

Leslie

the weird city's queer voice

LONG LIVE LESBIE

**TEXAS WAR
ON DRAG**

**Queer Events
Across Austin**



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Why Now?

BY: MIKE HENDRIX

Welcome to the first edition of Leslie. You are probably asking the same question we ask ourselves: "Why are you starting a LGBTQ+ media company in 2023?"

Community newspapers around the country are being bought out and closed by larger national media conglomerates. So why Leslie? Why now?

Our community is at a crossroads; we're being threatened from every side. Many of our threats are from the obvious perpetrators: the Trump MAGA movement, Texas' governor, lieutenant governor, state senate, and many of our state legislators.

At the same time, from within our own tent, our transgender community is being pitted against, in most part, gay men. So many of our siblings are losing their lives to fentanyl and meth addictions. Our Israeli and Palestinian siblings within our queer communities are being pitted against each other by the extreme left, while practicing LGBTQ+ Christians, Jews and Muslims are told they do not have the right to worship by the extreme right. Our LGBTQ+ art forms, like drag performances, are under attack, along with our books, our movies, and our leather and kink communities are all under attack.

Queer adoptions and families with trans kids are at risk of being torn apart. Families are being discriminated against by our local family services, and within families around the state, LGBTQ+ youth are being kicked out of their homes for simply identifying as trans or expressing a same sex attraction.

If that was not enough, our bars and our places of worship are being threatened by mass shooters, Nazis, decrying Jews and Gays, while so-called right-wing Christians hold signs calling for our communny's damnation.

We here at Leslie can no longer stand by and be complacent. We are the new voice, the so-called silent majority who can be silent no longer. We are here, we are loved, and we will be the voice of our community here in Austin and in Central Texas. We will call out injustice, wherever we see it.

Our pledge to you is that we will shine light into the darkness while giving everyone a voice in our community. Let me be clear: this is a mission of love and not a mission of profit. All the proceeds from our advertisers and the publication of this newspaper and media company will go towards making sure that our homeless LGBTQ+ youth in Austin and Central Texas have a warm bed, food and access to healthcare and that includes the right to transition.

Nearly seven in ten (68%) respondents in a study about LGBTQ+ youth homelessness indicated that family rejection was a major factor, making it the most cited factor leading to homelessness. More than half (54%) of respondents indicated that abuse in their family was another important factor contributing to LGBTQ+ homelessness. Additionally, more than 75% of responding agencies have worked with transgender youth in the past year.



Publisher, Mike Hendrix



Manging Editor, Caroline Savoie



Creative Director, Brian Kirchner

Our pledge to our community is that we will use our advertising dollars to house, clothe and feed our homeless queer youth. We will honor Leslie Cochran, a beloved, cross-dressing, homeless Austinite who was unashamedly queer in identity, politics and purpose.

To honor him is to honor you, our readership, and we hope that you will enjoy this first edition and keep coming back to it as future editions hit the streets.

So, do us a favor -- if you have a comment, a story to tell or a need to promote your local business, contact us, and let's use this new media to keep Austin queer and weird. At the same time, we'll help keep our queer youth safe and healthy.

Welcome to Leslie, our weird city's queer voice.

our guest's perspective

TEXAS SENATE BILL 12 AND THE TRUTH ABOUT DRAG

BY DR. REV. NEIL G. THOMAS

Too many Texas lawmakers have contorted, conflated, and concocted fabrications about drag. **Let's be clear about the facts:** Drag as an art form and method of self-expression has been around for centuries. The term was coined during the era of Shakespeare when men would dress up to play women's roles in the theater.

Drag performers have been a vital part of the LGBTQ+ community for decades. Drag queens were a central presence at the 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York, fighting for their rights and the rights of their communities.

Drag is the primary queer performance form – it is of the queer community, by the queer community and for the queer community. However, because of its emphasis on self-worth, self-expression, social commentary, and community care there has always been a large audience for drag both inside the gay community and outside the queer community.

Drag performers are artists who use exaggerated clothing, makeup, and personas to entertain and express themselves, often in the context of performance art or entertainment. The transgender community comprises individuals whose gender identity differs from the sex assigned to them at birth, and they may or may not have any association with drag performance. While some drag performers may identify as transgender, the two communities are distinct, with drag being a form of artistic expression and entertainment, whereas transgender identity pertains to one's gender identity and personal experience.

Drag is like any other performance and visual art form: the audience for drag can be comprised of children and families (i.e. The Walt Disney Company) and for the NC-17 viewers. Like going to the movies, individuals and families are free to make the decisions about what art they consume and view.

We all agree: We want our children to be safe and supported. Drag, as seen in the forms of library story hours, theater, music and even church worship services, do just that.

Rev. Dr. Neil G. Thomas is the senior pastor of Cathedral of Hope of Dallas, a member congregation of the United Church of Christ. On Sept. 17, Thomas held a Drag Sunday event, where dozens of local Drag Queens received a blessing for all they provide to the community.



It's personal.

BY: RABBI DENISE L. EGER

Saturday, October 7, I should have been dancing with the Torah scroll (the first five books of the Bible in ancient scroll form) in one of the most joyous Jewish holy days when we end the reading of the yearly cycle from the Biblical Book of Deuteronomy and begin again from the opening words in the Book of Genesis. Instead, I was glued to the television, watching as news of the horror unfolded in Israel. I was texting with my Israeli family who were locked in a bomb shelter. On the 50th anniversary of the Yom Kippur War-Israel was attacked.

At 6:30 am Israel time, Hamas terrorist invaded Israel from Gaza by land, sea, and air. They launched more than 6000 rockets and missiles (at the time of this writing); used paragliders to land their butchers over the borders and attacked innocent Israeli civilians.

More than 1300 Israelis murdered in cold blood. For reference this is as if 43,000 Americans were killed in one day. More than 3300 wounded that day. Everyone in Israel knows someone who was murdered by the terrorists, wounded or taken hostage. It's a small country. They were hunted like animals as the terrorists went door to door killing them while they were sleeping or locked in their homes. They rounded them up and burned them alive.

They slaughtered young and old indiscriminately, even Holocaust survivors. They shot parents in front of children and children in front of parents.

The brutality is hard to convey. They shot innocent people point blank, slit their throats and even beheaded babies in their nurseries. The cruelty and inhumanity of it remains.

They attacked young people who were gathered at a peace concert and more than 260 were gunned down and killed as they tried to flee, and others were dragged across the border and taken hostage. The terrorists invaded kibbutzim (small cooperative farms) along the Gaza border all through southern Israel. Bodies are still being found and they are trying to identify them.

And the Hamas terrorists raped and pillaged as they went along. Vile atrocities. Taking more than 150 civilians hostages including infants and women. Videos appeared online of the Israeli women bleeding from their crotches, evidence of rape and brutalization. These are crimes against humanity. Truly unspeakable. The videos uploaded by Hamas are nauseating. This is the largest number of Jews murdered in one day since the Holocaust during World War II.

Hamas is dedicated to killing Jews and wiping Israel off the map. But their rockets and missiles (supplied and supported by Iran) have destroyed more than just Jews. They hit a mosque in an Arab Israeli town of Abu Ghosh outside Jerusalem killing a man, and harmed Bedouins, Druze, Christians, Bahai, Circassian peoples all who make up the country of Israel. The 23-year Arab-Israeli son of one of my teachers, a paramedic, was killed by Hamas this week. Hamas and Islamic Jihad aim their rockets at hospitals and schools intentionally. As was evident by the hospital in Ashkelon that was hit. In Tel Aviv the hospital has moved more than 250 patients to an underground parking garage to keep them safe.

Jewish community members around the world ache, grieve and cry out in pain. These aren't just images of some strangers; these are our family members. My social media feeds are filled with pleas for information about missing loved ones, a son, a daughter, a mother, an aunt, whole families. And as bodies are being identified, there are now notices of funerals and posts of grief and wailing. One Israeli father interviewed by CNN shouted "Hurray", that his daughter's body was found rather than having been a hostage in Gaza subject to the unspeakable. This is horrific.

More than 260,000 residents of southern Israel have been displaced as they have been evacuated after these attacks.

Others of us have family members long out of the Israel Defense Forces who have been called up to reserve duty following this heinous attack. Including my own family members who have been out of the army for years. More than 300,000 Israeli reservists have been called up. Israeli ex-pats around the world are flying home to serve. (For reference the U.S. only has 330,000 reservists).

Security is ramped up at every synagogue and Jewish institution across the world as Hamas has threatened not just Israel but Jews everywhere. Nowhere feels safe. With the steady rise of anti-Semitism in the U.S. and especially on college campuses, we are worried. And the history of the Jewish people through the millennia, of pogroms, exile, blood libels, and of course the Holocaust and Inquisitions, the traumas of this hatred against us is in our very DNA. Your Jewish friends are scared.

As a queer activist and longtime progressive, I am doubly shocked at members of our queer community who cannot and will not condemn such barbarian acts of terror. I am angry at those in our queer community who praise Hamas and Islamic Jihad as 'freedom fighters' There is no justification for this. These are not freedom fighters they are mass murderers-even the Nazis tried to hide what they were doing in Auschwitz. Even Isis didn't behead babies.

I have stood face to face with the current prime minister of Israel, Bibi Netanyahu in meetings. I have challenged him on his policies toward Palestinians when I was president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. This spring, twice on visits to Israel I have stood in the streets with the protesters challenging the right-wing government of Israel and their actions. I do not support their policies.

I have met with Palestinian leaders, like the late Saeb Erekat who was secretary of the PLO from 2015 until his death in 2020. I have worked for peace between Palestinians and Israelis for decades.

But when members of our LGBTQ community tell me that they support these actions as resistance to Israel's policies I draw the line. This isn't resistance: these are war crimes.

Just as when Hamas used suicide bombers on civilians in Israel. I hear a lot of rhetoric in our community that Israelis are colonizers. These are slogans chanted without truth behind them. Israel is the indigenous homeland of the Jewish people who were exiled in the year 70 by the Romans. Israel was conquered first by Rome, and then the Crusaders and then the Ottoman empire.

And yes, Palestinians claim the same land. And so, a solution must be negotiated.

But to say that Israel will not exist after 75 years of statehood, or that Jews are not allowed to live in a land of self-determination not on the table.

The only solution is to negotiate. Not to murder. And Hamas as it says in its charter is dedicated to the eradication of Israel and the Jews. When Palestinian activists chant "from the river to the sea, Palestine will be free", these are not just empty words, I take it seriously. Would you live next door to someone who was dedicated to killing you without defending your family?

Queer people need to understand, your support of Hamas and Islamic Jihad is supporting a regime that would indeed kill you in an instant. You cannot be openly gay or lesbian or bi or trans in Gaza or the West Bank for that matter. You would be butchered and dragged through the streets as has happened to LGBTQ people in Gaza and the West Bank. You would not be safe. As a rabbi and LGBTQ activist, I have written many letters to the Israeli foreign ministry on behalf of queer Palestinians seeking asylum in Israel to escape the threats against them for begin gay.

Hamas holds the Palestinians of Gaza hostage as well. They came to power in 2006 pushing out Fatah (who runs the PA-headquartered in Ramallah), after Israel had withdrawn completely from Gaza.

I remember well the images of the Israeli army removing Jewish settlers from Gaza in 2005. The Israelis left infrastructure and farms for the taking. Instead, led by the terrorist of Hamas, it was all destroyed. And in 2006 Hamas was elected and there haven't been elections since in Gaza. Hamas runs Gaza and diverts billions in aid to building a web of tunnels beneath the streets of Gaza to hide their Iranian rockets and missiles and armaments under hospitals, schools, and mosques instead of building the hospitals, power plants and homes for the residents of Gaza. Israel doesn't control Gaza. Hamas does. And if Palestinians of Gaza speak up against what Hamas is doing, they too are quickly silenced and killed. Egypt also borders Gaza and they too have closed the border for fear of Hamas.

The days and months ahead will be difficult as Israel begins to mount a military campaign to eradicate Hamas. There are still infiltrator terrorist roaming southern Israel. And the barrage of rockets and missiles from Gaza toward Israel will keep coming. And the Israeli Air Force is already pounding back at military targets in Gaza. This will be frightening on both sides of the border. The toll of Palestinian lives who are victims of Hamas will rise as well. This too is heartbreaking. But Hamas and Islamic Jihad use those innocents to hide and as human shields. This is the dilemma of war.

My hope and prayer are urgently for peace but there can be no peace when one side only wants my death. That is the dilemma of Israel now.

Rabbi Denise L. Eger is the founding rabbi of Congregation Kol Ami in West Hollywood, CA. She is an author, activist, and executive coach at Resilience Strategies, now residing in Austin.



Rabbi Denise L. Eger

Unleashed

LGBTQ Brings Queer Creatives to Texas

BY CAROLINE SAVOIE

It's been years since Texas entrepreneur Wesley Smoot conjured up the idea for a live LGBTQ+ business festival, and on Sep. 22, he said he got to witness that dream come alive.

"It's hard when you're so busy planning everything in front of you, you forget how far you've come," Smoot said. "I felt like I needed to prove myself, to show people that this kind of conference is possible."

The three-day festival featured some of the most prominent names in the LGBTQ community including Antoni Porowski of Netflix's "Queer Eye"; Dyllón Burnside and Indya Moore of "POSE"; Billy Eichner of "Bros"; former Pennsylvania State Rep. Brian Sims; NASCAR driver Zach Herren; transgender rights advocate Naomi Green; Daniel Franzese of "Mean Girls" and at least a dozen other LGBTQ influencers and leaders, including Family Equality CEO Stacey Stevenson.

Smoot said the talent showed up and showed out, and for a first-year live event, Smoot said it went incredibly smoothly.

Attendees got to hear personal stories from entertainment industry and community leaders, and several were available afterwards to take pictures with those who wanted them. Smoot said the guests and panelists alike were so kind and friendly toward each other. They had interview opportunities with DVTV, OUT Magazine and PrideRadio (iHeart Radio).

He said Porowski signed copies of cookbooks

and let everyone try the elote he made, Eichner was "more than happy" to take photos with everyone, and Moore brought her mother on stage and thanked her for her influence on Moore's life.

Smoot said he knew the SAG/AFTRA strike would present a unique challenge for actors and writers on the agenda, as they are prohibited from speaking about any current or past projects for studios pitted against the fight for worker's rights that started on July 14.

"We got to make things more personal and intimate with our guests by talking about their experiences more than their projects," he said. "People got to know the panelists so much better. They hung on every word."

He said he spoke to people who flew in from all parts of the country; Attendees came in from California, New York, Florida, Michigan and more to get down at Gilley's.

"People came for all different reasons," Smoot said. "One person I spoke to came to learn how to be a better ally. Other people came for educational or business opportunities."

He said he's heard great feedback from attendees, partners, press, panelists who said "I'm coming back next year, even if I'm not on the stage."

"I love hearing what people got out of it, and the feedback helps me know what to improve for next year," Smoot said.

He said that Unleashed LGBTQ 2024 is already in the works with fresh ideas and sponsorship opportunities.



Robert Sanchez and Brian Simms at Unleashed

"We really want to have more events on The Strip," Smoot said. "I want to incorporate more performances by partnering with local businesses and drag queens in the future."

A few people who were out clubbing on The Strip posted on social media regarding the number of celebrities out on Cedar Spring Road.

"I love knowing we had that impact because it reminds me of my own experience on Sixth Street during SXSW. I want to build on that next year by holding events right on The Strip," Smoot said.

There's another aspect of local artistry Smoot said he wants to see more of at the next festival.

"I'm hoping to get more local filmmakers with projects available for screening," he said. "We love getting people from all over the country, but there are so many Dallas filmmakers who have projects to share."

Smoot said he woke up on Monday expecting to be exhausted, but he woke up completely energized, on a high from the weekend.

"People asked me why I'm holding a gay business festival in Texas, and I always said 'Why the hell wouldn't I hold it in Texas?'" Smoot laughed. "If I bring this to New York or California, we're preaching to the choir. What's the point? We're standing our ground here."

Shame, Substance Abuse, and Housing Insecurity

BY: CASE ERIKSON, AUTHOR, ADVISOR, AND ADVOCATE AT CASERICKSON.COM

According to the Trevor Project, "LGBT youth only make up 7-9% of the general population, but 29% of the total youth who are currently experiencing homelessness." And according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, "Individuals in the LGBTQ+ community are twice as likely to abuse drugs" no matter what the category.

These are statistics we may have heard before, and the "solutions" all range from developing more comprehensive poverty prevention programs to more inclusive therapeutic offerings and other various economic initiatives on the state and local levels.

All of the current solutions are valuable, and this work is helping the crisis. But from my vantage point, there is an enormous gap in the conversation around the roots of rejection.

For if you do not feel rejected on a deep, core level like so many of our community feel, you don't experience life in the same way as someone who was rejected does. Someone who has been rejected for who they are or who they love learns a level of pain that few people can understand. It's literally painful to exist.

And when it's painful to exist, we learn to medicate the pain. I believe that most of us in the community (and the world at large) are the walking wounded. We are either ignoring our wound, medicating our wound, or dealing with our wound.



In my own experience of substance abuse and housing insecurity years ago, it was deep seated shame and pain of my existence that led to the events of an accidental overdose and subsequent loss of my home. I count myself fortunate that I found my sobriety and had a small infrastructure of support as well. Certainly my access to a community of alternative/plant-medicine healers helped and continues to help me as well. But others are not so fortunate. For some, the pain is just too great. We lose amazing souls like our dear Leslie. Souls who we'll never know what could have been created or the lives that could have been touched if only we could collectively stop the conversation and belief that who we are is fundamentally flawed, broken, or in need of being fixed.

We may be wounded, but we are not broken.

We are the ones to shine our light and transcend shame. We are the deep feelers and creative trailblazers — the artists who will show the world that shame is what kills, and the solution is less about a program as much as it is about pride. Pride about who we are and who we love. So we stop beating ourselves up, and rather honor, respect, commend, applaud, and praise ourselves and each other instead. It's what those who left too soon would want for us, and today is our opportunity to bear the torch of the light they left behind.

Translated: The Austin queer community is a beacon of resilience and beauty that is just getting started!

*"It's not how you dress. It's what's in your heart."
— Leslie Cochran, 2000*

ICONIC QUEER BUSINESS MOVES ACROSS AUSTIN

After nearly 30 years of business, Package Menswear has relocated from downtown to Central/South Austin by Polvo's and Boulden Creek Café.

BY: ANN PARKER

The iconic LGBTQIA+ Adult Boutique has just signed a long-term lease at 2008 S. First Street, once occupied by Rivers and Reefs, a long-running pet store.

"It's an exciting move," said Dan Chavez, the store's manager, buyer and promoter. "Package started out as an adult video store in the 90s, and we've been transitioning ever since. We are one of the few LGBTQIA+ businesses remaining from 'old school Austin.'"

Package started in Austin in 1996 with a store in the Dobie Mall for a few years before moving to its current building, the Fifth Street Market.

In its early years, Package (then TapeLenders) relied heavily on adult DVD rentals and sales as well as adult novelties and fetish wear. In 2010, the shop changed its name to Package Menswear in an effort to reflect more expansive changes to inventory.

The boutique has grown to expand their selection over the years, including adult toys, men's swimwear, athletic wear, fetish gear, and underwear.

"The community we cater to is quite diverse," Chavez said. "We are looking forward to expanding to unisex clothing and products for the Trans community."

Package dropped the "menswear" from their name in a recent re-branding.

Store owner Chris Lynch said is also looking forward to the move.

"I am so excited about our new potential," he said. "Our new space opens a whole new realm of possibilities for Package Austin. We will be able to showcase greater styles and throw amazing events that our current location does not afford."

At press time, Package is planning big things for their grand opening, set for Oct. 1. Tony Castro is reported to be the DJ of the festivities.

"We are going to have a DJ, snacks, libations, maybe even some lube wrestling," Chavez said.

"There's a lot more stuff we are planning out, but I think it's best to leave it as a surprise for the party."

A Package party is a guaranteed good time in the books. Staff and patrons have enjoyed many events the business has put on in the city.

"We have underwear and gear parties at the Iron Bear every first and second Saturday of the month, and we have our own kink fashion party in the basement of Highland Lounge every last Friday of the month."

Package has had a strong philanthropic streak under the helm of Lynch, who took ownership in 2009. Countless fundraisers and donations have been provided to groups including Project Transitions, The Octopus Club, and Kind Clinic, among others.

"We are always happy to support our community," Chavez said. "I can't wait to show further support in the new spot!"

To find out about more about Package events, you can follow their Instagram (@packagemenswear), Facebook (@packageaustin) and X/Twitter (@packagemenswear).



Old Package Menswear store on 5th Street.

BRIAN KIRCHNER



New Package store on 2008 1st Street.

BRIAN KIRCHNER

Court Issues Permanent Injunction Declaring Texas' Drag Ban Unconstitutional

BY: KRISTI CROSS, ACLU OF TEXAS

HOUSTON — A federal judge in the Southern District of Texas ruled the state's drag ban, Senate Bill 12, is unconstitutional and issued a permanent injunction on Sep. 26 blocking the legislation from becoming law.

The ruling stops the Texas attorney general and other government officials from enforcing any provisions of the ban. Before issuing this permanent injunction, the court previously issued a temporary restraining order, which prevented the law from going into effect September 1.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Texas and Baker Botts LLP filed the lawsuit in August on behalf of the plaintiffs: The Woodlands Pride, Abilene Pride Alliance, Extragrams LLC, 360 Queen Entertainment LLC, and drag performer Brigitte Bandit.

In a consolidated injunction hearing and trial on the merits on August 28 and 29, the plaintiffs testified how S.B.12 threatens their livelihoods, censors their freedom of expression, and vilifies an art form that has roots going back millennia.

"Today's ruling blocks a law that threatens some of the most cherished First Amendment freedoms we all hold dear," said Chloe Kempf, attorney at the ACLU of Texas. "S.B.12 attempts to suppress drag artists and the LGBTQIA+ community, and its steep criminal and civil penalties would harm Black and Latinx transgender Texans the most. As the court recognized, S.B. 12 is also vague, overbroad, and chills entire genres of performances that are not obscene or inappropriate, from high school Shakespearean plays to the Nutcracker ballet to the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders."



LESLIE PHOTOGRAPHER

Brigitte Bandit, a drag performer who spoke about the bill during legislative debates, said she is relieved and grateful for the court's ruling.

"My livelihood and community has seen enough

hatred and harm from our elected officials," Bandit said. "This decision is a much needed reminder that queer Texans belong and we deserve to be heard by our lawmakers."

'This table is set for you': Cathedral of Hope Blesses Drag Community

BY CAROLINE SAVOIE

Animated, colorfully-clad drag queens bowed their heads and sang hymns at Cathedral of Hope on Sep. 17 in the wake of the Texas Legislature's attack on the LGBTQ+ community exhibited by Senate Bill 12, a bill conceived to prohibit drag performances in front of children.

Cathedral of Hope's 10 a.m. service kicked the day off with its own strong, concise, and timely message that was met with a standing ovation: "Drag is not a crime."

Rows of drag queens in feathers and jewels sat beneath a stained glass window that read "Esperanza," the Spanish word for "hope." With fans in hand and their painted faces lifted to the ornate altar, the queens traded the hateful words uttered by protestors outside for hopeful ones.

"Here, we are a sacred, safe space," Senior Pastor Neil Thomas said. "Here, we know that if it's not love, it's not God. We stand in solidarity. All too often, [drag queens] are not invited to the table of the Lord, but this is a table set for you."

A minister clad in white vestments and a rainbow stole walked Penny Cilyn, a professional drag queen, up onto the altar.

"Oh my goodness, a drag queen reading from the good book," Thomas said in jest, clutching his chest. The congregation laughed, and Penny Cilyn adjusted her crown and began reading.

Thomas' sermon addressed the small group of

protestors outside the church.

"The most compassionate thing we can do is just to let them be," he told his church. "We are not here to argue with one another or condemn one another. Hasn't that happened to us?"

Several members of the Dallas chapter of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, a 45-year-old international organization, attended the service. Lola Hangars, a 10-year member, said it was the best Christian service she'd ever seen.

Christina Manger, a 13-year-member, said their mission is to share joy, expiate stigmatic guilt, and raise money for women's and LGBTQ+ charities in Dallas. Manger said she grew up hearing the same messages protestors perpetuated outside, so to be in such an accepting, affirming church was "overwhelming."

"Walking through all the heckling outside was like a dry desert," congregant Sheri Vaden said. "But coming inside was like entering into a beautiful, lush oasis that celebrates love. It's not just tolerance or acceptance here; it's celebration."

Thomas said that as pastor of a largely LGBTQ+ congregation, he aims to get people who have had negative church experiences back into church to let them know that "we're in it together."

"It was amazing to see so many drag queens here, to see the diversity of our community," he said. "To be able to show up anywhere in your full authenticity enables you to settle into the reality that you are loved, regardless."



CAROLINE SAVOIE

CAROLINE SAVOIE

“Freedom should be given to all people, not just to a few people because of their dominance.”
 — Leslie Cochran, 2000

Those who knew Leslie Cochran used a spectrum of words to describe the Austin icon. Brave, headstrong, generous, creative and queer — Cochran’s spirit lives on through the streets of the city inside those who dare to challenge societal norms, use their platforms to give a voice to the unheard, and embody the true, strange and sacred spirit of Austin, TX.

this month's Leslie



ARYEL MUSE PHOTOGRAPHY

Name:	Miguel
Age:	24
Occupation:	Manager at The Austin Eagle
Sign:	Cancer
Faves:	Photography, techno music, peer support, sexy bodies of a types, psychology, the outdoors.

Where are you from and what keeps you in Austin?

Originally born in Argentina, after having travelled around the world and living in Texas for 12 years, I settled in Austin for the vibe, the camaraderie and wholesomeness in the leather and kink scene here. I’ve found a home at The Austin Eagle working to grow our leather and fetish community that involves supporting the many queer organizations in town. It’s a great avenue to show who I am and help support our queer family as a whole.

How do you identify in the LGBTQ+ Community and are you involved in any movements?

I am a gay man. I have been a part of protests, marches, and overall support during the past legislative session fighting for the rights of our drag and trans family which also included support on a lot of bills and hearings for the bills on education and addiction recovery. I work as well with The Foundry; a local organization that hosts get togethers like movie nights, camping trips and volunteer work in the leather community to keep our sense of community strong.

What have been some of your greatest accomplishments?

Personally I have been in recovery from alcohol and other drugs for 9 months and counting. Very proud of that as it has opened many doors for me to be able to better show up for my loved ones and my community. Community wise, several years ago in Houston I was part of a team that hosted a very successful fundraiser for, and erected a permanent flag memorial for the victims of, the Pulse and Club O shootings. Those are two that stand out for me and there will be many more to come.

What do you feel will change the most in Austins LGBTQ+ Community politically?

I hope every day that it won’t take drastic measures like losing our rights, which is already happening all over the country, to band together in much larger numbers to fight the political agenda that is being forced on us by our lawmakers and religious fanatics

What changes could make the community stronger and more inclusive?

I feel that more collaboration between community leaders (be that queer business owners, social groups, nonprofits, title holders etc) would help the diverse perspectives come together and form a more cohesive path forward for those that need us. Division is our downfall and with the current political climate we cannot thrive in the freedom that previous generations have quite literally fought and died to provide us.

And finally, What’s your advice to those struggling with identity and the lack of support?

There is always a place for you. There are countless people that have been through what you have gone through even if it may feel like you are alone. There is chosen family that will hold you and your heart safe. Keep putting yourself out there and surround yourself with people that will protect and teach you because there is always something to learn, and so many reasons to have pride in yourself. Get tested, know your status, help end the stigma surrounding sex positivity, HIV and STIs.

able,” Shaver said. “If you’re buying binders from Amazon, you’re not getting the same level of education that you get with us.”

Biffle said access to free binders stops people from using harmful practices like duct tape or injury wraps to hide their chests.

Biffle said referrals to the closet have come from other community members’ recommendations, and she’s working with Weatherford’s police and teachers to inform them about the services P.L.A.C. provides.

Biffle said The Crossing P.L.A.C. grew from a need for an LGBTQ+ support group. She said another community organization started a group that served the same function, but that organization got donations from affluent, right-leaning churches. When the churches pushed back and said they’d take funding away if the organization didn’t shut down its LGBTQ support group, the organization asked P.L.A.C. to fulfill this need instead.

P.L.A.C. held the first event on Sep. 29, and Biffle said that leadership changed the meeting location at the last minute to avoid any protests or backlash from Hall or his followers.

“Everyone who showed up was brought there by their parents,” Biffle said. “A parent has to make the choice for their child to be there, and they fill out paperwork. We’ve always been a multigenerational community, and we’ve never claimed to only serve the youth. We’re not just trying to help teens, but help their families too.”

Biffle and Shaver explained that LGBTQ+ youth are at higher risks of running away, committing suicide and experiencing family violence. They said their goal at P.L.A.C. is to reduce their community’s chances of falling under those statistics.

“Statistically, seven percent of adults have said they’re a part of the LGBTQ community, which means there could be over 10,000 LGBTQ+ people in Parker County,” Biffle said. “There are young people who are a part of our community, and we want to see them grow up to become adults. If our group can help more kids survive, we’ll have served our purpose.”

Hall posted four images of a drag performer dancing at an all-ages Pride event P.L.A.C. put on two years ago.

“We’ve held a Pride picnic in the park for the last four year without anyone saying anything negative about it,” Biffle said. “The queen was background checked, just so no one could accuse him of anything. He took photos with families and made sure that his performance was age appropriate.”

Hall called the picnic a “grooming event” and called the dance “provocative.” One commenter pointed out that the pictures were misleading, as they blurred out the area around the performer’s genitals even though the dancer was wearing several layers of tights under his silver sparkly leotard.

Biffle said none of the parents there had any issue with the queen’s performance.

In that post, Hall incorrectly stated that Grace First Presbyterian Church held the Pride event,

but Biffle said the church did allow P.L.A.C. to hold a drag storytime in their building in 2021.

“We spoke to their board members, and they voted to let us hold the event,” Biffle said. “They approved the music and books and crafts. The queen discussed the fact that he was a boy playing dress up, like any other superhero or princess. The kids understood.”

Hall posted photos of that storytime event as well, and parents whose children were in the pictures messaged him and requested he take them down. As of Oct. 10, the storytime photo has been removed from the Texans for Brandon Hall page.

Hall posted his latest attempt to threaten P.L.A.C.’s P.L.A.C.e in the community on Sep. 23, asking his followers to sign a Google petition to “stop P.L.A.C. from targeting children.”

Five days later, Hall said “techno-fascist Google” disabled his petition and revoked his access to the list of those who signed.

“We will press forward and continue to gather signatures,” Hall wrote.

Biffle said Hall threatened to turn P.L.A.C. over to the police, which is why she went to the police herself. She said Weatherford’s chief of police was supportive of P.L.A.C.’s goals and would work with them in the future.

“Brandon Hall gave our personal information and organization to Libs of Tiktok, a terrorist organization who encourages members to take issues into their own hands, which is another reason we went to the police, to get active shooter training,” Biffle said. “He said he’d try to make it so we couldn’t work with or be around children. It just went too far.”

Biffle and Shaver said they’ve never personally spoken to Hall, but they blocked him from P.L.A.C.’s Facebook group after he “started a rant” in early September.

“We haven’t engaged with him on our public page, and we apologized to members on our private page for his behavior,” Biffle said. “We at P.L.A.C. are not doing anything to entice or antagonize Brandon Hall. We don’t want this to go any further, and we want this to stop, but we aren’t trying to make a spectacle out of this.”

Shaver said she asked P.L.A.C.’s members not to engage with Hall or his supporters.

“Our one goal is to keep our community safe,” Shaver said. “We are an accepting community that does not want conflict. We’re not trying to divide people.”

Until Hall started his online crusade against P.L.A.C., she said the non-profit hadn’t received any backlash from the community.

“Usually people don’t even know we’re here,” Biffle said. “We get information out to the people who need it, but we try to fly right under the radar. We don’t try to rock the boat or do protests or anything. We’re trying to be the good guys.”

As of the date of publishing, Brandon Hall has not responded to requests for comment.

Candidate for state rep. targets LGBTQ+ non-profit

BY CAROLINE SAVOIE



When Tina Biffle started a community organization on Facebook in 2019 to fill a gap she and some friends saw when it came to LGBTQ+ outreach in Parker County, she didn’t know that the Parker County LGBTQ+ Awareness Community (P.L.A.C.) would become the target of a political campaign for Brandon Hall, a republican running for State Representative of Texas House District 60.

But when Biffle and P.L.A.C. started advertising a youth and family group that met the last week in September, Hall took to his Facebook page to rally his supporters against the program and its organizers.

On Sep. 9, Hall posted screenshots of advertisements for The Crossing P.L.A.C., a youth and family group for sixth through 12th graders, and P.L.A.C.’s Transformation Station, a LGBTQ+ affirming community closet.

“P.L.A.C. is a group right here in Parker County targeting children with their sexual agenda,” Hall wrote. “Their website is alarming. They are peddling ‘chest binders’ to underage girls for free at their ‘transformation station’ (brutal, cruel, and disgusting), and they are starting a local youth group dedicated to grooming children. Nobody will work harder to stop these people from getting to children than I will. Let’s rise up and take a stand!”

Biffle said the non-profit’s three-person board only puts programs in P.L.A.C.e when there’s a direct need from the community. Before P.L.A.C. got non-profit certification, she said people were

asking where to find free chest binders or try on clothes in a safe space for transgender folks.

“The Transformation Station was born out of a growing need for LGBTQ-inclusionary clothing,” Biffle said. “We don’t cater to children, and we only offer adult clothing, but we do see teenagers come in on occasion.”

Biffle said P.L.A.C. accepts clothing donations, and the store is open to anyone in the community who might not feel comfortable shopping in traditional spaces. While the organization doesn’t have a program specifically tailored to chest-binding, it does accept binder donations and educate those who are interested in safe binding practices.

“We don’t allow anyone to take a binder if they can’t safely use it,” Biffle said. “We always discuss the maximum time to wear it safely, we only take certain types of binders that are safe, and we give their parents the names of websites for research on safe binding practices.”

Hall cited a statistic on his Facebook page noting the health risks involved in wearing binders, and Biffle said there are health risks involved in wearing any compression clothing. She said girls and women who wear compression sports bras face the same risks to their breast tissue as transgender and nonbinary folks who wear binders.

Turah Shaver, P.L.A.C.’s vice president and board director, said the goal of the volunteers at Transformation Station is to educate the community.

“We want to provide the right education and give these people their best chance at feeling and being safe in clothes that make them comfort-

Long Live Leslie.

*"It's not what happens to
you, it's what you do with it."*
— Leslie Cochran

BY: CAROLINE SAVOIE

For 16 years, a chronically unhoused, politically involved, theatrical man who disrupted gender stereotypes in his tutus, tiaras and feather boats strutted through Downtown Austin as the personification of the city's beloved weirdness.

Wise, resourceful, kind, maddening — his friends said Leslie Cochran was the full embodiment of what life has to offer, the full spectrum of the human experience. Eleven years after his death, the nomad's motley crew of hand-picked friends remember the impact he had on not only them, but Austin as a whole.

Albert.

Albert Leslie Cochran was born in Miami on June 24, 1951, and he was one of five siblings. His sister, Alice Masterson, said teachers couldn't control him, and a long line of others who tried formed behind them. She said he missed class Mondays and Thursdays, but he'd come in for tests on Friday and ace them.

Cochran confided in a few friends that his mother and father were both physically and emotionally abusive, with allegations of sexual assault coming out in Cochran's later years.

Adam Callaway, one of Leslie's friends in Austin, said one of the first stories Cochran told him was about how he killed his brother and carried the guilt with him his whole life.

"He was a twin, but his sibling died in the womb with him," Callaway said. "Leslie said his mom blamed him for the death of his brother, and that really messed with him. He was convinced he was actually responsible for it."

He left home at 16 years old, stayed in school, and graduated with an academic scholarship to Florida State University, but he dropped out of college and enlisted in the Navy in 1973. After his stint in the Navy, Cochran started traveling across the country. He took up jobs in Atlanta, Shreveport, Miami, Seattle, and spent several years working at Safeway and skinning road-kills in Colorado as "Trapper Al."

Cochran spent 10 days in a coma in a Colorado hospital after sustaining brain injuries in a motorcycle accident, injuries that would impair him going forward.

Valerie Romness, Cochran's friend and de facto secretary, said the first time he wore women's clothes was in 1994. He told Romness he saw a beautiful woman in a club, and she invited him to her trailer. During their tryst, he realized she was transgender, and his view of sexuality and gender identity was forever changed.

"He realized people who crossdressed or wore drag got lots of attention, and he decided to partake as well," Romness said. "He had a hard time working because he couldn't do math, and he self-medicated to cope with his trauma, but he realized he could get tips when he dressed like a woman. He wasn't trying to be a woman, but he wanted to dress like them."

APD, Kiss This."

Cochran had visited Austin before, but when he made his way into Austin on a year-long tricycle ride in 1996, Austin police arrested him.

"I think they were trying to run him out of town with tickets," Cochran's friend Debbie Russell said. "But instead, they pissed him off and gave him something to talk about."

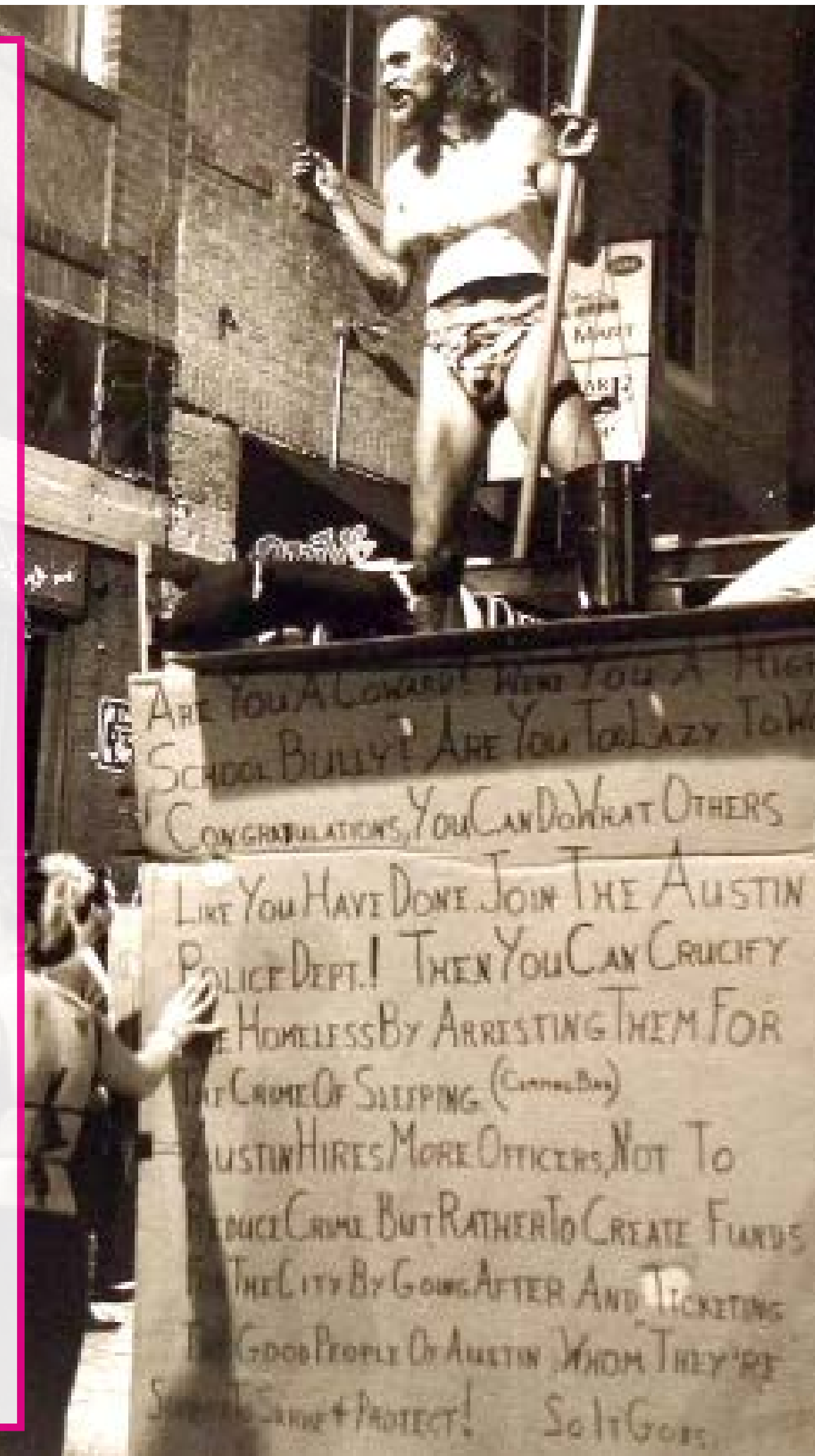
Russell, who served as chapter president of Austin's ACLU, said unhoused people had a strong presence in Austin in the late 1990s, and Cochran, with a 6-foot trailer in tow behind his tricycle, didn't approve of how the Austin Police Department handled "transients."

"He wanted to write a book on how the police treat the homeless," Russell said.

Instead, he wrote about his encounters with police in *The Challenger*, a street newspaper Romness started, for six months before he died.

Cochran's own relationship with the police was fraught with tension. In Tracy Fraizer's 2019 film "Becoming Leslie," Cochran's friends recall how APD arrested him 81 times between 1996 and 2012 on misdemeanors ranging from public camping to urinating outside, his mugshots like yearbook photos marking his time in Texas' capitol.

Russell said Cochran wasn't shy when it came to his attitude toward APD. One of Cochran's most iconic photos shows him strutting in his typical Sixth Street regalia: clear platform heels, red curls,



TIM PIPE VIA FRECKELED FANNY FILMS

a pink spaghetti strap crop top, and a black thong. “APD” is written in marker across his lower back, and the words “kiss this” are displayed on either side of his thong.

Russell said she was on her second stint living in Austin when she saw Leslie in 1997. During his first year in Austin, he became a staple of the city, and he made money off of Austin locals and tourists alike, as they often tipped him for pictures. She said her first proper introduction to Cochran happened years later, when she was out on Sixth Street.

“I knew he was special from the get go,” she said. “I’d buy him a few beers at El Camino, and we’d sit and talk. He wasn’t just a leering dude who says flirtatious quips to get pictures and money. He knew things. I mean really, he had this depth within him.”

Russell said she was called “Austin’s most active activist,” and she focused heavily on police accountability, a platform Cochran could get behind.

In 1998, Romness was on a live TV show with Americorps called “Dialogues About Homelessness,” where she brought homeless peoples’ stories with the police to television. She’d heard about Cochran being sprayed down with a hose in an Albertsons parking lot, and she interviewed him in front of the store. At 45 years old, he was the youngest person filmed for the show, and he wore a plaid mini skirt and tank top.

“Leslie was savvy and determined and respectful,” Romness said. “He was a comedian, and everything was about having fun. He was always around -- on TV, on the news, on the street.”

The Queen.

“This ever-smiling man with a wirey-wild mane riding a bike in heels became the queen of Austin,” Russell said. “He wasn’t Albert anymore. He was Leslie. Leslie Alice Cochran, this walking contradiction who was neither male nor female.”

Russell said Cochran called on Romness, his hairdresser and de facto secretary, to help him legally change his name, and she obliged.

Russell said that Austin, a “haven for social rejects,” nourished Cochran, allowing him to be celebrated for his strangeness instead of denigrated for his refusal to conform.

“Leslie was this perfect bellwether,” she said. “If you didn’t like Leslie, you probably won’t like Austin.”

Romness said Austin was always weird, but Cochran cemented the slogan with every click of his heels across the pavement.

“In the early 2000s, people thought it was a privilege to see him,” she said. “Walking with Leslie was like walking with a celebrity. Some people would ask for pictures, and some people would clutch their children to their side and give him a cautious smile.”

Romness said that during annual events like South By Southwest and Austin City Limits, people would travel from other states and countries and spend their time looking for Cochran and his ever-exposed, street-toned gams.

“He was always dropping something and bending over,” she said. “It was part of his act. The first time it happened, I was completely shocked, but I got used to it. If your tire was flat, he’d bend over, show off his fanny, and change that tire.”

Romness said Cochran would tell children to stay in school, stay away from drugs, and stay off of cigarettes, all with a cigarette held between his own fingers.

When he wasn’t teasing for tips, Romness said Cochran would dumpster dive or attend storage auctions to find gifts for himself or his friends.

“Gift-giving is a really important thing for unhoused people,” she said. “It’s a prized opportunity for them to give of themselves.”

Cochran’s friends said unhoused and housed people alike have stories about him inserting himself, warranted or unwelcome, into their lives. Callaway said Cochran would work odd jobs, like bartending for house parties or spontaneously bussing tables in restaurants to get food.

“He was fearless, stubborn, smart, and fed,” Callaway chuckled.

Romness said two unhoused men she knows said they woke up with Cochran cuddled between them for warmth. He also donated some of the little money he had to help feed the homeless community.

was the tallest building, and everything was so laid back. Leslie wanted it to stay that way.”

Russell said the late 1990s was the beginning of a transition for Austin.

“We expected Austin to grow, but we didn’t expect the city to outspend other large Texas cities on economic development,” she said. “We spent an incredible amount to get people to move here, but we didn’t need that. They were forcing unsustainable growth. Making it cheap for developers to build and expensive for people to move in. There was no focus on the roads or public transportation, nothing to help the people who already lived here.”

Callaway said Cochran was always up to date on current events and politics, and he always had something to say about them. Cochran ran for mayor in 2000 and 2003, finishing in second place in 2000 with 7.75% of the votes in his favor. Russell held a debate for his election against Will Wynn in 2003, and she had to pick him up to bring him to the debate.

“He was dressed in Goodwill’s finest women’s suit with a skirt,” she said. “He was so ready to go, and he hands down won that debate. I realized our politics are 99% matched, so it was kind of crazy.”

Cochran’s political platform was based on respecting Austin’s culture and rejecting the allure of corporations looking to expand to the growing city.

“You’ve got to take care of the foundations first,” Cochran said in *The Austin Chronicle* in 2003. “A little money to help (i.e., incentives) is fine, but Smart Growth is actually Greedy Growth. It’s become a disaster, killing what we are so we can try to be like somewhere else.”

The Friend.

Cochran befriended Callaway, a now 53-year-old hairdresser, when he walked by one of Callaway’s Fourth of July parties in 2000. The two met before, when Callaway would stop and take pictures with Cochran. But on this night, Callaway brought down a trunk of Halloween

costumes, and all the party-goers dressed in boas and leopard-print caught Cochran’s eye.

“He saw us all on the porch looking like him, and I just thought to myself, ‘Well, this would be a fun guy to have at a party,’ so I invited him in,” Callaway said. “He told a bunch of raunchy jokes and made everyone laugh.”

As he was leaving, Callaway told him to stop by whenever he wanted.

“For the next several months, I would walk up on my front porch and see Leslie on the stoop or asleep in my hammock,” he said. “Leslie found me; I didn’t find Leslie.”

Callaway said Cochran’s friend group was an unlikely melding of people who would have never crossed paths if not for him.

“Nothing is the same about us except for Leslie,” Callaway said. “Lawyers, hairdressers, artists -- he found us through necessity and kept us for friendship.”

Russell said he’d call her when he needed legal help, Bob Baird when he needed money, Ruby Martin for haircuts, and Romness for paperwork.

“He had the connects,” she said.

Romness said she moved to Austin in 1982 and got involved in the city’s early club scene, where she struggled with addiction and housing insecurity. She befriended a group of unhoused people on the corner of Barton Springs and Lamar, and in 1990, she got sober and became an advocate for the unhoused. Romness said the city shut down the tent camp in 1996, the year Leslie came to Austin. Forty unhoused people lived there.

Romness said that in 2000, Cochran started to trust her. He got his hair cut at the Clip Joint, where Romness worked, and when he was in the hospital, he would call the salon to get a ride from her.

“He was either getting beat up or having seizures, but either way, he needed time to recover,” she said. “He trusted me, and I trusted him to come to my home.”

Cochran slept on the street, in backyards, behind businesses, and on friends’ couches during his time in Austin, bringing along his collection of discount Western movies. He said the values of ethics, honor and justice represented in Westerns matched his own values.

When he was to stay at Romness’ home, she said he had to let her know before he came over.

“He often let me know he was coming by waiting for me on my porch,” she said. “He had a cell phone, and he was supposed to call, but he would just sit on the porch.”

While he was oftentimes an unruly houseguest (sneaking food, forgetting to use the ashtray, rearranging furniture and breaking things in the name of fixing them), Romness said Cochran never had ill intentions.

“He wasn’t just an unhoused person I helped,” she said. “He was my friend. He let me be myself. For a single woman to break the marriage and family stereotype, I was subverting expectations like he was. I knew I could be happy in other situations, and he let me be.”

She said he was like a brother to her, that when he’d take his street outfit off to shower, he was just Leslie.

“All of his friends had this immense respect for him as a person,” she said. “We kept his dignity intact by listening to him and sharing with him and integrating him into our lives. If he was drinking, he’d tell me stories that went on for hours about Trapper Al or his childhood. I think he was processing later in his life, and I was safe to talk to.”

Callaway said Cochran was a “damn good listener,” a pack rat, a gift-giver, and a reliable friend.

“I think I took him for granted,” Callaway said. “I always thought he was going to be here.”

The Decline.

Callaway said Cochran’s health declined in tandem with his view of Austin. After the 2008 financial crisis and economic recession, Russell said tourists and Austinites stopped tipping Cochran.

Russell said Cochran started getting money from his mother, and that upset his siblings. Romness said that around this time, any time money was brought up to Cochran, he started having stress-related seizures, a byproduct of his earlier brain injury.

“He wasn’t weird anymore,” Callaway said. “He dropped the facade. It was hard, and I could see he was depressed. That’s why he was so jovial around people. But when we’d sit on the porch, I could see this sadness in his eyes.”

In 2009, Cochran’s mother died. His favorite actor, Patrick Swayze, died in September of that year. In October, Romness said Cochran had a seizure and was unconscious for two weeks.

Austinites got worried when they didn’t see their unofficial mas-

cot on the street for days, and Russell said people wanted accurate updates about Cochran’s health. That’s when she started Love for Leslie, a Facebook group to communicate with his supporters.

“When he woke up, I told him, ‘People think you’re dead,’” Romness said. “He laughed and said, ‘I know, I love it.’ He was a total drama queen.”

Russell held a press conference with Cochran when he got out of the hospital.

“The media wanted to talk to him, and we sat around a little table and talked,” she said. “He had them just charmed.”

Romness kept him at her house for five days, and he “flew the coop” on day five while she was at work.

“I’ve got a life to live,” Cochran told her.

Romness said Cochran evolved into a poor, lonely man. Clad in a t-shirt, jacket, and pants, he “stopped looking like Leslie and started looking like any other homeless man,” Romness said.

He was talking about leaving Austin for Colorado because it was changing, and he didn’t feel like he was welcome anymore.

“Austin doesn’t love me anymore,” he told Russell.

She said the hospital shaved his head, and he started losing his teeth, so she bought him a purple wig and a pink wig to make him “feel like Leslie.”

He got turned down for Social Security income, he blamed Romness for “filling out the forms wrong,” and he marched into the office and declared that he was struggling and needed help.

“He got his first check two weeks later,” Romness said. “I let him blame me. Money from the government

His friends and some media gathered at an Amtrak station on the day Cochran was supposed to board a train for Colorado. When he didn’t show up, Romness said she knew something was wrong. She had medical power of attorney for him at that point, and she knew she’d have to go through the hospitals to find him.

The first hospital she checked, Leslie was there -- on the fifth floor of St. David’s South Austin Medical, unconscious, with a bandage wrapped around his head. Doctors said he had a seizure in a bakery parking lot, and EMS picked him up after someone reported him unconscious.

Romness called his sister and let her know, and his friends had their final visits.

Romness said she visited him every day, sometimes twice a day. After several weeks, doctors did a brain test to see what capacity Cochran had, and the results were poor.

At the end of February 2012, she showed up to take him off of life support, and all of his friends were in his room. Cochran was awake. His friends asked him if he wanted to go.

“We’re gonna take everything off, and you don’t have to worry about this anymore,” Callaway said.

Callaway said Cochran opened his eyes, looked all the way around the room, and he gave the friends a thumbs up, and then closed his eyes. Russell said once his feeding tube was out, his friends held his hands and talked to him.

He didn’t even want water once his breathing tube was out, and Romness said she knew he was ready to go.

Cochran was moved to Hospice Austin’s Christopher House the next day, and Romness said she went to see him. She washed his face, plucked the dirt out of his eyebrows, and Cochran reached over and patted her leg. Romness said she was emotionally exhausted.

Russell said he inhabited the biggest room, big enough for his motley crew of friends to say goodbye. To ensure no unwanted visitors snuck in, the friends dubbed “leopard print” the secret password. The group held vigils and asked the public to sign posters for his room.

On the last day of Cochran’s life, Romness wore her black cowboy hat to the hospice.

“I told him to stay on the train,” she said. “I wanted him to hear my voice, to know that he didn’t have to come back to me. He just needed to stay on the train. He was in my dream that night, and I knew.”

When she woke up, she had a voicemail. Leslie Alice Cochran died on March 8, 2012, at 12:45 a.m.

Coincidentally, Russell had already lobbied Mayor Lee Leffingwell to declare March 8 Leslie Day in the City of Austin.

Russell said the funeral home gave Cochran the casket, the service and the burial plot for free.

“He’s buried in between priests and babies, and we know Leslie would think that was just fuckin’ hilarious,” she said.

During the end of his life and for seven years after, local director Fraizer worked with Martin, who’d videotaped Cochran, on a documentary about Cochran’s life called “Becoming Leslie,” a film Fraizer hoped would be a source of income for the struggling performer. It premiered in 2019 at SXSW.

As the executive director of Austin’s street association, Russell got a plaque installed in front of Cochran’s main haunt, the building of the old Black Cat bar. It stands to teach younger Austinites and tourists about the value of being an authentic person, no matter how weird or misunderstood one might be.

“Not having the money or means to be housed doesn’t stop me from living a full and fruitful life,” Leslie said. “I’m not homeless. Austin is my home.”



Drag Wars

The real ramifications of Senate Bill 12

BY CAROLINE SAVOIE

As Texas lawmakers scrambled to criminalize “the radical left’s disgusting drag performances” in the name of children’s safety this past session, the state’s rich history of queer performances watched, unappreciated, from a dusty corner of the State Capitol.



Photos from left to right: Dulce Strutts of Hamburger Mary’s, Sen. Roy West, Liquor Mini is show director at Hamburger Mary’s, Naomi Evans is a cast member at Hamburger Mary’s.

DRAG PHOTOS BY CAROLINE SAVOIE.

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick’s vitriol toward family-friendly drag performances continued as he celebrated the passage of Senate Bill 12 after its passage on May 28.

“It is shocking to me that any parent would allow their young child to be sexualized by drag shows,” Patrick said in a press release. “Children, who cannot make decisions on their own, must be protected from this scourge facing our state.”

James Love, aka Cassie Nova, is a drag veteran with more than 30 years experience who’s done drag queen story hours at the Dallas Public Library and Dallas Museum of Art. Love went to the state capitol in Austin in April to speak against SB12.

“It’s a direct attack on me and my community,” Love said. “From Mrs. Doubtfire to M*A*S*H, drag has been around forever. Now all of a sudden, drag is after your children? It doesn’t make sense.”

The “scourge” Patrick referenced is over 100 years old, with deep roots in the Lone Star State.

At the State Fair of Texas in 1890, “female impersonators” took the stage for an all-ages audience. The Dallas Morning News said that day at the fair was set aside for children, where schools brought their students, and teachers got in for free.

The state’s drag scene grew from exclusive to diverse and ballooned to the world’s stage in the last 133 years. But the nationally-recognized commu-

nity is facing attacks from Texas lawmakers and residents unlike its ever seen before.

Equality Texas spokesperson Jonathan Gooch said many of the battles were fought at the Capitol, with more than 140 anti-LGBTQ+ bills coming up for vote.

While Equality Texas tried to kill the bill in session, the much debated and often edited piece of legislation was set to go into effect on Sept. 1. That was until a federal judge in Texas ruled otherwise.

Legal challenges

On Aug. 3, a group of drag performers and human rights advocates filed a federal lawsuit to block the new law. They argued that the language is meant to target drag shows, and, due to the scope of behavior that falls under the law, could inadvertently criminalize some dance performances, including cheerleading.

On Sept. 26, a federal judge in the Southern District of Texas ruled the bill unconstitutional and issued a permanent injunction to block the legislation from becoming law. The ruling stops the Texas Attorney General and other government officials from enforcing any part of the ban.

“Today’s ruling blocks a law that threatens some of the most cherished First Amendment freedoms we all hold dear,” said Chloe Kempf, attor-



Opposition to the ban

Jenni said that while children aren’t the target audience of most drag performances, children can enjoy the shows as well. Moreover, Jenni said performers tailor their style to fit the audience.

Drag, like other forms of entertainment, exists on a spectrum from risqué to G-rated. Love said story hours and nightclub shows could not be more different. While both are comedic, they are targeted at different audiences. Cassie can crack a few PG jokes to keep the parents entertained, but she covers up the cleavage and trades showgirl garb for princess dresses.

“I think we can all agree that we don’t want sexual performances in front of children,” Love said. “There’s nothing sexual about just being in drag. When my audience is children and their parents, you’re gonna get a different show than you get in the Rose Room.”

Jenni said a young boy and his mother attended one of her all-ages shows because the child was obsessed with drag and makeup and wanted to be a makeup artist. Jenni brought him onstage and introduced him to the crowd. They spoke with Jenni after the show, and the queen mailed him a makeup kit to get him started.

“We’ve all seen a child in the audience and we’ve adjusted our performances and verbiage accordingly,” Jenni said. “Now, I don’t feel comfortable with children in the audience, because I don’t want to get accused of something.”

Jenni said for most of her career, she’s exclusively performed at 18+ shows. Jenni has been performing in Texas for 20 years, but in the last couple of years, she said she’s been harassed and threatened

ney with the ACLU of Texas. “SB 12 attempts to suppress drag artists and the LGBTQIA+ community, and its steep criminal and civil penalties would harm Black and Latinx transgender Texans the most.”

Judges blocked similar laws in Florida and Tennessee, where drag bans are now on hold.

In removing the term “drag” from the bill during debates, the legislature broadened the scope of what could be considered illegal.

The law banned real or simulated groping, real or simulated arousal, and the display of a sex toy if done in a “prurient” manner in front of a minor or on public property. It prohibits Texans from wearing accessories or prosthetics that “enhance” the female or male form in front of a minor or on public property.

“This is a very fluid bill,” said Jenni P, who’s been doing drag for over 30 years. “It’s easily maneuvered for them to hurt us anyway they want.”

The lawsuit said some TV shows, movies and internet activity would also fall under the guidelines, and “any type of wardrobe malfunction” could result in fines or jail.

“The Texas Drag Ban is stunningly broad in scope and will chill entire genres of free expression in our state,” said Brian Klosterboer, attorney at the ACLU of Texas. “This law flies in the face of the First Amendment. No performer should ever be thrown in jail because the government disfavors their speech.”

for her devotion to drag more than ever. "I've never been called so many names in my life on social media," Jenni said. "I've been threatened on social media and called a pedophile, a groomer. It's on a daily basis at this point."

The history of drag in Texas

Texas queens fear that lawmakers are trying to erase a history that they're not a part of, that they don't know about. It's a history that runs deep and colorful through the heart of Texas.

Drag thrived in the 1920s and '30s during Prohibition, with more straight people being drawn to underground clubs where queer artists performed. In the '30s, police raided a club in San Antonio and arrested seven performers, but officers couldn't find a crime to charge them with, so the performers were released.

The first gay club in Dallas opened in the 1950s, and despite its illegality in the state, drag continued to draw crowds at late-night theater shows and supper clubs through the '60s.

In 1972, the first record of two men getting a marriage license in Texas was between a female impersonator and his partner in Houston. When local officials realized the couple was male, the marriage was ruled invalid. In the 1970s and '80s, Texas' drag stage featured performers like Tasha Kohl and Hot Chocolate, who continue to perform today.

In the '80s, with the onset of the AIDS crisis, drag's focus shifted from entertainment to charity. Awestruck onlookers handed queens \$1 and \$5

bills to raise money for the cause, a tradition that prevails, at least in symbol, today.

In the '90s, drag kings and Black performers entered the spotlight. In 1996, the first Miss Gay USofA pageant made Texas its home, working in tandem with the Rose Room to solidify Dallas as one of the capitals of drag.

"We love what we do, and we love doing it here," Jenni said. "Our goal is to entertain, and I've been able to do that for 30 years. Now this whole 'grooming' thing has changed everything. It was like overnight, all of a sudden, we were being targeted. Every week, something new popped up that we were being blamed for."

Mike Hendrix, an Austin-based lobbyist, played an integral role in getting legislators to remove the word "drag" from SB12 in April. Hendrix often works with Texas Republicans on behalf of progressive constituents to undercut aggressively anti-LGBTQ+ legislation.

When Mike Nguyen, CEO of Caven Enterprises, noticed his efforts to get Dallas city officials involved in stopping SB12 were fruitless, he decided to hire Hendrix to represent LGBTQ+ interests in Austin. Caven, which owns TMC, S4 and The Rose Room, JR.'s Bar & Grill and Sue Ellen's, and HV Entertainment, two of the biggest drag companies in Texas, spent more than \$250,000 fighting the bill in Austin.

"I know how they think, and I know how to deliver a message to them," Hendrix said. "I talk to them about the 'spirit of the bill,' to see their point of view. The outcome is never what I want, but it's always better than what they were going to pass."

Hendrix explained that progressive Texans are

fighting a losing battle if their goal is to strike down any legislation targeting LGBTQ residents during session.

"People need to understand that Republicans have the votes to pass any of this anti-LGBTQ legislation they want," he said. "The bills are either going to be really bad or watered down, but they're going to pass. My job is to compromise, to take the teeth out of dangerous legislation."

He said groups who protest to kill the bill completely, like Equality Texas, give all their negotiating power away.

"Why fight a losing battle when you can negotiate a better outcome?" he asked.

Gooch, Equality Texas' spokesperson, said the group felt compelled to kill the bill because any form of the bill that passed would explicitly target the LGBTQ+ community.

"No matter what version of the bill comes out, the spirit of the bill will be reflected in the impact, in this chilling effect that's going to occur," Gooch said.

He said that most drag shows don't "appeal to the prurient interest of sex," but because most people don't dig into the bill, they're going to tamper down their behavior because they're worried about getting in trouble. Gooch said that's what lawmakers were hoping for.



"Drag inherently challenges gender expectations, and that can be threatening to people who have a more narrow approach to gender," Gooch said.

Kempf emphasized the bill's broad scope in a press release from the ACLU.

"As the court recognized, SB 12 is also vague, over-broad and chills entire genres of performances that are not obscene or inappropriate, from high school Shakespearean plays to the Nutcracker ballet to the Dallas Cowboys cheerleaders," she said.



LA OFRENDA

Mour Cocina | Bodega Día de los Muertos Celebration

It's that soulful time of the year again when we reminisce and celebrate together, in true Mour style!

Grab a seat this November 1st and 2nd, from 5 PM - 10 PM, and dive into the flavors of our exclusive "La Ofrenda" tasting menu - a blend of tradition with a modern zing that's bound to get you talking!

Entertainment by Ballet Folklórico de Austin and singer Alexandra Dorantes. Also, don't miss our Catrina and Ofrenda Altar photo ops.

Immerse yourself in the vivid and heartfelt Día de los Muertos tradition. We've got a cozy nook shaping up to celebrate the lives of the departed with a memory-rich ofrenda, a splash of color, and a sprinkle of memories. Feel the vibe, share a story, be a part of this tapestry of love and remembrance.

You're not just a customer, you're familia. So, pencil in the date. Hit that RSVP now via [OpenTable](#) or give us a call at (512)442 6687.

mour
COCINA | BODEGA

mourcafe.com



1414 Shore District Dr, Austin, TX 78741 | 512 442 6687 | Open every day 10am - 10pm.





BRIAN WILLIAM KIRCHNER



RIC NELSON



EVELYN RUDE



4th Street Gallery at Austin Studio Tour

A group of seven local artists are holding a showing at 3405 E. Fourth St. during the Big Medium's Austin Studio Tour. The show will be open to the public the weekends of Nov. 11-12 and Nov. 18-19 from 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Also, 4th Street Gallery is hosting two parties at the same address as the showing to open the event weekends. The parties are on Friday, Nov. 10 and Friday, Nov. 17 from 8 p.m. to 11 p.m. The showing will feature art by 4th Street Gallery's seven artists, live music, a tattoo booth, and refreshments.

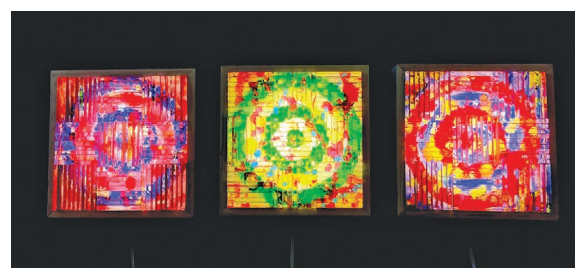
Also featured at the 4th Street Gallery show:

J. Michelle Galeck
instagram: jmichellegalek

Mathew Ross
instagram: mrrocksoul

Richard Rutner
Instagram: rutnerstudio

Cori Wilbanks
instagram: coriwilbanksmakes



Targets Red, Green, and Blue mixed media by Ric Nelson

Ric Nelson

Ric is a self-taught artist, exploring the use of multiple mediums and styles to narrate his story. The beginning of his artist journey began with music. As a self-taught guitarist, he wrote and performed musically for over 40 years. As he continued to explore his self-expression, he also turned towards the visual arts as another inspiring source. It was not as a replacement for his music, but as a way to visualize his thoughts and moods. It allowed him to express the acoustical influences that inspired him in the music like the nuances in musical scores and rhythmic patterns to a more in-depth visceral experience in the visual work.

Facebook/ Instagram: heyriconelson



'Outside the Goldfish Bowl' photo series by Evelyn Rude.

Evelyn Rude

Evelyn Rude is a queer AAPI Gen-Z creative based in Austin, Texas. Her focuses are photography, creative directing, and content creation for social media platforms. Her heritage as a Vietnamese American with Japanese culture from her adopted parents can be seen in her photos series and creative work such as K of Koi and Outside the Gold fishbowl. She uses her creativity as a voice for the AAPI and queer community telling her story through her work. She finds it important that her work has diversity and is able to express a story or a message for her clients, herself and the communities she is involved in.

Evelyn has been involved in working with Gen-Z creative agencies such as Adolescent Content, Fly on Wings Agency and personal freelancing. She has done event coverage for clients such as United Talent Agency, Workweek, and AskDiem for SXSW. Her work has been published in magazines such as Mob Journal, Selin Magazine, and Vigour. Outside of photography, Evelyn works with companies as a micro influencer and has been partnered with Mejuri and Outdoor Voices.

Facebook: evelyn.rude Instagram: evelyn_rude



Brian Kirchner and Money Map from 'The Grocery Bag Series'

Brian William Kirchner

Professional "fun-haver" floating up from a heavy past and painting all about it today. Brian Kirchner's art is like a journal, referencing dark and difficult past experiences which serve as learning tools for the present. Often you will see his life experiences painted with a bright and playful pallet meant to contrast the heavy subjects he explores. Currently he paints on paper bags to illustrate an impoverished time in Atlanta when he had to search the streets for loose change to feed him. When his search was unsuccessful, he turned the search into a game of finding things to uplift his spirits. These sources of inspiration served as sustenance for the day and now are seen throughout his artwork. As a gentle reminder, today he paints his past experiences of searching for something to eat on the very thing in which he carries groceries home. His art does not serve as a story of a dark past but a reminder to find levity to help persevere during difficult times.

Facebook: BWK.Art

You can order prints of Brian William Kirchner's art here



The Flavor & Fabric of Austin's South Shore: Mour Cocina | Bodega

WORDS BY JORGE VALDÉS & ERICKA TOLOSA

Hey there, Austin! If you're scouting for the coolest haunt in the South Shore, look no further than Mour Cocina | Bodega. Forget "restaurant"—this is a place where each bottle of vino is like your most interesting friend, every plate is Insta-worthy, and you're not just a customer—you're family!

Now, let's talk about the dynamic duo running the show: GM Félix Jiménez and owner Naju Maredia. These legends took a humble corner store and flipped the script. The minute you walk in, you're not just in a place; you're in a whole mood. Imagine a place where wine flows like your group chat and the food feels like a big, warm hug from your grandma.

For all you wine lovers—prepare for your socks to be knocked off. Félix isn't just curating orange wines. Nope, they're also offering a collection of biodynamic, organic, and sustainable options. It's not just about grabbing a bite; it's about making memories that stick around longer than your latest TikTok dance.

Let's get into the nitty-gritty: the food! Félix Jiménez and Chef José Alvarez are like the Lennon and McCartney of Austin cuisine. They're taking you on a mouthwatering road trip through Mexico without ever leaving your seat. Tlayudas and Huevos Rancheros? Think of it as a passport to the flavors of Veracruz and the hustle-bustle of Mexico City, but with a modern twist, because, hey, they're cool like that.

And let's not forget, Mour isn't just a spot; it's a vibe. When that 2021 Texas Freeze hit, this place turned into a warm sanctuary. Free food, hot drinks—they didn't just serve meals; they served comfort. Forget about just filling bellies, they were all about warming hearts.

Seriously, the place transformed from your fave brunch spot into a legit beacon of hope when the snow came down.

But don't get it twisted—Mour is more than just a trendy hide-away or a stormy-weather savior. It's a story in resilience, like Austin's own spirit animal. Whether you're raising a glass or forking into your plate, you're toasting to togetherness and feasting in the name of community.

So, next time you find yourself cruising around the South Shore, make a pit stop at Mour Cocina | Bodega. Here, you're not just another face in the crowd; you're part of Austin's most vibing culinary adventure.

Cheers to great food, epic wine, and most importantly, each other!

Chef José Alvarez and GM Félix Jiménez



MOUR COCINA | BODEGA





Visit UNLEASHED's website here.

Purchase To Find a Killer on Amazon



Purchase 7 Principles for Living Bravely



LGBTQ+ Movies To Watch This Year

The following movies were screened at Unleashed LGBTQ 2023 in September. All descriptions credited to the conference founder Wesley Smoot.



The Mattachine Family

While Thomas and Oscar are very much in love, after their first foster child returns to his birth mother, they find that they have different ideas about what making a family actually means.

Director: Andy Vallentine
Runtime: 1 hour 39 minutes



Tina Town

Three young gay men who are best friends, two of them married to each other, find the memories of their individual childhood traumas so painful they turn to crystal meth, "Tina", their "pain-killer." After years of using they all descend to a world that might be imaginary or real called Tina Town where residents are met immediately with two choices: stop using the drug which would allow for possible escape and a chance to continue living or use and face the wrath of the town's unofficial leader, Mr. Jones, who, upon catching a young resident, rapes and kills them. Two of the characters, Sammy and Andy who are married to

each other, must mourn the loss of their friend, Ashtyn, who was recently captured. Sammy and Andy are left and faced with the two choices which they find almost impossible to make. Tina Town explores crystal meth addiction, trauma, the horrors of the passage of time but at heart the film is a love story of two gay men and the lengths they will go to save each other thereby saving themselves.

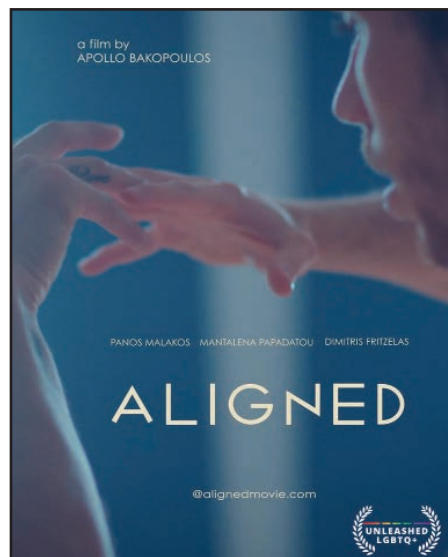
Director: Michael Hyman
Runtime: 1 hour 32 minutes 46 seconds



The Beat Goes On

In this documentary special, KHOU 11 examines the origin and history of the Pride Houston Parade. The program also highlights the personal stories of the grand marshals of the 2022 parade.

Director: Dale Lockett
Runtime: 47 minutes 35 seconds



Aligned

Aligned is an intimate exploration of self-discovery, love, desire and pain. Set against a backdrop of beautiful music, dance and photography.

Two male dancers with shared cultural heritage, though worlds apart, find a deep unexpected connection. This intimate tale reveals the beauty that lies within us all and the transformative power of self-love.

Director: Apollo Bakopoulos



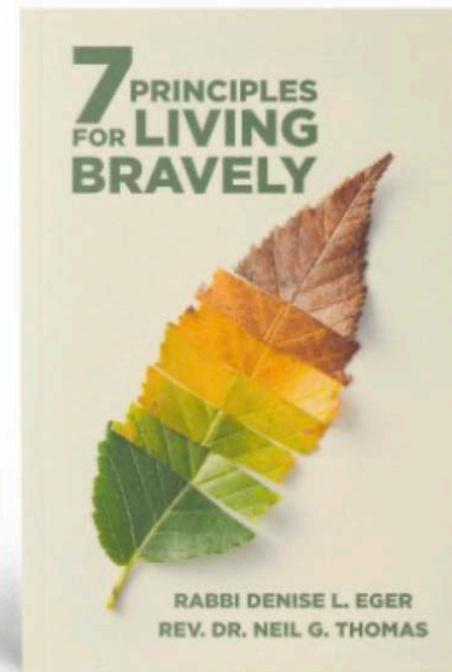
Intentionally Erased

Intentionally Erased is a new documentary from A Call to Men aiming to do just that by spotlighting four Black trans women in conversation with Black cisgender men. What follows is a series of honest, heart-wrenching interactions that uplift the experiences, challenges, and humanity of Black trans women in the United States. The film had its world premiere on Monday, September 26th, at the Out On Film festival in Atlanta, GA.

Intentionally Erased was co-written, directed, and produced by A Call to Men's Chief Communications Officer Kimya Motley – an educator and activist working to end violence against all women and girls. Inspired by the work of Tony Porter and A Call to Men (in addition to her own experiences as a survivor of gun violence and domestic abuse), Kimya directed, co-wrote, and co-produced this absorbing documentary to identify and deconstruct the biases against Black trans women.

"I made this film to foster a greater understanding of the experiences of Black trans women, to uplift the humanity of Black trans women, to expand awareness about the violence levied against Black trans women, and, ultimately, to reduce that violence in any way possible," Motley said. "Each and every one of us need to be invested in centering and supporting those folks living at the most extreme margins of society."

A Film by: A Call to Men
Runtime: 47 minutes 35 seconds



\$19.95 paperback,
\$9.99 e-book

SEVEN PRINCIPLES FOR LIVING BRAVELY

DENISE L. EGER AND REV. DR. NEIL G. THOMAS

A minister and a rabbi offer spiritual advice on how to live authentically in a post-pandemic world.

After their congregations experienced similar crises during the Covid-19 pandemic, rabbi Eger and United Church of Christ minister Thomas decided to join forces to learn from each other's faith traditions and spread seven basic disciplines that can apply to a wide range of people who believe in God. "A Time To Mourn" tackles the group trauma of millions of Covid-19 deaths and emphasizes the importance of rituals. "A Time for Truth" tackles the importance of thinking for oneself, lamenting that those who speak the truth are lately "drowned out by the voices of those who appear to be vested in

manifesting myths that cause confusion and division." "A Time for Rest" defines downtime as a spiritual practice that's supported by both science and "ancient wisdom"; "A Time for Love" examines its transformative nature, emphasizing that Jesus' ministry was "one of radical inclusion, dismantling the systems of inequality that existed then so that we have the tools to do the same today." The title activity in "A Time for Prayer" is discussed as an opportunity to reflect and do better, while "A Time for Joy" is characterized as the foundation for life's happiness and meaning. Lastly, "A Time for Hope" suggests concrete ways in which to keep it alive, including faith in God's eternal love. Although the Covid-19 pandemic is a major



driver of this work (with masking and social distancing explicitly discussed), the authors also support their points with other relevant topics, such as the AIDS crisis and ongoing discrimination against people of color and the LGBTQ+ community. The guidelines are written with passion and patience, with numerous Bible passages, although Eger and Thomas also draw on elements from other spiritual practices, such as Buddhism, as well as scientific studies of physical and mental health. The result is a well-rounded, earnest look at religion through the lens of a post-pandemic society that many may find inspiring.

Spiritual guidelines for religious readers that effectively emphasize love and acceptance.

To Find a Killer: The Homophobic Murders of Norma and Maria Hurtado and the LGBT Rights Movement

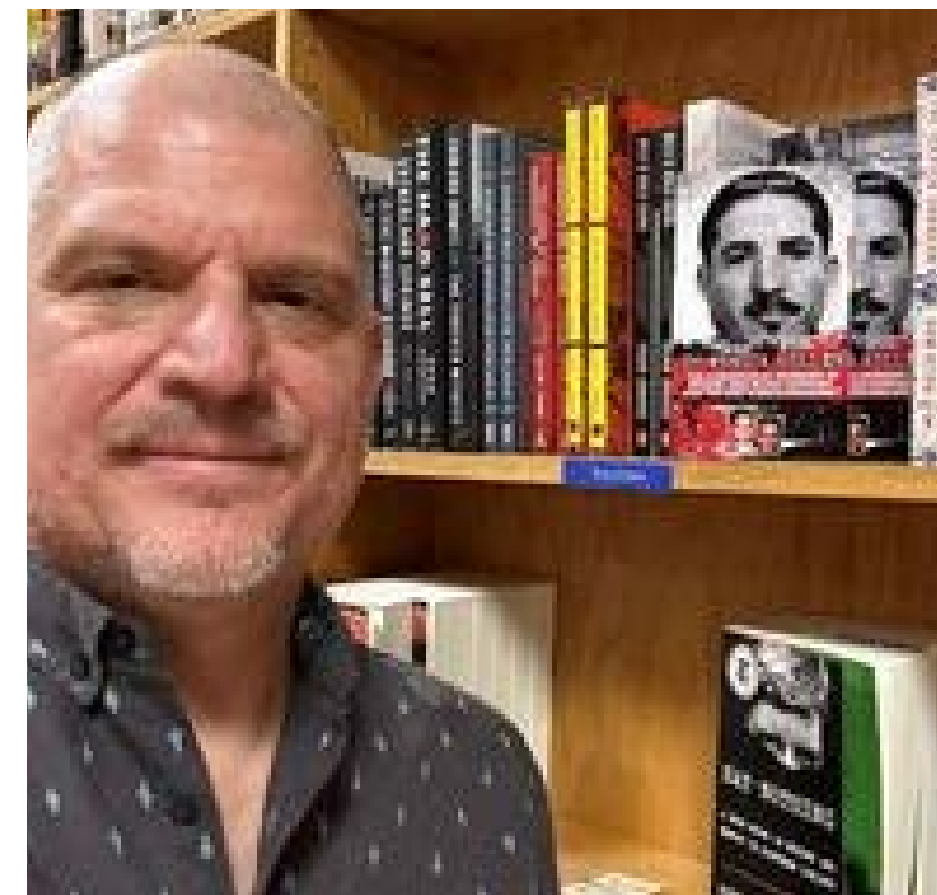
REVIEW BY ZACH RODRIGUEZ

Doug Greco's To Find a Killer: The Homophobic Murders of Norma and Maria Hurtado and the LGBT Rights Movement is a captivating recount of the heart-rending South-east Austin murders of Norma Hurtado and her mother Maria, deeply analyzed through the intersectional lenses of Norma—a working-class, young, lesbian Latina—and presented in local, national, and worldwide political contexts.

Greco skillfully connects these dots through the broader histories of the global human rights movement, the modern American LGBTQ+ rights movement, the Civil Rights movement, and the Hurtados' place in history, threading them together with his own personal narrative and analysis as a seasoned organizer and leader.

Throughout the book, Greco emphasizes the power and need of collectives, institutions, and advocacy groups including religious organizations to collaborate not just within their communities but to champion one another across marginalized communities. In this way, Greco thoughtfully memorializes Norma and Maria Hurtado while inspiring action for advancement of rights in a post-marriage-equality environment where state politicians are trying once more to otherize us as LGBTQ+ people and criminalize our existence.

To Find a Killer encourages readers to think beyond their own community for social change and shows us how we can build a more equitable future.





high heels

APD arrested Leslie Cochran 81 times between 1996 and 2012 on misdemeanors ranging from public camping to urinating outside. They towed and ticketed the trailer he pulled behind his tricycle. Debbie Russell, Cochran's close friend, said he wasn't shy when it came to his attitude toward ADP. This article appeared in *The Challenger* in 2011, a newspaper for unhoused folks Valerie Romness started that year.

LESLIE'S CORNER

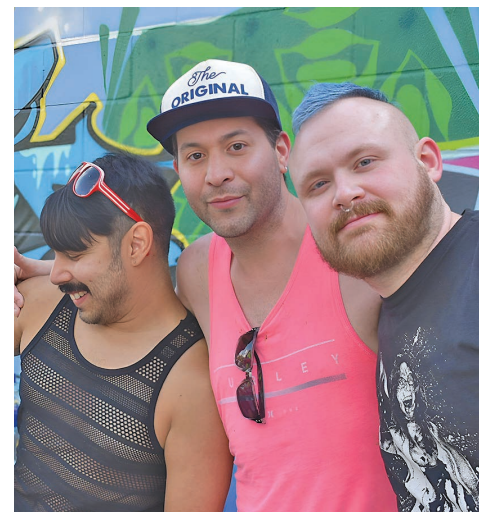
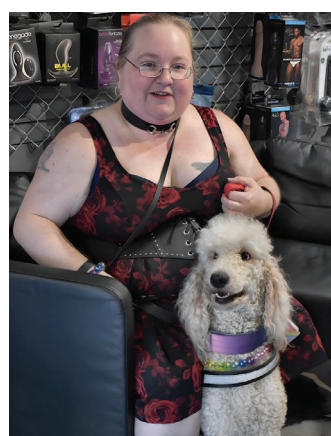
BY VALERIE ROMNESS, THE CHALLENGER, APRIL 2011

I asked Leslie how the police are treating homeless people. "Like the Germans treated the Jews," he said. "The police don't call 'em homeless people anymore. They call 'em 'transients,' because picking on the homeless is not politically correct." He went on to say, "I've been a resident of Austin for 15 to 16 years. I ran for mayor and they still call me 'transient.'" "The trouble is: They don't want to go after the bad guys when it's safer to go after sleeping homeless people," Cochran said.



Package Store Opening Weekend Party on 1st. Street.

PHOTOS BY ARYEL MUSE



RUTZ NUTZ MONTHLY LEVITY FROM ARTIST, CHRIS RUTZ

LESLIE LAUNCH PARTY
 Nov. 15 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.

Party Five Leslie.

Join our staff to support and celebrate the launch of Leslie, a queer magazine to share the history, progress and goings-on of Austin's LGBTQ+ community. Food and drinks provided.

mo-wr
 MODERN URBAN

1414 Shore District Dr. Building 3 Suite 120, Austin, TX 78741

THE BIGGEST STREET PARTY IN TEXAS

HALLOWEEN BLOCK PARTY

SATURDAY
OCTOBER 28

IT'S TIME FOR VOODOO VENGEANCE

The Party is **FREE!!!**



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Reservations on **yelp**
or call 214-377-7446.
Walk-ins welcome!

HAMBURGER **Mary's** DALLAS

18+  

WED **GAYME NIGHT** *Maryoke*

THU **MGT** *Mary's Got Talent*

FRI *feel the Fantasy*

SAT **DAL-YASS!** DIVA BRUNCH **STARS on the STRIP**

SUN **COMMUNION** DIVA BRUNCH *Charity* **BINGO**

PLUS, WEEKLY FOOD & DRINK SPECIALS!
Follow our socials for full details on all Mary's Events!

4123 Cedar Springs Road • Dallas • hamburgermarys.com/dallas

What World Leslie

LGBTQ+ EVENTS, BARS AND PARTIES AROUND AUSTIN

IRON BEAR

301 W. Sixth St., Austin, TX 78701
Sundays: Drag Brunch from 1:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.
 Planet Fabulous Karaoke 9 p.m.
Sunday Funday: 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Monday: Musical Mondays at 10 p.m.
 Happy Hour All Night
Thursday: Unbearable first Thursday, every other week
Friday: Country Night every first Friday of the month 9 p.m. to close
Saturday: Underwear Night every other week 9 p.m. to close.

RAIN ON 4TH

217 W. Fourth St., Austin, TX 78701
Sunday: Sunday Funday 5 p.m. to 7 p.m.
Thursday: Vegas Backyard Bingo 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Friday: Come Dance the Night Away
Saturday: Body Beautiful hosted by Rachel Mykels at 10 p.m.

SECOND SUNDAY IN AUSTIN

Join Marty Bender and a group of Texas Friends who get together on every second Sunday of every month brunch and drinks. They meet at 3 p.m. for a few hours of fellowship. Contact Marty Bender or the group at Second Sunday in Austin on Facebook.

OILCAN HARRY'S

211 W. Fourth St., Austin, TX 78701
Sunday afternoon: Join us every Sunday starting at 4 p.m. for TDRL: Total Drag Request Live hosted by Celia Light & guests. It's say-what-you-want Sundays, a drag show where the audience gets to choose what goes down! Buy a drink, request a song – it's that easy! DeeGee Rey and Celia Light are ready to entertain and make sure that your Sunday Funday is the best!
Sunday night: Welcome to THE DRAG IS RIGHT – a weekly show full of jokes, hijinks, and drag-ified versions of your favorite game show games, hosted by Sir Maxim and Iggy Bank. And at this show, YOU are the contestants! Tune in on Sundays at 6 p.m. to end your weekend right!
Thursday: Thursdays are a RIOT with host Riot Girl and cast Venus Rising & Titty Androgynous!
 Join them every Thursday night starting at 8 p.m. for RIOT FAIR – a drag spectacular that will bring down the house! Join us every Thursday at midnight for Spank Bank, Austin's hottest all-trans, sex-positive drag show hosted by the tantalizing Iggy Bank at Oilcan Harry's! Embrace the celebration of trans joy and self-expression as we delve into the world of sex and kink, all with style and grace. Featuring the incredible talents of Ryan and Jenna Talia, this is a night you won't want to miss. Mark your calendars, tell your friends and your friends with benefits, and let's make Thursday nights unforgettable!
Friday: Host Celia Light along with Salem Ofax & Harlot are putting the YAY in FriYAY! Join them every Friday night starting at 10:30 p.m. for Whipped – the definition of sexy, sickening and stupid!

Saturdays: Got a Late Night appetite for Drag? We've got a midnight snack just for you. If you're ready to drink, dance & sing your face off to some of your favorite songs, then Oilcan Harry's is the place to be! Ritzy Bitz and company stun, dazzle, delight & surprise with The Late, Late, Late Show!

AUSTIN EAGLE

8201 Cross Park Dr. Suite B2, Austin, TX 78754
Tuesdays: Two Steppin' Taco Tuesdays – 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
 Country night – Free dance lessons with Jay Lykel and James Heath 8 p.m. to close
Wednesdays: Steak Night 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.
 Karaoke – 9 p.m. to close
 Kennel Karaoke – Every third Wednesday from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Fridays: Sports Gear Night, first Friday from 9:30 p.m. to 2 a.m.
 Leather and Fetish, second Friday
 Underwear Night, last Friday
 Onyx Pearls Bar Night, 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Saturdays: Austin Gears Gear Night, every first Saturday from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
 Dirty Divas, every second Saturday
 The Foundry Gear Night, third Saturdays from 10 p.m. to 2 a.m.
 Otter Space with DJ Mark Irwin, every fourth Saturday from 10:30 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Sundays: weekly brunch
 Special Events:
Oct. 27: Slut Super Heroes vs Slut Villains from 9:45 p.m. to 2 a.m.
Oct. 28: Halloween Party from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m.
HALCYON COFFEE SHOP
 218 W. Fourth St., Austin, TX 78701
 Happiest Hours: Monday through Friday 4 p.m. – 8 p.m., all day Sunday

\$2.5 Wells and Domestics
 Reverse Happy Hour: Monday 12 a.m. – Close
Tuesdays: World Music
Thursdays: Live Music At 6 p.m.
Saturdays: Drag Brunch

PACKAGE MENSWEAR

2008 S. First St., Austin, TX 78704
 Final Friday: Fetish Fashion Party Oct. 27

LESLIE LAUNCH PARTY

Mour Cocina | Bodega
 1414 Shore District Dr. Building 3 Suite 120, Austin, TX 78741
 Nov. 15 from 7 p.m. to 9 p.m.
 Join our staff to support and celebrate the launch of Leslie, a queer magazine to share the history, progress and goings-on of Austin's LGBTQ+ community. Food and drinks provided.

HIGHLAND LOUNGE

404 Colorado St., Austin, TX 78701
Fridays: Re-tucked Drag Show from 11 p.m. to 3:30 a.m.
Saturdays: Dance Party with DJ Eman Domi from 9:30 p.m. to 3:30 a.m.
Oct. 28: Yaaas Witch! Halloween Bash ft. Lag-anja Estranga
Oct. 29: Uncanny Attractions Presents: Drags and Dropkicks, doors open at 5 p.m.

AUSTIN STUDIO TOURS: 4TH STREET GALLERY OPENING PARTIES

4th Street Gallery 3405 E. Fourth St.
Nov. 10th and 17th from 8 to 11 p.m.
 Join 7 local artist for live music adult beverages and art for thier Austin Studio Tours opening parties. 21+ and \$15 tickets online and \$20 at the door.