Dead man talking

Ms. Hughes was accorded the respect that her proximity to the Oval Office warrants, but it was Kinky who filled the room with gravitas when he stepped out of character and into the biggest brier patch in Texas — the death penalty. He asked everyone to go to his Web site, Kinkyfriedman.com, and read his column "Case Open" about death row inmate Max Soffar.

Kinky's friend and frequent character in his novels, private investigator Steve Rambam, is working for Max pro bono. He tells Kinky, “I’m not anti-death penalty; I’m just anti-the-wrong-guy-getting-executed.”

Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Harold R. DeMoss, after serving on Max's last appeals panel, wrote in his dissent, "I have laid awake nights agonizing over the enigmas, contradictions and ambiguities which are inherent in this record. However, my colleagues ... have shut their eyes to the big picture and have persuaded themselves that piecemeal justice is sufficient in this case ... I am glad I will not be standing in their shoes, if and when Soffar is executed."

One read of "Case Open" illustrates why Texas’ death penalty process is a lot like making sausage — it’s not something most people want to see up close.

Deep Ellum farewell

Saturday night in Deep Ellum, Sambuca founder Kim Forsythe and friends said goodbye to the Elm Street jazz club where his company started. The occasion was the closing party of the original location. Next week, Kim and his sister, Holly Forsythe, will open a Sambuca (the sixth) in the former Salve spot at McKinney Avenue and Pearl Street.

Among the Saturday night revelers was the imposing Calvin Lane who parlayed his job as doorman at Sambuca into a career as a celebrity appearing in movies and commercials and at trade shows. At 440 pounds, 7-foot-6, and with a 25 EEE shoe size, Calvin casts a big shadow.