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BAY WINDOWS

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10 Myths About LGBTQ Families

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

Misconceptions and misinformation about LGBTQ families can perpetuate stereotypes and lead to actions and policies that harm our children. Let's therefore debunk 10 long-running myths and offer some useful facts for countering them.

Myth: LGBTQ parents are a new phenomenon. Fact: We first hear of out LGBTQ parents in the 1940s, mostly in the context of cases that denied them child custody after divorce from different-sex, cisgender spouses. By 1956, the lesbian civil rights group Daughters of Bilitis held discussion groups on lesbian parenthood. And queer parents in the broadest sense go even further back, arguably to the Greek poet Sappho (c. 600 BCE), who may have had a daughter.

Myth: Having LGBTQ parents negatively impacts children. Fact: Cornell University's What We Know project analyzed 79 scholarly studies from 1980 to 2017 about children with gay or lesbian parents. Of those, 75 concluded that they fare no worse than other children. In the four other studies, most of the children were actually raised by different-sex parents, one or both of whom later came out. Their families therefore had "added stress and often disruption or family breakup," and it was that, not having gay parents in itself, that led to more negative outcomes, says the Cornell team.

In addition, a 2023 meta-analysis of 16 previous studies, published in BMJ Global Health, found that overall, children with LGBTQ parents have similar outcomes to those with heterosexual parents, and may even have better ones in some areas, such as psychological adjustment and par-

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 5*

Stealing peace in the belly of the beast

Seasons change, connections abide

by Richard J. Rosendall | rrosendall@starpower.net
contributing writer

Urban environments contain countless noises that would disrupt our inner lives if we did not filter them out: the beeping of a delivery truck backing up; the siren of an emergency vehicle; impatient drivers blasting their horns as if surprised to encounter traffic while driving downtown.

I find detachment in various ways, from turning my phone ringer off, to listening to music, to sitting on my roof deck gazing at the moon. Often when I am there with a glass of wine in the evening, cheers rise up from a nearby soccer field.

At home in the city, we still need moments of solitude. Some afternoons I spend in a garden owned by the nonprofit Resources for the Future on a quiet street across from First Baptist Church. In the mornings I like to sit in the park at Dupont Circle. These green spaces provide respite from the 24/7 news updates on the latest volleys in the GOP's politics of rage.

Autumn is in the air as I walk to the Circle with my morning coffee. Even here there are reminders of the world's tumult: to the north, across the lanes of traffic, stands the Dupont Circle Hotel, where former Putin media czar Mikhail Lesin was found bludgeoned to death in November 2015.

Luckily I have never been bludgeoned, but I was threatened in 2009 after writing a column titled "Pro-Gay,

see **ROSENDALL,** *page 4*

NEWS FROM... THE CITY OF BOSTON

New Gender-Aware Guidelines And Standards For City Of Boston Services

These guidelines serve to support the implementation of the Gender Inclusion Ordinance and components of the Chosen Name Amendment.

Submitted by
The City of Boston

The City of Boston will no longer use gender markers on marriage certificates issued by the city and is implementing new guidelines and standards for city departments.

Developed in partnership with members of the LGBTQ+ and gender diverse communities in Boston, these guidelines and standards are the first version of how we expect City employees to engage with people when it comes to gender identity. These guidelines will evolve over time as we figure out how to apply them throughout City services and get direct feedback from the people we serve. We greatly appreciate any thoughts, questions, or feedback you'd like to share at TechGovernance@boston.gov.

When we design and run programs and services, we create an experience for constituents that can benefit them. In fact, our main objective is to achieve an outcome that benefits our constituents. These experiences consist of processes that are carried out in physical and digital spaces. We create data whenever we capture information, in either digital or physical forms. The design of a service and the data collection matters: How and what we ask might change how the process works in later steps. We designed this document as a set of stan-

see **GENDER-AWARE,** *page 7*

A Ugandan man is charged with aggravated homosexuality and could face the death penalty

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) — Ugandan authorities have charged a man with aggravated homosexuality, which carries a possible death penalty, in the first use of the charge since the enactment in May of an anti-gay law that has been condemned by critics as draconian.

The law has widespread support in Uganda but has drawn pressure from abroad on Ugandan officials to repeal the measure. The World Bank earlier this month announced a decision not to consider new loans to Uganda because of the law, drawing an angry response from President Yoweri Museveni.

The suspect is identified as a 20-year-old "peasant" in the eastern district of Soroti who was charged on Aug. 18 with having unlawful sexual intercourse with a 41-year-old man, according to the charging document issued by police in the Soroti Central Division.

Aggravated homosexuality is defined as cases of same-sex sexual relations involving a minor and other categories of vulnerable people, or when the perpetrator is infected with HIV. The charging document does not clarify the aggravating factor in the case, or

see **UGANDA,** *page 4*

BACK TO SCHOOL

A Warning to All of Us

By by Mark Segal,
Courtesy Philadelphia Gay News

Campus Pride has served students and higher education for more than 20 years. According to its website, "Campus Pride represents the leading national nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization for student leaders and campus groups working to create a safer college environment for LGBTQ students." Each year since 2007, the organization conducts the Campus Pride Index, which gives prospective college students insight into LGBTQ+-friendly campuses.

This year, there is one major change we should all take note of. Due to the unhealthy atmosphere in Florida and Texas, Campus Pride removed colleges and universities that were previously listed as LGBTQ+-friendly in the past. These include the University of North Florida, the University of Central Florida, the University of Texas at Dallas and Texas Tech University. In a statement, Campus Pride noted that "The inevitable — and intended — consequence of these laws will be to eliminate the types of LGBTQ-friendly policies, programs and practices that we ask about and evaluate on the Campus Pride Index."

The statement continued: "Many campuses in Florida and Texas have previously demonstrated a commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion — in some cases, these colleges have had a long-

see **SCHOOL,** *page 4*

"Mmmkay! And I'm 110lbs and a virgin! I'm not a scale or a doctor but I have spent some time beneath 215lb men and Tiny was not one of them."

— Stormy Daniels' Tweet about the alleged weight of the former president.

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

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Things to know about the latest court and policy action on transgender issues

By Geoff MulvIhill
Associated Press

On Friday, Texas became the most populous state with a ban in effect against gender-affirming care for minors.

The law was allowed to kick in after a court ruling on Thursday, part of a flurry of action across the country on policies aimed at transgender people and their rights. A separate Texas ruling blocked a law that drag show performers feared would shut them down.

Here's a look at the latest developments and what's next.

Texas gender-affirming care ban takes effect

In its ruling Thursday, the Texas Supreme Court allowed a law banning gender-affirming care including puberty blockers, hormones and surgery for minors.

The ruling is not final, but allows enforcement of the law while courts determine whether it's constitutional. The decision is also a reversal of a lower court from the week before, when a state judge had said the law should be put on hold while it's sorted out.

Since 2021, 22 Republican-controlled states have passed laws restricting access to gender-affirming care for minors. At least 13 states, meanwhile, have adopted measures intended to protect access.

Several of the bans are so new that they haven't taken effect yet. Missouri's kicked in earlier this week. Enforcement of the laws in Arkansas, Georgia and Indiana are currently on hold.

There are legal challenges to the policies across the country, and there isn't a clear pattern for how courts handle them. None have reached a final court decision.

Courts in three states hold hearings on care restrictions

Two court hearings on the matter Friday did not immediately change the status quo in three states but showed how thorny the legal issues can be.

In Florida, a judge declined to take steps to immediately ease access to gender- affirming treatment for children or adults. Both age groups were affected by a ban which, unlike other states, also has a provision that restricts access to care for adults. The ban on treatment was signed into law in May by Republican Gov. Ron DeSantis.

District Judge Robert Hinkle said that he would consider changes for adult plaintiffs if he sees medical evidence on how going without treatments could be harmful.

He has a trial scheduled for February on the constitutionality of the Florida law.

But he noted that with similar cases moving through courts across the country, whatever he decides won't be the final word.

Also Friday, a three-judge panel from the Cincinnati-based 6th U.S. Circuit Court heard arguments on whether states can ban puberty blockers and hormones for transgender minors in both Kentucky and Tennessee, as lawsuits challenging the statutes makes their way through the courts. The appellate judges did not make a ruling but noted that a key factor would be determining which side was being more compassionate.

Alaska moves to restrict sports participation for transgender girls

The Alaska state board of education on Thursday voted in favor of a policy that would keep transgender girls out of girls sports competitions.

The board's action is a major step, but not the final one for the policy.

It's up to Alaska Attorney General Treg Taylor to decide whether to implement it. The attorney general, like the school board, was appointed by Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy, who has called for such a ban.

At least 24 states have adopted laws restricting sports participation, including four where courts have put enforcement on hold.

Kansas no longer has to change birth certificates

A federal judge ruled Thursday that Kansas officials no longer have to change transgender people's birth certificates to match their gender identities.

The ruling undoes a 2019 federal consent agreement that required the state to make the changes when asked. The reason for the change is a new state law that defines male and female as the sex assigned at birth.

The ruling puts Kansas among a small group of states, including Montana, Oklahoma and Tennessee, that bar such birth certificate changes. Under a separate legal filing from Kansas Secretary of State Kris Kobach in July, the state is among a few that do not allow people to change the sex on their driver's licenses.

Texas law that drag performers feared is put on hold

Not all the latest developments are losses for transgender people.

A federal judge on Thursday temporarily blocked a new Texas law that drag show artists feared would be used to shut them down or put them in jail.

The law, which expands the definition of what's considered an illegal public performance of sexual conduct in front of children, was scheduled to take effect on Friday.

But a group of LGBTQ+ rights advocate and drag performers sued to block it. U.S. District Judge David Hittner agreed with their contention that it likely violates the First Amendment and paused enforcement while he prepares a more permanent order in the case.

Judges have also blocked enforcement of bans on drag performances in Florida and Tennessee.

This week, advocates filed a lawsuit in Tennessee trying to stop a local prosecutor who said he intends to enforce the law there despite the federal court ruling. On Friday, a federal judge ruled that law enforcement officials cannot use the limits to interfere with a local Pride festival in Blount County this weekend.

Canada responds with a travel advisory

Canada this week updated its travel advisory to the U.S., alerting members of the LGBTQ+ community that some states have enacted laws that

see **TRANSGENDER,** *page 4*

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guestopinion

Fly the Rainbow Flag in Honor of Laura Ann Carlton, an LGBTQ ally

Charles Beal, President
Gilbert Baker Foundation

The Gilbert Baker Foundation mourns the August 18 murder of Laura Ann Carleton, a gift shop owner in Cedar Glen, CA. A longtime LGBRQ+ ally, Lauri was shot dead by a man who complained about the Pride Flag displayed at her store. Carleton leaves behind a husband and nine children.

The world has reacted with anger to this shocking hate crime. But people should not be surprised. This is the inevitable conclusion of mounting Republican Party and conservative attacks on the LGBTQ+ community. They label us as groomers, they lie that we are recruiting children. They ban our books, halt trans care, censor our school curricula. And all this hatred creates more hatred. Now it has led to the brutal and senseless murder of a straight woman whose only crime was to support her LGBTQ+ friends by flying a Pride Flag.

The blood of Lauri Carleton is on the hands of every conservative politician who makes verbal and legislative attacks on the LGBTQ+ community. Make no mistake; this horrendous crime is no isolated incident. Across the country the Rainbow Flag has been banned in forty cities. Right-wing legislators have also tried to ban the flag nationally – over 30 members of the U.S. House of Representatives voted for such a proposal earlier this year. This wave of censorship and anti-LGBTQ+ sentiment has created a climate ripe for hate crimes, and now a brutal murder in Cedar Glen.

The Gilbert Baker Foundation unequivocally condemns the rhetoric of hatred promoted by conservative and homophobic politicians. Words have consequences. Words of hate have even greater consequences. In memory of Lauri Carleton, the foundation asks every American to display a Rainbow Flag – at their homes, at their businesses – to let the haters across America.

The mission of the The Gilbert Baker Foundation is:

To protect and extend the legacy of Gilbert Baker, the creator of the LGBTQ Rainbow Flag, as an activist, artist and educator.

To record and promote the history of the creation of the Rainbow Flag and its impact on the world.

To educate future generations about the LGBTQ Rainbow Flag.

To support and empower our mission on a collaborative level between the Foundation and allies, including the LGBTQ community and artists, organizations, educational institutions, non-profits, museums, archives and the press.

Transgender

Continued from page 3

could affect them.

The advisory doesn't single out states and it doesn't go as far as telling Canadians not to travel to the neighboring nation. Instead, it tells them to check local laws.

Non-government groups have issued similar warnings. In June, the Human Rights Campaign, the largest U.S.-based group devoted to LGBTQ+ rights, declared a state of emergency for community members in the U.S.

And in May, the NAACP issued a travel advisory about Florida citing policies and laws including bans on gender-affirming care for minors, requirements that transgender people use school bathrooms that don't match their gender, and restrictions on drag performances although those were later put on hold.

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Rosendall

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Pro-Choice" in response to the murder of Dr. George Tiller in his church in Wichita by an anti-abortion fanatic. The man threatening me by email called me an abortionist and said, "The only good abortionist is a dead abortionist." I contacted the FBI. He was later convicted of making threats against James Zogby of the Arab American Institute.

On the evening after Dr. Tiller was killed, a candlelight vigil was held beside the Dupont Circle fountain. Mourning is part of what binds us.

Most people making violent threats are just venting, but some few will act on them. The leading Republican presidential candidate for 2024 has a penchant for inciting violence.

As I sit in the park, a squirrel climbs up my leg looking for a handout, then scampers off. A few minutes later, a tiny spider crawls on my knee; I gently blow it onto the grass. Some spiders migrate by clinging to gossamer carried on air currents.

I wonder what it would be like to live that way and not be tied down by belongings. I know several LGBTQ refugees in Nairobi who have next to nothing; but they had to flee for their lives, mostly from Uganda. I send a photo of the park bathed in the morning light to a few of them. Some have been resettled, but many are still waiting. It is humbling to think that despite cruelty and hate running rampant here, so many are still eager to come.

As acclimatized to humans as the park's wild creatures are, I suspect they would manage without us. Indeed, they might do better if we disappeared and stopped heating up the planet.

Years ago I read a book called The World Without Us that considers what would happen if we were wiped out (say) by a virus that left our infrastructure intact. Nature would slowly overtake the ruins.

We are imperiled by a politics of aggressive ignorance. Demanding control without understanding courts catastrophe. Part of the strength of diversity is that it brings different perspectives to our shared challenges. If we treat it as a weakness, we may learn too late that we have only sabotaged ourselves.

To lessen my burden of possessions, this year I donated several cartloads of books to a local library for its occasional book sales. After decades of accumulating them, it was time to share. I still have plenty, but not on every surface. The top of my rolltop desk has three musical instruments decorating it instead of the previous row of books, which included a three-volume boxed Shakespeare set too massive to be practical. Now I use a Kindle edition on my smartphone and tablet that allows quick searches.

The ways we connect change over time. The online world allows faster connections without an editor's mediation. This facilitates greater participation, but also accelerates the spread of poison. Noise drowns out thought. Rancor banishes solutions. Contempt blinds and deafens us.

To center ourselves and regain perspective requires seeking out places that help restore our peace of mind. Then we can more fully connect, inspired by our better angels.

Richard J. Rosendall is a writer and activist at rrosendall@me.com.

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School

Continued from page 1

standing commitment that earned them inclusion on previous Best of the Best lists. However, the new laws will negatively impact their ability to continue to offer LGBTQ+ inclusive programs and services and to foster safe, welcoming environments for LGBTQ+ students."

This might seem drastic, but it should be stated that by doing this, Campus Pride highlights how each of us is impacted by the actions of state governments and the antigay actions they take.

Campus Pride is on point. Many students might find a welcoming attitude at school, but what happens once you leave? No one wants to be a prisoner of their campus.

And what about while on campus and attending classes? Shane Mendez Windmeyer — the founder, CEO and executive director of Campus Pride — told Diverse Issues in Higher Education that "New laws in Texas and Florida effectively require colleges and universities in those states to cease LGBTQ+ inclusive programs, services and policies.

"Students and families must exercise caution in choosing to go to college on any public Florida or Texas campus," Windmeyer said. "New state laws endanger and harm LGBTQ+ people, particularly transgender students, and create hostile and unwelcoming learning environments for all students."

Uganda

Continued from page 1

say how the victim might be part of a vulnerable population.

It says the offense took place at a sports stadium in Soroti, but provides no other details. No information was immediately available on who might represent the defendant in court.

The law has been condemned by rights groups and other campaigners. A group of U.N. experts described the law as "an egregious violation of human rights," while Amnesty International called it "draconian and overly broad."

A suspect convicted of attempted aggravated homosexuality can be imprisoned for up to 14 years, under the new law. The legislation in May did not criminalize those who identify as LGBTQ+, which had been a key concern for activists who campaigned against an earlier version of the legislation.

Homosexuality is criminalized in more than 30 of Africa's 54 countries. Some Africans see it as behavior imported from abroad and not a sexual orientation.

Police in Nigeria on Tuesday announced the detention of at least 67 people celebrating a gay wedding in one of the largest mass detentions targeting homosexuality, which is outlawed in the West African country.

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Mombian

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ent-child relationship quality. Other studies have shown that children of same-sex parents are more likely to have higher self-esteem, a broader conception of gender roles, and to deal better with differences and conflict. There has been less research specifically on children of transgender and bisexual parents, but the little there is also points in the same direction.

Myth: LGBTQ families are White, middle class, and living in LGBTQ-friendly states. Fact: Same-sex couples of color are more likely than White ones to be raising children, according to the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law. Williams researchers also found that children of same-sex couples are more likely to live in poverty than children of heterosexual married couples. Additionally, the highest proportions of same-sex couples raising children live in southern, mountain west, and midwestern states, which are often less LGBTQ friendly.

Myth: Our kids won't be affected at all by having LGBTQ parents. Fact: As noted above, children of LGBTQ parents may in fact have some positive differences from children of other parents. Yes, children of LGBTQ parents may also be teased or bullied about their parents' LGBTQ status, and their families may face legal, social, and financial obstacles. Yet the root cause there is not the parents' LGBTQ identities per se, but rather biased attitudes and unfair laws.

Myth: All LGBTQ families have same-sex parents. Fact: Although most current data, research, and media attention has focused on same-sex parents, we are far more varied. According to studies from the Williams Institute, as many as 2 million to 3.7 million children under age 18 may have an LGBTQ parent, but only about 200,000 are being raised by a same-sex couple. The others are being raised by bisexual parents (who comprise nearly two-thirds of all LGB parents) or other LGBTQ parents in different-sex couples, or single parents. (Or, I would add, LGBTQ parents in polyamorous or co-parenting relationships of more than two adults.) Heather had her two mommies, but the possibilities go beyond.

Myth: All our kids will be LGBTQ. Fact: Even though it shouldn't matter if this were true, every legitimate study that's looked at this has found that most of our kids are not LGBTQ, just as with the general population.

Myth: None of our kids will be LGBTQ. Fact: Statistically, of course some will, just as with any large group of humans. Additionally, a few studies have found that children of same-sex parents were more likely to report a same-sex attraction or to question future heterosexual romantic relationships than children with different-sex parents—but that doesn't mean that queer parents "make" their kids queer. As Dr. Nanette Gartrell, principal researcher of the long-running National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study, has explained about her findings, this may simply be because the children were "more attuned to their own same-sex sexual feelings because of the environment in which they were raised" and their parents were "nonjudgmental about their exploration of non-heterosexual relationships."

Myth: We're completely different from any other type of family. Fact: Diapers. Laundry. Sports and music practice. Homework. Family dinners. On balance, our similarities outweigh our differences.

Myth: We're just the same as any other type of family. Fact: We are still fighting for full, legal parentage equality in most states, and we still struggle for acceptance, understanding, and inclusion. We may have overcome more obstacles to start our families and may have additional people under our family umbrellas, such as gamete donors, surrogates, and birth parents, although we are neither limited to nor unique in that. We are also part of a long, proud history of LGBTQ people and their accomplishments.

Myth: We are redefining family. Fact: The definition of family has varied throughout history and across cultures. In the 20th century, changing divorce laws, more open attitudes towards adoption, and advances in reproductive technologies are only a few of the other factors that are continuing these evolutions.

Myths, like all good stories, have the power to mesmerize. In the real world, however, it's best to stay clear eyed.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a two-time GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory, plus a searchable database of 1300+ LGBTQ family books.

LGBTQ New England Fall Calendar

2023 HistoryMaker Awards

Thursday, September 7 at 6:00 pm

The 2023 HistoryMaker Awards will recognize the outstanding lifetime commitment and impact of Gary Bailey and the Boston Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence as the 2023 Lavender Rhino Awardee.

St. Botolph Club, 199 Commonwealth Ave, Boston

https://www.historyproject.org/event/2023-historymaker-awards

Celebrating The 50th Anniversary Of Ethos

Thursday, September 28 at 6:00 pm

"Where the Heart Is" will take place on Thursday, September 28, 2023, at The 521 Overlook at Fenway Park. The event promises to be an unforgettable night of inspiration and recognition, with a special focus on promoting the independence and well-being of older adults.

The 521 Overlook at historic Fenway Park
Cocktails, Dinner, Program & Dessert
https://www.ethocare.org/ethos50/

The HRC New England Dinner

Saturday, November 18 at 5:30 pm

Featuring Mrs. Kasha Davis (Ed Popil) of RuPaul's Drag Race Season 7 and All Stars 8 Boston Marriott Copley Place 110 Huntington Avenue, Boston

https://newengland.hrc.org/events/new-england-dinner-and-auction

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billy masters

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You can take the boy out of the beach, but you can't take the beach out of the boy...and I've got enough sand in my crevices to prove it. You didn't think that a little ol' hurricane was gonna stop me from spending Labor Day in Fort Lauderdale, did you? I've risked life and limb for less. However, prior to going down south, I had some unfinished business in Provincetown — namely, the last underwear party at Purgatory, which was made memorable by a couple who live in NYC and one of those Carolinas. I left them with memories that will keep them warm all winter long.

There were also some last—minute shows. I finally was able to see the legendary **Edie** at the Post Office Café and Cabaret. My God — that gal's got gams! Her high kicks rival those of any Rockette — or **Hugh Jackman**. If you close your eyes, you'd swear you were watching **Miss Donna McKechnie**! "Dance, Edie, Dance" is a fast—paced romp through Edie's story which will leave you breathless...and wanting more. Catch her when you can.

The best way to close out a banner season in Provincetown is with the incomparable **Marilyn Maye**. I have spent the past 15 years in Ptown with Auntie Marilyn — the last 13 of which she's been performing there. Prior to that, we'd be there on vacation. One day, Maye said, "I want to do a show here" — and, poof, she did. The 95-year-old chanteuse is the last of a...well, one can't say "dying breed", because they all died. She's the last of an extinct breed of band singers who could belt, croon, and hold you in the palm of your hand. Her two weeks at the Ptown Art House (the last two weeks of the venue) were a veritable lovefest — a sold—out lovefest. One would expect Maye to trot out all her hits, and she did. But, remarkably, she also sang new material. She's a marvel, and if you get the chance to see her, rush. If you need proof, you can see some clips of her in action at BillyMasters.com.

While I was flying down to Fort Lauderdale, I was amused to hear about a group of Swiss Air flight attendants who were dancing on the wing of their 777. A video taken at Buenos Aires airport show the crew dashing out of the emergency exit and engaging in horseplay on the wing! The only thing missing was an actual horse! One report said, "The incident also presented even more danger as the flight crew were not wearing safety harnesses." Well, I never! Every time I've been with a flight attendant (or two), they're always wearing harnesses!

It's been quite a year for **Josh Seiter**. The former contender for the affections of a "Bachelorette" came out as bisexual, returned to stripping, and got a boyfriend. He even announced plans to make adult films. What would come next, you might ask? Suicide — that's what came next. Last week, reports indicated that Seiter was dead at 36. He had long expressed feelings of depression and other mental health issues. So it wasn't a complete surprise when his family went public with this post: "It is with an extremely heavy heart that we share the tragic news of Joshua's unexpected passing. As all who knew him can attest, Joshua was an incredibly bright light in an increasingly dim world. His fearless voice and indomitable spirit helped thousands of people in their darkest moments feel just a little less alone." His family added information about 24/7 suicide prevention hotlines.

And three days later, like Jesus before him, he rose from the dead. Turns out, his verified Instagram account had been hacked. He posted a video — I suppose to really prove he was alive. "Hey guys. As you can see, I am alive and well. My account was hacked. For the last 24 hours, I've been trying desperately to get into it. Somebody was playing a cruel joke and mocking my mental illness and the struggles I've gone through with depression and suicide attempts and I'm sorry for all the pain they caused when they made that post." But is that really the truth? Josh's ex, "RuPaul's Drag Race" alum **Monica Beverly Hillz**, doesn't believe any of it — and points to the gap of time between the death announcement and Josh's rebuttal. "He didn't do shit, sat back, and got off on everybody freaking out." Of course, this doesn't answer the question I'm sure most of you are asking: "Who?"

Someone who is no longer a bachelor is **Derek Hough**. Last week, the "Dancing with the Stars" golden boy got married...to a woman! I'm sure it was a small consolation that his true love, **Mark Ballas**, was also on the altar — as a groomsman. Derek's sister, **Julianne**, was a bridesmaid. And in another twist, Julianne's ex, **Brooks Laich**, was also an usher!

Powerhouse vocalist **Adele** is known as a showstopper. And at a show at Caesars Palace in Las Vegas, she did that — literally. During a rendition of "Water Under the Bridge", she stopped singing and addressed the crowd. "What is going on there with that young fan who's been bothered so much since I came on for standing up?" The fan in question raised his hand. "What's going on with him? Yes, you, with your hand up. Yes, you. Why are you all bothering him? Can you leave him alone, please?" Security walked away. Pleased with herself, Adele continued. "They won't bother you anymore, darling. You enjoy the show. Leave him alone." Before going back to the song, she added, "Sorry, guys. He's been bothered the whole show by security and other people sitting behind him." Well, I can't blame the people sitting behind him — they probably couldn't see a thing! "He's here to have fun. All of you are here to have fun." Unless you're sitting behind him — then you're on your own!

Speaking of Las Vegas, we have some exciting news. I've already told you that the vivacious **Varla Jean Merman** will be performing at the Westgate on October 3—5 (on the eve of Las Vegas Pride). That same week, Vegas will welcome another luminary with her own residency. The Queen of Burlesque, **Dita Von Teese**, will take to the stage of the Jubilee Theatre starting October 5th. "Dita Las Vegas: A Jubilant Review" will be staged at Horseshoe Las Vegas (previously Bally's) — the former home of Fluff LeCoque. The press release promises it will be "the most lavishly staged burlesque production ever, anywhere". That's good enough for me to book a flight.

Before I left New England, I zipped up to the Ogunquit Playhouse in Maine to catch the US premiere of a play version of "The Da Vinci Code". I'm surely in the minority of people who never read the book or saw the movie. But I'm delighted to say I not only followed the show, but I found it to be marvelously entertaining. It's well—written and fast—moving (save for a lengthy section in the plane — which clumsily gave us information necessary for events that happen thereafter). I don't think I've enjoyed a new play as much in quite some time. I was completely astounded by the physical set. It's smart, slick, and looks like a million bucks. The fact that it seems to be identical to the set used for the shuttered UK tour doesn't take away from how great it is. Enormous credit must go to the lead. If you only know **Michael Urie** from "Ugly Betty", you're in for a treat. I've seen him in "Buyer & Cellar" and "Torch Song Trilogy", so I know he's a theatrical animal. But in the role **Tom Hanks** played in the film, Urie gives a galvanizing and nuanced performance which holds the whole show together with ease. My pal **Charles Shaughnessy** plays Sir Leigh Teabing with aplomb and provides a good amount of sly humor in just the right places. While I'm singling people out, I must note **David T. Patterson**, who not only is a very good actor, but who titillates with his magnificent body (unfortunate lashed back makeup notwithstanding). It runs until September 23rd, so check it out at OgunquitPlayhouse.org.

Let's slip in a quick "Ask Billy" question. One of our most loyal readers, Benjamin, writes, *"I saw an article about **Jaclyn Smith's** son **Gaston** getting married — and **Kate Jackson** attended. I wondered if this meant her health issues have finally resolved. Also, is this Gaston's first marriage? To a man or a woman? Is he hot?"*

So many questions, so little time. We don't know much about the reclusive Kate, except that she looked fine at the wedding — even if she was wearing what appeared to be white jeans. On the other hand, Jaclyn made up for it with a gown that had on so many feathers, it looked like she was about to do a burlesque show in Vegas herself! As to Gaston, he married a woman — **Bonnie Lane**. I'd certainly call him handsome — even dashing. You can check out photos from the wedding on BillyMasters.com.

When we're posting photos from a heterosexual wedding, we've definitely come to the end of another column. But we've got much more entertaining media on www.BillyMasters.com — the site that has something for everyone. And if any of you have a question, send it off to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Jaclyn's booked as Dita's opening act in Vegas! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

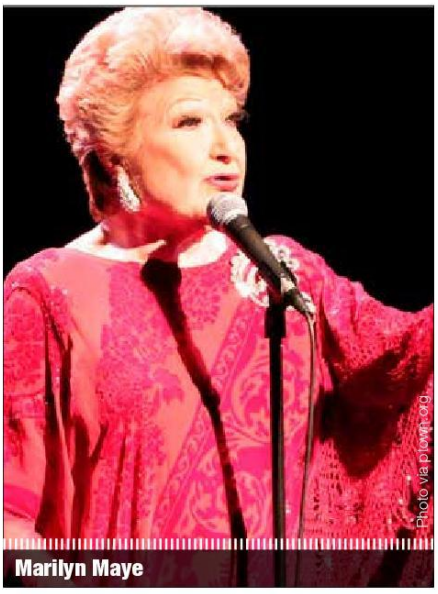

Photo via ptown.org

Marilyn Maye

Photo by MingleMediaTVNetwork - Michael Urie, via Wikimedia Commons

Michael Urie

Photo via Jaclyn Smith, Instagram

Gaston Richmond & Jaclyn Smith

Gender-Aware

Continued from page 1

dards and guidelines that can support our public servants in determining when and how they should collect gender identity information.

A person's gender and sexual identity can be tremendously important to their overall identity. These guidelines and standards seek to balance the right to be affirmed, against risks and constraints. To be affirmed is to be able to be recognized by others as you recognize yourself. In government, we may create harm by not allowing people to affirm their identities throughout our processes, especially as we collect information that misrepresents who they are. On the other hand, collecting information can also increase risks of identification for vulnerable groups and create barriers to participation. Data can be a powerful tool to understand disparities and to drive equitable outcomes. But, embedding the collection of data into government programs can often have negative consequences for the people those services and programs were intended to help in the first place. These consequences can be magnified when data collection is mandatory or tied to other Personally Identifying Information (PII). As these are complex issues that involve trade-offs, we expect the standards and guidelines to evolve.

The City delivers services to its constituents. These services are supported by processes which create experiences for our constituents. These processes also generate administrative data to reflect government processes, as well as other data that can be used to improve policies or programs. However, our goal as a City is to provide affirming, dignified experiences for all constituents and our workforce when they interact with the City of Boston.

For more information visit www.boston.gov/gender-aware-guidelines-and-standards-city-boston-services

CHARLES E. BYRNE

AUG. 30 2023

BYRNE, CHARLES E. "CHICK" of West Roxbury MA shone brightly on this earth for 36 years. His spirit left his body on Aug. 30 2023, to the shock of all who knew him. Chick leaves behind his bereft mother Loretta A Lennon, his devastated sister Lottie Welter and niece Etta, all of West Roxbury. He leaves heartbroken his grandfather James F Lennon of Chestnut Hill, aunt Diane Lennon of Dover, aunt Marie and her husband David Tracey of West Roxbury, uncle Joseph and wife Kathi Lennon of Needham, his dear cousins; Frances, James, and Teresa Tracey, Curt and Hannah Pfannenstiehl, Megan, Laura, and Kaitlin Lennon. Chick also leaves his other parent Charlene Byrne of Brookline, along with her family; Bob, Madelyn, Ginger, cousins Rob, Katherine, and Nick, and brother-in-law Kurt Welter and nephew Luke.

Chick was an accomplished artist and a compassionate healer. He graduated from the John D O'Bryant School in Boston, and was awarded a prestigious Posse Scholarship to Denison University in Ohio where he earned a BFA in Studio Art in 2009. His stunning and dynamic art has been widely recognized, and received accolades in shows, exhibits, and galleries in Boston, New York, Miami, Provincetown, and others. He held a coveted position as an Artist in Residence at the Boston Center for the Arts. His work, CV, and awards can be viewed on his website chickbyrne.com

Chick was an intensely sensitive, caring, and generous soul who gave of himself until he was empty. His countless friends always felt seen and valued. Chick saw angels in the most unexpected people, and treated all with dignity and respect. His spiritual life was of the utmost importance to him. During the past seven years he studied and practiced pranic healing, and made himself available to help many find relief and comfort.

Chick will be greatly missed by his fellow artists at the BCA Studios, his coworkers at the Mills Gallery in Boston, and Exodus Bagels in Roslindale. He truly appreciated their friendship and loved working with them.

Visiting hours at the William J. Gormley Funeral Home, 2055 Centre St. West Roxbury, Wednesday, September 6th from 4-8pm. Funeral from the funeral home Thursday September 7th at 9am followed by a Funeral Mass in St. John Chrysostom Church at 10 o'clock. Relatives and friends invited. In lieu of flowers consider a thoughtful donation made in Chick's memory to one of these organizations which made his life richer: Boston Center for the Arts bostonarts.org, BAGLY bagly.org, or Poor Clare Nuns 920 Centre St Jamaica Plain MA 02130 poorclarenunsboston.org. For directions and guestbook gormleyfuneral.com.

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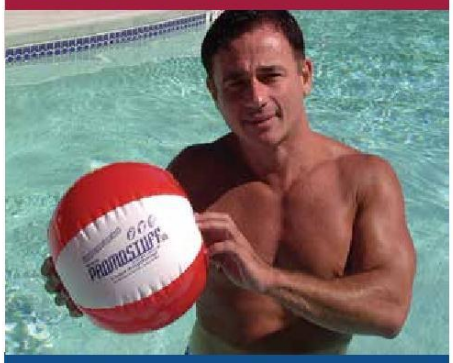

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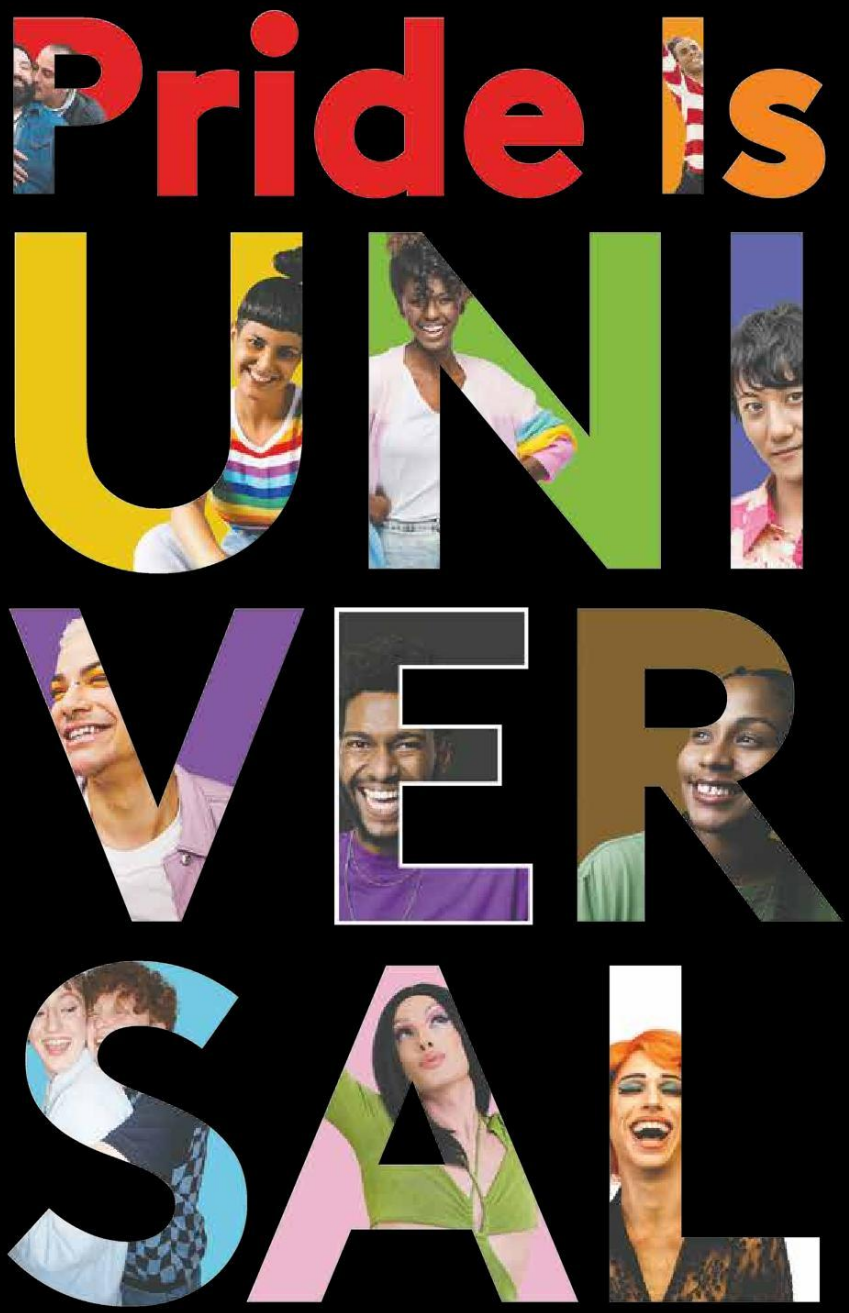

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