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Worcester Declares Itself “Sanctuary City” for Transgender Community

Bay Windows Staff

The Worcester City Council voted 9-2 on Tuesday, February 11, to designate Worcester as a “Sanctuary City for Transgender and Gender Diverse People.” The resolution came in response to recent federal actions affecting transgender rights and healthcare access.

The measure affirms the city’s support for its LGBTQ+ communities amid changes in federal policy, including reported removals

of transgender healthcare information from the CDC website and executive actions regarding gender recognition and medical treatment.

Two council members voted against the resolution, citing concerns about potential impacts on funding for local organizations and nonprofits. The majority of the council, however, moved forward with the declaration, making Worcester one of several cities to take such a stance on transgender rights.

Boston’s 2025 Pride Parade and Festival Set for June

Submitted by BP4TP

Boston Pride For The People (BP4TP), the volunteer-led organization behind the largest Pride celebration in New England, announced

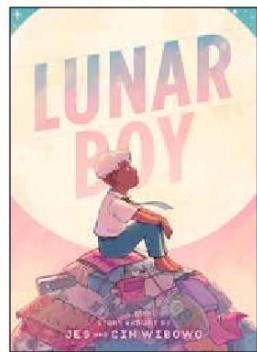
today the 2025 Pride Parade will take place Saturday, June 14, 2025 accompanied by festivals on Boston Common and at City Hall Plaza.

see **PRIDE**, page 7



LGBTQ+ Kids’ Books Garner Awards and Accolades

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com contributing writer



Book bans are continuing to target LGBTQ-inclusive children’s and young adult books—but this year’s American Library Association Youth Media Awards (YMAAs) from the show that doing so means keeping young people from some of the best children’s literature around, bar none. And the American Library Association’s (ALA’s) latest annual Rainbow Book List, a broader selection of recommended titles, also shows that publication of LGBTQ-inclusive books isn’t slowing down.

see **MOMBIAN**, page 5

US Park Service erases the word ‘transgender’ from website commemorating Stonewall riot

By Susan Haigh
Associated Press

References to transgender people were removed Thursday, Feb. 13, from a National Park Service website for the Stonewall National Monument, a park and visitor center in New York that commemorates a 1969 riot that became a pivotal moment for the LGBTQ+ rights movement.

The changes were made in the wake of an executive order President Donald Trump signed on his first day in office calling for the federal

see **STONEWALL**, page 2



A National Park Service sign marks the Stonewall National Monument outside the Stonewall Inn, Monday, June 17, 2024, in New York. AP Photo by Pamela Smith.

‘SPACE’ Soars as a Powerful Tribute to Women Astronauts and Their Earthbound Battles

SPACE, a Brit d’Arbeloff Women in Science and The Catalyst Collaborative at MIT production. Central Square Theater, Cambridge, through February 23. 617-576-9278.

By Jules Becker
Contributing Writer

John Lennon imagined a world with no borders. The very diverse women in L M Feldman and Larissa Lury’s both informative and pioneering play “SPACE”—now in an exuberant world premiere at Central Square Theater—imagine a future “different world” in which there are no human barriers for female scientists and would-be astronauts as well as women themselves. Co-creator Lury is attentively directing a talented ensemble as diverse as the actual women they portray. The result—presented by Brit d’Arbeloff and celebrating the 20th anniversary of Catalyst Collaborative@MIT—is a vital examination of the struggle of 14 gifted women—some still living—against stereotypes and sexism in the

pursuit of inclusion in America’s exploration of space.

In a play that “moves across time and space,” Feldman has set Movement One (Act One) mostly in the early 1960s—when President John Fitzgerald Kennedy spoke of Americans reaching the moon—and Movement Two (Act Two) mostly in the early 2020s. Scenic Designer Qingan Zhang has cleverly turned the Central Square Theater stage floor into a veritable surreal space where the women in question effectively explore with their minds and movement as they seek to transcend the obstacles presented by testing officials, institutional directors, Congressional committees and NASA itself. Stretching from pioneering pilots like Amelia Earhart to celebrated astronauts like Sally Ride, “SPACE” stretches from 1920 to 2020. At the same time, Feld-



MK Tuomanen as Geraldyn Cobb and Hui Ying Wen as Ivy Rieker in the play “SPACE” at Central Square Theater. Photo by Nile Scott Studios.

man’s stirring effort speaks of a Movement Three—set in 2112—that invites future women explorers to find total parity with their male counterparts in the full investigation of the terra nova

see **THEATER**, page 7




“I love @realDonaldTrump as much as a straight man can love another man.”

—Elon Musk. I believe he said that during “Bring Your Kid to Work Day.”

more in Billy Masters on page 6!


Photo by The Royal Society, via Wikimedia Commons.



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Stonewall

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government to define sex as only male or female. “This is just cruel and petty,” New York Gov. Kathy Hochul, a Democrat, posted on X. “Transgender people play a critical role in the fight for LGBTQ+ rights — and New York will never allow their contributions to be erased.”

The monument in Manhattan’s Greenwich Village section is based in a tiny park across the street from the Stonewall Inn, a bar that became ground zero for the gay rights movement on June 28, 1969, when gay and transgender patrons and neighborhood residents fought back against a police raid.

The park service website on Friday was still filled with information about the uprising, including photographs of noted transgender activists.

But the words “transgender” and “queer” had been deleted from text that had been on the site.

Also, the letters T and Q were cut from various references to the acronym LGBTQ and replaced with phrases like the “LGB rights movement” or “LGB civil rights.”

Representatives of the present-day Stonewall Inn, which is part of the national monument, and The Stonewall Inn Gives Back Initiative, a nonprofit organization associated with the historic bar, expressed anger and outrage over the changes.

“This blatant act of erasure not only distorts the truth of our history, but it also dishonors the immense contributions of transgender individuals — especially transgender women of color — who were at the forefront of the Stonewall Riots and the broader fight for LGBTQ+ rights,” said organizers of the two entities in a statement.

“They’re trying to literally cis-wash, if you will, LGBTQ history by taking trans folks and saying they didn’t exist then and don’t exist now,” said Stacy Lentz, CEO of The Stonewall Inn Gives Back Initiative and a co-owner of The Stonewall Inn. “It is very alarming.”

Angelica Christina, who is board director of the initiative and a transgender woman, said the changes to the website are not surprising given “the constant executive orders the Trump administration has been leveling against the trans community.”

But she said it is shocking and unnerving to

see the Stonewall National Monument in particular targeted: “The West Village, and especially the Stonewall Inn, has always been a safe haven for the LGBT community.”

Earlier this week, the homepage for the national monument said that “Before the 1960s, almost everything about living openly as a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ+) person was illegal.”

On Thursday, it said: “Before the 1960s, almost everything about living openly as a lesbian, gay, bisexual (LGB) person was illegal.”

The National Park Service did not respond to a message left Thursday seeking comment on the changes. The service previously did not respond to questions about whether Trump’s executive order would mean changes for the monument.

Timothy Leonard, Northeast program manager for the National Parks Conservation Association, a 1.6 million-member nonprofit group that advocates on behalf of national parks and helped push for the Stonewall monument, said “erasing letters or webpages” does not change history or the contributions of the transgender community at Stonewall or elsewhere.

“The National Park Service exists to not only protect and preserve our most cherished places but to educate its millions of annual national park visitors about the inclusive, full history of America,” Leonard said.

Then President Barack Obama designated the Stonewall National Monument in 2016.

Last year, a \$3.2 million visitor center run by the LGBTQ+ advocacy group Pride Live opened at the site, in partnership with the park service, to tell the Stonewall story in more depth. The center was financed mostly with private donations, except for \$450,000 from the park service’s charitable arm.

Trump’s order declared the federal government would recognize only two immutable sexes: male and female, based on whether people are born with eggs or sperm, rather than on their chromosomes. The change is being pitched as a way to protect women from “gender extremism.”

Conservative groups such as the American Family Association have praised the change as one that acknowledges the truth. But experts including the American Medical Association and American Psychiatric Association hold that gender is a spectrum, not a binary structure consisting only of males and females.

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EEOC seeks to drop transgender discrimination cases, citing Trump's executive order

By Claire Savage and Alexandra Olson
Associated Press

Signaling a major shift in civil rights enforcement, the federal agency that enforces workplace anti-discrimination laws has moved to dismiss six of its own cases on behalf of workers alleging gender identity discrimination, arguing that the cases now conflict with President Donald Trump's recent executive order, court documents say.

The requests by the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission mark a major departure from its prior interpretation of civil rights law, and a stark contrast to a decade ago when the agency issued a landmark finding that a transgender civilian employee of the U.S. Army had been discriminated against because her employer refused to use her preferred pronouns or allow her to use bathrooms based on her gender identity.

Just last year, the EEOC updated its guidance to specify that deliberately using the wrong pronouns for an employee, or refusing them access to bathrooms corresponding with their gender identity, constituted a form of harassment. That followed a 2020 Supreme Court ruling that gay, lesbian and transgender people are protected from employment discrimination.

Nearly all workplace discrimination charges must pass through the EEOC — at least initially — and the agency's decision to drop at least six of the cases raises serious questions about whether its protections will continue to extend to transgender and gender nonconforming people going forward.

The EEOC is seeking to dismiss three cases in Illinois as well as one in Alabama, New York and California. In each instance, the original complaints allege discrimination against transgender or gender nonconforming workers. The agency cites Trump's Jan. 20 executive order declaring that the government would recognize only two "immutable" sexes — male and female

— as the reason for why it no longer intends to pursue the cases.

The Alabama case charged that Harmony Hospitality LLC discriminated against an employee who identifies as a gay non-binary male by firing him hours after co-owners learned of his gender identity. The New York lawsuit alleged that Boxwood Hotels LLC fired a transgender housekeeper who complained that a supervisor repeatedly misgendered them and made anti-transgender statements, referring to the housekeeper as a "transformer" and "it."

Another suit alleged that Wendy's franchisee Starboard Group, Inc. subjected three transgender employees to pervasive sexual harassment at a Wendy's restaurant in Carbondale, Illinois, claiming a supervisor demanded to know if one employee had a penis. In another Illinois case, a transgender Reggios' Pizza cashier at Chicago O'Hare International Airport was "outed" by her manager, called a racist, homophobic slur by coworkers, and fired when she complained. In southern Illinois, at a hog farm called Sis-Bro, Inc., a coworker allegedly exposed his genitals to a transgender employee and touched her breasts.

And in Santa Clara, California, the EEOC charged that a Lush Handmade Cosmetics store manager sexually harassed three gender nonconforming employees with "offensive physical and verbal sexual conduct."

Former EEOC General Counsel and Professor and Co-Dean Emeritus at Rutgers Law School David Lopez, who served in the agency for more than 20 years, on Friday said in his experience, the EEOC has never dismissed cases based on substance rather than merit — until now.

For the country's anti-discrimination agency "to discriminate against a group, and say, 'We're not going to enforce the law on their behalf' itself is discrimination, in my view," Lopez said. "It's like a complete abdication of responsibility."

The EEOC's requests to dismiss the cases come just weeks after Trump dismissed two Democratic commissioners of the five-

member EEOC before their terms expired, an unprecedented decision that removed what would have been a major obstacle to his administration efforts to upend interpretation of the nation's civil rights laws. Had the commissioners been allowed to carry out their terms, the EEOC would have had a Democratic majority well into Trump's term. The administration also fired Karla Gilbride as the EEOC's general counsel, replacing her with Andrew Rogers as acting counsel.

Shortly after their dismissals, acting EEOC chair Andrea Lucas, a Republican, signaled her intent to put the agency's resources behind enforcing Trump's executive order on gender. She announced in a statement that one of her priorities would be "defending the biological and binary reality of sex and related rights." Later, she ordered that the EEOC would continue accepting any and all discrimination charges filed by workers, although complaints that "implicate" Trump's order should be elevated to headquarters for "review."

"Biology is not bigotry. Biological sex is real, and it matters," Lucas said in her statement. "Sex is binary (male and female) and immutable. It is not harassment to acknowledge these truths — or to use language like pronouns that flow from these realities, even repeatedly." She removed the agency's "pronoun app," which allowed employees to display their pronouns in their Microsoft 365 profiles, among other changes.

The EEOC in fiscal year 2023 received more than 3,000 charges alleging discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity, "the most since the agency started tracking these charges in FY 2013, and up more than 36% from the previous year," according to the agency's website, which also provides a link for more information on discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity. But the information appears to have been removed and the link now leads to a blank page with

see EEOC, page 5

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Repairing Trump's social damage

One act of courage can inspire others

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

If you believe America is fallen and wish to restore white Christian male supremacy, there is no point in pretending you support democracy. If you fashion yourself an alpha male, you should own what you are doing and not look for others to blame.

Having decided four years ago to incite an insurrection and seize power, you should not then claim it was Antifa – rather than your supporters – who stormed the Capitol, attacked police officers, and smeared feces on the walls.

Donald Trump, now in the midst of his second coup attempt, had his press secretary say that the federal judges who have ruled against him are the ones provoking a constitutional crisis. That is the mark of a first-class weasel. But it is what bullies often do when people stand up to them; they point fingers at anyone and everyone except themselves.

Democrats are pushing back against Trump's oligarchic putsch in Congress, in the courts, in the streets, and in media, both old and new. Rather than wring our hands, we should join in the pushback.

Trump and his supporters brought "shock and awe" by attacking on multiple fronts from the moment he returned to office. But they have shown a good deal of stupidity, carelessness, and recklessness in the process. That is their vulnerability.

From its outset, America has had a conflict between its high ideals and its often low behavior. We talk about liberty and justice for all, then engage in racist bank redlining and try to erase transgender people. We boast of pulling our-

selves up by our bootstraps, then make billions from government contracts. We invoke Christian values, then deny food and medical care to sick children.

There are signs of hope. In opposing vaccine skeptic Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s nomination as secretary of Health and Human Services, Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) noted that he was a survivor of childhood polio. He wrote, "I will not condone the re-litigation of proven cures."

Point taken. But had McConnell voted to convict Trump on impeachment for inciting an insurrection four years ago, we might not now have an anti-vaxxer as head of DHHS. We need people who stand up for the truth when they're in power, not as they're heading out the door.

A flashpoint in the resistance against Trumpism was the resignation of several top Department of Justice officials over the decision to drop criminal corruption charges against New York City Mayor Eric Adams in exchange for his support of Trump's anti-immigrant crackdown. The resignations included Danielle Sasso, acting U.S. attorney for the Southern District of New York. Notably, she has extensive conservative Republican credentials. It is not so easy to dismiss her as a partisan Democrat when she clerked for Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia and is a member of the Federalist Society.

Contrary to Attorney General Pam Bondi, Justice Department attorneys are not the president's personal lawyers. They represent the American people and are sworn to uphold the Constitution. The DOJ's culture is one of respecting the law and the evidence without regard to party lines. Bravo

to the Justice officials who refused to participate in Trump's lawlessness and disorder.

It is not enough to fight back against Trump and his minions. We must communicate about our larger purpose while recognizing that some people are not receptive to anything we might say. Trump has poisoned our public discourse to an extent that will take many years to heal.

It is not enough to focus on people's self-interest, such as the price of eggs. We must earnestly strive to rebuild trust and cooperation despite our differences. Our nation cannot endure if we are constantly at one another's throats. Fascism grows and thrives in chaos.

Just as Trump does all he can to blast away any sense of the common good, we must work to nurture it. This includes respecting the evidence Trump routinely disregards. For example, the price of eggs has been affected by an outbreak of avian flu, not political policy.

A penchant for destructiveness as a display of power is a sign of arrested development more than leadership. We need to uplift people; Trump doesn't know how. We must appeal to one another's better angels, not succumb to his transactionalism.

The rash of resignations at DOJ over Eric Adams is a reminder of shared values that Trump cannot sweep away. One act of courage and principle can inspire others. Make it a trend and we can begin to restore our embattled republic.

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

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NEWS FROM GLAD LAW

Students and Families Move to Challenge Trump Executive Order Banning Transgender Sports Participation

The organizations representing the families of New Hampshire students challenging a state law that categorically bans transgender girls from participating in school sports asked the court to expand their case to include a legal challenge to President Trump's executive orders that ban transgender girls and women from sports nationwide.

"The Trump Administration's executive orders amount to a coordinated campaign to prevent transgender people from functioning in society. The systematic targeting of transgender people across American institutions is chilling, but targeting young people in schools, denying them support and essential opportunities during their most vulnerable years, is especially cruel," said Chris Erchull, Senior Staff Attorney at GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD Law), which is representing the plaintiffs along with the ACLU of New Hampshire (ACLU of NH). "School sports are an important part of education—something no child should be denied simply because of who they are. Our clients Parker and Iris simply want to go to school,

learn, and play on teams with their peers."

GLAD Law and the ACLU of NH filed the motion in the U.S. District Court for the District of New Hampshire in the case *Tirrell and Turmelle v. Edelblut*, a federal lawsuit challenging HB 1205, a 2024 state law banning all transgender girls in grades 5-12 from participating in school sports in New Hampshire public schools. Last September, the court ordered that students Parker Tirrell and Iris Turmelle be allowed to play sports during the litigation, ruling that HB 1205 discriminates against transgender students in violation of Title IX and the U.S. Constitution.

"We're expanding our lawsuit to challenge President Trump's executive orders because, like the state law, it excludes, singles out, and discriminates against transgender students and insinuates that they are not deserving of the same educational opportunities as all other students. Every child in New Hampshire and across the country has a right to equal opportunities at school and all students do better when they have access to resources that improve their mental,

emotional, and physical health," said Henry Klementowicz, Deputy Legal Director at ACLU of NH.

In asking the court to add federal defendants to the lawsuit to formally challenge the Trump administration's executive orders to ban transgender female athletes, GLAD Law and ACLU of NH contend that the Trump administration's February 5 executive order, along with parts of a January 20 executive order, subject Parker and Iris and all transgender girls to discrimination in violation of federal equal protection guarantees and their rights under Title IX. The organizations also assert the orders unlawfully subject the girls' respective schools to the threat of losing federal funding for allowing Parker and Iris to play school sports.

Parker Tirrell is a tenth-grader who plays on her high school soccer team. Iris Turmelle is a ninth-grader who is looking forward to trying out for tennis this spring.

"I love playing soccer and we had a great sea-

see **GLAD**, page 7

Mombian

Continued from page 1

The YMAS, announced January 27, include the renowned Newbery and Caldecott Medals, the top U.S. awards for literary and artistic excellence in children's books, respectively, but also many other awards in various sub-categories. Two of the YMAS are specific to books of "exceptional merit relating to the LGBTQIA+ experience": the Stonewall Book Awards - Mike Morgan & Larry Romans Children's & Young Adult Literature Awards.

The Stonewall Award for Children's Literature went to "Lunar Boy," by Cin and Jes Wibowo (Harper Alley), a warm and touching graphic novel about a transgender boy finding community and connection in the distant future. Two picture books and two middle grade titles were also given Stonewall Honors: "Marley's Pride," by Joëlle Retener, illustrated by DeAnn Wiley (Barefoot Books); "What I Must Tell the World: How Lorraine Hansberry Found Her Voice," by Jay Leslie, illustrated by Loveis Wise (Zando); "The Flicker," by H. E. Edgmon (Feiwel & Friends); and "Murray Out of Water," by Taylor Tracy (Quill Tree).

The Stonewall Award for Young Adult Books went to "Canto Contigo," by Jonny Garza Villa (Wednesday Books), about a gay, cisgender Mexican American mariachi star and the Afro-Latino transgender boy who is his rival and love interest. Four young adult books received Stonewall Honors: "Most Ardent: A Pride & Prejudice Remix," by Gabe Cole Novoa (Feiwel & Friends); "Navigating With You," by Jeremy Whiteley, illustrated by Cassio Ribeiro (Maverick); "Time and Time Again," by Chatham Greenfield (Bloomsbury); and "Road Home," by Rex Ogle (Norton).

A number of LGBTQ-inclusive books also gained awards or honors in non-LGBTQ-specific categories:

"The Wrong Way Home," by Kate O'Shaughnessy, earned a Newbery Honor; The Michael L. Printz Award, for "literary excellence in young adult literature," went to "Brownstone," by Samuel Teer and Mar Julia, while Printz Honors went to "Compound Fracture," by Andrew Joseph White (Peachtree), "The Deep Dark," by Molly Knox Ostertag (Graphix), and "Road Home" (also a Stonewall honoree; see above).

"Night Owls," by A. R. Vishny (HarperCollins), won the Sydney Taylor Book Award (Young Adult) for books about the Jewish experience; Sydney Taylor Honors went to the picture book "Joyful Song," by Lesléa Newman, illustrated by Susan Gal (Levine Querido); the middle grade novel "Just Shy of Ordinary," by A.J. Sass (Little, Brown), and the young adult novel "The Forbidden Book," by Sacha Lamb (Levine Querido), while the middle grade novel "Benji Zeb is a Ravenous Werewolf," by Deke Moulton (Tundra) was named a Sydney Taylor Notable Book.

EEOC

Continued from page 3

the message: "The requested page could not be found."

Jocelyn Samuels, one of the Democratic EEOC commissioners who was fired last month, said via email that Trump's executive order and the EEOC's response to it "is truly regrettable."

"The Administration's efforts to erase trans people are deeply harmful to a vulnerable community

"Libertad," by Bessie Flores Zaldívar (Dial), earned a Pura Belpré Honor (Author), for books about "the Latino cultural experience"; "Homebody," by Theo Parish, earned a YALSA Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults Honor; and illustrator Jamiel Law won a Coretta Scott King - John Steptoe New Talent Award for the picture book "Jimmy's Rhythm & Blues: The Extraordinary Life of James Baldwin," written by Michelle Meadows (HarperCollins).

Additionally, author Carole Boston Weatherford won the Children's Literature Legacy Award, for the lasting impact of her "books that demonstrate integrity and respect for all children's lives and experiences." Her titles illuminate Black lives, and several contain LGBTQ representation, including "Sugar Pie Lullaby," illustrated by Sawyer Cloud (Sourcebooks); "A Song for the Unsung: Bayard Rustin, the Man Behind the 1963 March on Washington," co-authored with Rob Sanders and illustrated by Byron McCray (Henry Holt), and "Becoming Billie Holiday," illustrated by Floyd Cooper (Wordsong).

Just over two weeks after the YMAS, the ALA's Rainbow Book List Committee announced its 2025 Rainbow Book List of over 175 titles "celebrating LGBTQIA+ youth and families." Unlike the Stonewall Awards and other YMAS, which recognize only a very few books at the peak of excellence, the Rainbow Book List is a larger but still librarian-approved group of titles, intended "to assist librarians, educators, caregivers, LGBTQIA+ members, and community allies in selecting quality LGBTQIA+ stories to include in their collections," as the committee explained in its announcement.

The committee read and evaluated more than 550 books to arrive at its selection of 175. This is up from 2024's selection of 111 titles, second only to 2023's record of 193, and nearly four times the 45 selected in 2008, when the list first launched. See the whole list, including Top 10 Titles for Young Readers and Top 10 Titles for Teen Readers, at bit.ly/rainbowbooklist.

The Rainbow Book List Committee observed, too, "Over the last few years, our job as librarians to fight for the inclusion of stories that reflect and celebrate the existence of all genders and sexual identities has become increasingly difficult. Unfortunately, the fact that this list exists will anger those individuals who wish to erase and censor queer identities and challenge titles in library collections."

At the same time, the committee said, "We remain encouraged that so many queer stories are continuing to be told. The experiences of LGBTQIA+ youth and families deserve to be represented and included in ALL library collections." They hope that stakeholders will use the Rainbow List to be "intentional" about doing so. I urge readers here to be among them.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a two-time GLAAD Media Award-winning blog for LGBTQ parents plus a searchable database of 1,700+ LGBTQ family books.

and inconsistent with governing law," she said.

Sarah Warbelow, vice president of legal at LGBTQ+ rights group Human Rights Campaign, added in an emailed statement: "This is the inevitable outcome when the EEOC is weaponized to greenlight discrimination against American workers.

"Instead of standing up for the rights of everyone to a workplace free from discrimination, including harassment and bias, the Trump administration is making it abundantly clear they will not protect working people."

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billy masters

I'm more than a little annoyed at my beloved Google. They've caved to pressure from our new federal government and renamed the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America. BUT (there's always a but), it will only be named that when you are in the United States. Anywhere else, it will continue to be called the Gulf of Mexico. Admittedly, this is not a big deal, right? Who cares? I thought that way...until I discovered that Google has also eliminated Gay Pride Month from their calendars...along with Hispanic Heritage Month, Women's History Month and Holocaust Remembrance Day. I hear that Black History Month was also on the list—but they felt it was better to wait until after it's over! They're all heart.

Because he's known for his discerning taste, El Presidente has taken over the Kennedy Center as chairman of the board. The previous CEO, **David M. Rubinstein**, held the position since 2010. That means he was chairman through both Democratic and Republican administrations. One of El's first decisions was to cancel the national tour of "Finn"—a children's musical shepherded through the Kennedy Center. While the Center's spokesperson says the tour cancellation was "a purely financial decision", I think not. "Finn" is a musical about a young shark who "wants to let out his inner fish"—and I think we all know what that means. In case it wasn't clear, the team behind the show said, "At its heart it has a universal message of love and acceptance." Well, we can't have that! They added, "The fact that that extends to sparkly boys seems to be controversial."

Last week, **Guy Pearce** and **Adrien Brody** were at the Santa Barbara Film Festival and both received the Cinema Vanguard Award. During a panel discussion, Pearce was asked about "The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert." "We made the film in '93, it came out in '94 and coming off the back of the AIDS epidemic, homophobia was just off the charts through that period. And people were starting to speak up. People were starting to feel braver about stepping forward and acknowledging and speaking up about who they are. 'Priscilla' really enabled a voice for a lot of people, which is one of the things that we've been told this past 30 years." When asked about the oft-rumored sequel, he said, "We're putting together a script, what the idea might be, and if we all feel that it's worthwhile, and then we'll do it. I think Hugo and I and Terence are certainly into it, and Steph (writer/director **Stephan Elliott**) and Hugo and I are having lots of chats about what we might do. So we're excited about it, but we won't do it unless it feels right. We don't want to ruin the original one." Fingers crossed.

Sometimes you can go home again...and sometimes you can't. After years of bad recasts and inactivity, "Project Runway" is returning to the air, now as part of the Disney family on Freeform. Lo and behold, they've lured back **Heidi Klum**. But in a surprising move, **Tim Gunn** won't join her...and it wasn't his decision. When Klum texted Tim to ask how his contract looked, he said what contract? Tim says, "I called my agent and he knew things were going on, but he contacted the executive producer of this new show, and they said, 'We don't want him.' And my agent said, 'Well, he's done 19 seasons of 'Runway', 16 with Heidi. The two of them won an Emmy together as hosts, and now you're going to separate them?' And they said yes. So I wasn't asked back." Well, that's not completely true. He was asked to make a cameo in one episode. He shot back, "What do I do? Wave from a bus as the designers are going into Mood? Heidi comes to see me at the retirement home and we play croquet? So no thank you. And as Heidi would say, you're either in or you're out. And I'm out. So I wasn't asked to join."

Someone who is trying to get out is **Wendy Williams**. As you know, Wendy's been in a memory unit of a NYC care facility which she describes as a prison. Of course, that is where people with dementia and Alzheimer's are placed, and Wendy was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia—which she's vehemently disputed during a recent media blitz. Due to these lucid appearances, a new medical evaluation has been scheduled. In fact, by the time you read this, that will have already

taken place (by a doctor her legal team hand-picked). She also filed papers with the court asking that her guardianship be dissolved. Stay tuned.

Back in 2023, **Sean Hayes** won a Best Actor Tony for "Good Night, Oscar", in which he played actor, pianist and raconteur **Oscar Levant**. The show closed in August of 2023. If you missed it, have no fear. It's just been announced that Hayes will bring the show to London's Barbican Theatre—thus making his West End debut. It's a limited seven-week run starting on July 31st and ending on September 21st. So book your trip now.

This made me look something up. I remembered **George Clooney** announcing that he would be making his Broadway debut in a play adaptation of his film "Good Night and Good Luck". I wondered what ever happened to that. Well, turns out the show is opening on April 3rd at the Winter Garden Theatre. His Edward R. Murrow will allegedly only run for two months, but something tells me that could be extended.

Last week, **Joy Behar** debuted her latest oeuvre, "My First Ex-Husband" (the title was the idea of Behar's second husband), based on discussions she had with dozens of divorced women. She distilled their stories into eight monologues delivered onstage by four women in black. It's a performance style that has worked well for shows like "The Vagina Monologues" and "Love, Loss and What I Wore". Similarly, her cast will rotate every four weeks. The opening night company featured Behar alongside bestie **Susie Essman**, **Tovah Feldshuh** and **Adrienne C. Moore**. The next cast will kick off February 26th and includes some of our favorites—**Susan Lucci**, **Judy Gold**, **Cathy Moriarty** and **Tonya Pinkins**. It plays at the MMAC Theatre in NYC.

Matthew McConaughey and **Woody Harrelson** have signed with Apple TV+ for an "untitled brothers comedy series". The show is a fictionalized version of their lives—they are playing McConaughey and Harrelson as if they were brothers. But it's the next name which caught my eye. The fabulous Holland Taylor will play Matthew's mother, "Ma Mac". If they're looking for a title, might I suggest, "Two and a Half Bosom Buddies"?

This week's "Ask Billy" question really took me back. Sam in Las Vegas writes, "I read that **Tom Chase** is making a comeback. Is it true?"

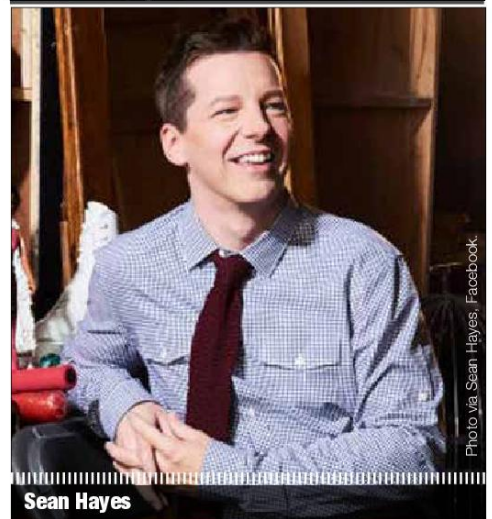
Gay porn legend Tom Chase got into gay porn in the 1990s, primarily working with Falcon. At the time, he called himself "the Wally Cleaver of porn". In 2004, he announced his retirement. Two years later, he returned—somewhat scruffier and more in the daddy vibe. He landed at Colt Studios and was bigger than ever (so to speak). He retired again around 2009. Recently he gave an interview to explain what he's been up to. He's a personal trainer, married to his best friend, and living in Oregon. He said, "I am adjusting to getting older. I am letting go of needing my butt to be as firm as a basketball, and I am allowing myself to crease and wrinkle and be ok about it." I'll have to ask him how he did that! As to gay porn, he started an OnlyFans page last year (he filmed a scene with **Johnny Hazard**). However, he's open to a full-scale porn return. He says he'd like to work for Raging Stallion—"any studio that focuses on older, senior muscle guys will interest me". He looks at his life in three stages—but phrases it like one of those SAT word questions. "The first half of my career lasted 15 years. Then I took 15 years off to grow up and get happy. I want the second half of my career to be just as long—15 years, finishing at the age of 75." So how old is Tom now? You'll get more visual clues on BillyMasters.com.

When Chase is showing off his beaver, it's definitely time to end yet another column. These few days in Fort Lauderdale were just what I needed to recharge. If you need to warm up, check out www.BillyMasters.com—the site that's both naughty and nice. If you have a question for me, send it along to Billly@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Trump becomes a pescatarian! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.



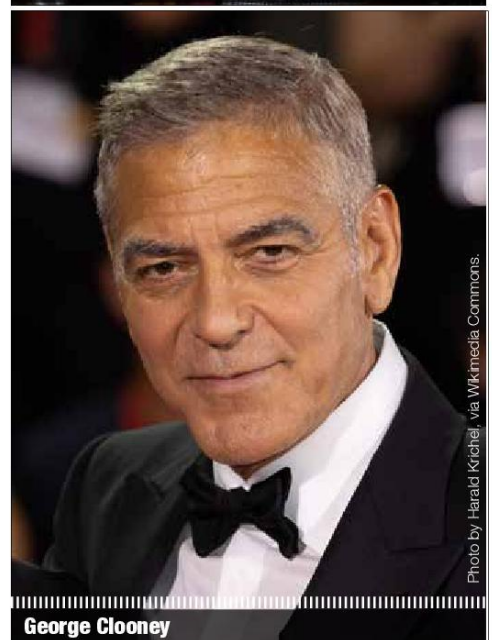
Tim Gunn

Photo by Chrisea Hekey, via Wikimedia Commons.



Sean Hayes

Photo via Sean Hayes, Facebook.



George Clooney

Photo by Harald Krichel, via Wikimedia Commons.

Pride

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“These past two years, I have had the pleasure of seeing a beautiful ocean of love, joy, and euphoria on the streets of Boston—all rooted in LGBTQ+ liberation. I expect this year to be just as moving,” said Adrianna Boulin, President of Boston Pride For The People. “Our commitment to building a celebration reflective of the dynamic ways LGBTQ+ communities honor Pride remains strong.”

Like recent years, Boston Pride for the People will kick off its celebrations on June 14 with a parade that begins in Copley Square and makes its way through the South End and Back Bay, culminating at Boston Common where an all ages concert and festival will take place. A 21+ block party will take place in the afternoon on City Hall Plaza.

“Boston always leads as a beacon of love, resilience, and inclusion,” said Mayor Michelle Wu. “As we come together for the 2025 Boston Pride for the People Parade and Celebration, we honor the vibrant diversity of our LGBTQ+ community. In the face of uncertainty, our city remains unwavering in its commitment to equal-

ity and justice for all. Pride is not just a celebration—it’s a powerful reminder that our strength lies in unity, and Boston will always be a place where everyone belongs.”

It is estimated more than 1 million people attended the Pride Parade and Festivals in June of 2024, BP4TP’s second year as organizers. An estimated 15,000 people marched from Copley Square to Boston Common in the parade, with 316 contingent groups participating. Of those contingents, 62% were nonprofits and community groups. The festivals also welcomed 240 vendors in 2024, of which 38% were community based groups and 40% were small businesses. Many of these were offered reduced registration fees or participated at no cost.

Supporting BP4TP’s operations across the parade and festivals were 311 volunteers. BP4TP also contracted services from 25 LGBTQ+ business owners to support production of the event.

This year’s celebration will take place in the midst of ongoing attacks on LGBTQ+ people and other marginalized communities, from the federal government and state legislatures around the country.

“Attacks on transgender people take aim at the heart of LGBTQ+ communities. They are intended to strike fear in all

LGBTQ+ people,” said Chastity Bowick, a member of the BP4TP Organizing Committee. “In the midst of such vitriol, we want BP4TP to be a celebration of Trans joy, an act of resistance in itself. I am excited to see the whole queer community and our allies stand together this summer.”

Registration for organizations in both the parade and festivals is now open. BP4TP also invites the community to submit ideas for this year’s theme, which can be found here. Individuals and organizations interested in sponsoring this year’s celebration can contact sponsor@bp4tp.org. Sponsorships help cover the costs of producing the events and allows BP4TP to reduce registration costs for smaller organizations. BP4TP encourages anyone interested in volunteering to sign up at <https://bostonprideforthepeople.org>.

Boston Pride For The People (BP4TP) is a volunteer and community-run non-profit group working to empower, celebrate, commemorate, and educate in partnership with Boston’s LGBTQ+ communities. In 2023, BP4TP hosted and managed Boston’s first Pride parade and festivals in more than three years, bringing New England’s largest Pride parade back to its home in Boston. For more information visit: <https://bostonprideforthepeople.org>

Theater

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and terra incognita that is space itself.

Make no mistake. No didactic exercise, Feldman’s play contains not only convincing evidence about the struggles of women scientists and explorers but also real drama—sometimes combined with irony and even unexpected humor. Aside from vivid information about all of the women, there is a strikingly detailed depiction of the astronaut screening tests undergone by women in the program known as Mercury 13—participants inexcusably denied access to the NASA space program in 1962. Here special credit goes to movement director Lindsay Torrey, who effectively configured various actresses to evoke the screening tests

unreasonably demanded of the women in question. Going forward, there is a telling reference to budget cuts and layoffs.

Along the way, a strong and dramatically compelling conflict involves tenacious record breaker (for speed and distance, among others) Jackie Cochran (who would provide some financial support) and less self-assured but no less expert Gealdyn Cobb (vulnerable as a lesbian in very intolerant times). Catharine K. Sulsar captures Cochran’s authority as well as her self-serving statements that would alienate fellow explorers. MK Tuomanen brings touching nuance to Cobb and exhilaration to Ride. Kaili Y. Turner brings captivating wonder and enthusiasm to the role of Jane Hart, a savvy senator’s wife. Hui Ying Wen is touching as Cobb’s journalist lover Ivy Rieker and spirited as first Chinese-Amer-

ican pilot Hazel Ying Lee—never given a military funeral despite her World War II service. Valencia Proctor catches pioneering Bessie Coleman’s feistiness and Irene Leverton’s passion. Monica Risi and Mitra Sharif are equally persuasive as are all of the seven actresses in moving between two roles. Barlow Adamson ranges smartly between the male roles—particularly JFK and very demanding administrator Randolph Lovelace.

A theater side room features photographs and informative bios of the actual women. “SPACE” is much more than a validation of these female pioneers. The Brit d’Arbeloff production should serve as an artful encouragement to aspiring women and a timely challenge to all theatergoers at a time when science and technology are threatened by purveyors of ignorance.

GLAD

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son last fall. I just want to go to school like other kids and keep playing the game I love,” said Parker Tirrell.

“We were so grateful and proud to watch Parker play soccer with her friends last fall, and to see the joy it brings her. Her father and I just want her to be happy, healthy, and know she belongs—the same things any parent wants for their child. It’s just not right for the federal government to come down so hard on a kid,” said Sara Tirrell, Parker’s mother.

“The chance to try out for tennis means new teammates, new friends, and a sense of fun and belonging. I just want the same opportunities as other girls at my school,” said

Iris Turmelle.

“It’s heartbreaking to have the federal government so aggressively go after our daughter,” said Amy Manzelli and Chad Turmelle, Iris’s parents. “Iris is looking forward to playing spring sports and being part of a team. We just want her to be able to attend school and get the most out of her education—on and off the court.”

President Trump’s February 5 executive order banning transgender girls and women from athletics is the latest in a series of executive orders and related policy changes deliberately aimed at broadly restricting the rights of transgender Americans in public life. Since taking office Jan. 20, his administration has worked to roll back access to non-discrimination protections, health care, equal educational opportunities, military service, and vital identity documents

for transgender people.

Parker, Iris, and their families are represented by Chris Erchull, Ben Klein, Michael Haley, and Jennifer Levi at GLAD Law, Henry Klementowicz and Gilles Bissonnette at the ACLU of NH, and Louis Lobel, Kevin DeJong, and Elaine Blais at Goodwin.

GLAD Law (GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders) has been a leading force in LGBTQ+ rights for nearly 50 years. With deep roots in New England and impact nationwide, we use strategic litigation, legislation, and public education to fight discrimination based on gender identity, sexual orientation, and HIV status. GLAD Law’s bold strategy and precedent-setting victories have reshaped the legal landscape, advancing equality for all people facing discrimination and social barriers. www.glad.org

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