Submitted by Fenway Health

Trump Administration Announces Repeal of Federal Health Regulations

By Sue O’Connell

Alleged Hate Crime

By Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com

You Began as a Wish

Explains Assisted Reproduction to Children

“I wish my name was Hunter Biden. I could go abroad and make millions off my father’s presidency. I’d be a really rich guy.”

– Donald Trump Jr. clearly has no clue. He’ll have even less after he tangles with the ladies of “The View” this week.

The other Admissions scandal

Assault Outside Jacques in Boston

Facebook posts.

The Boston Police are seeking the identities of men who were involved in the altercation. If you have information that might lead toward identifying the alleged attackers, call Boston Police Crime Stoppers at 800-494-TIPS. Flowers, who is the organizer of the

"You Began as a Wish" Explains Assisted Reproduction to Children

Kim Bergman wrote her new children’s picture book about assisted reproduction based on “what I’ve been telling parents for 30 years to tell their kids. It’s what I told my own kids.” Bergman is a licensed psychologist and senior partner at Growing Generations, the first surrogacy and egg donation agency dedicated to serving the gay and lesbian community, but now serving clients of all identities. She and her spouse Natalie also used assisted reproduction to start their own family over 20 years ago. Bergman distilled this wealth of knowledge and experience to create You Began as a Wish, a simple and melodic book appropriate for even the very youngest children.

This picture book comes just a few months after the publication of her book for adults, Your Future Family: The Essential Guide to Assisted Reproduction. “They really are meant to be companions, because they both take you through the different parts that you need when you’re having a baby through this super-intentional method,” she explained in a phone interview. “In the children’s book, I wanted to emphasize the normalcy of

The other Admissions scandal

Assault Outside Jacques in Boston

Alleged Hate Crime

Rev. Irene Monroe

The College Admissions scandal involving wealthy parents highlights the length at which some will go to assure their children’s entry into elite schools—like former “Desperate Housewives” actress Felicity Huffman and “Full House” star Lori Loughlin who (allegedly for Laughlin) cheated, bribed, lied, and laundered money. While it is easy to dismiss this group of wealthy parents as depraved, morally bankrupt and awash in white privilege, Joshua Harmon’s timely and satirical drama “Admissions” illustrates the length at which high-minded, politically correct and supposedly “woke” white liberals will go to get their chil

see FENWAY, page 2

see MONROE, page 2

see MOMBIAN, page 3

You Began as a Wish cover artwork

Cheryl McMahon and Maureen Keiller in Speakeasy Stage’s production of ADMISSIONS. Photo by Maggie Hall Photography

see JACQUES, page 2

see JACQUES, page 2

see MONROE, page 2
Jacques

Continued from page 1

bi-monthly Fascination fetish gear and kink event at Jacques, and two other men say they were waiting outside the club for a ride when they were provoked with anti-gay slurs and beaten.

On November 4 the following was posted on the event’s Facebook page:

“[The attackers] were attending the show upstairs and used anti-gay epithets, including the words faggot during the assault... All three of the individuals assaulted are comfortable acknowledging this as a hate crime influenced by their identities and presentations as queer people. All three of individuals assaulted are currently safe and have support systems with which they are able to unpack the trauma associated with the event.”

Fenway

Continued from page 1

to one’s belief;”

Repealing gender identity and sexual orientation nondiscrimination provisions related to implementation of the Affordable Care Act, marketplace insurance plans, Medicaid, and elder health care;

Eliminating references to inclusion and protection from discriminatory housing practices in the Department of Housing and Urban Development’s mission statement;

Dismissing Peace Corps volunteers who tested positive for HIV, and refusing to provide pre-exposure prophylaxis for HIV prevention (PrEP) to at-risk volunteers;

Placing transgender inmates of the Federal Bureau of Prisons, especially transgender women, at much higher risk of rape by incarcerating them according to their biological sex at birth instead of their gender identity;

Flowers also posted that the assault began with jeers and taunts from the group before the conflict escalated into a multi-person fight. I remember getting hit in the face several times. It is unclear to me how many times I was hit. At some point during the conflict, I noticed that [one of Flowers’ friends] was on the ground and saw that he was getting kicked and punched repeatedly. I attempted to pull several of his assailants off of him unsuccessfully. After what I perceived to be about a minute, the fight broke up and the assailants fled. It was only then that I noticed [Flowers’ other friend] and saw that the left side of his face was completely covered in blood.”

Police Sgt. John Boyle told Boston Magazine that the Boston Police Department’s civil rights division is investigating the incident. Anyone with information is encouraged to call Boston Police Crime Stoppers at (800) 494-TIPS.

Monroe

Continued from page 1

dren into top-tier colleges and universities, too.

Charlie, a graduating senior at a tony New Hampshire boarding school, gets wait-listed for Yale, a school he has dreamt of attending since a small child. The news of being wait-listed flings Charlie into a tempest turban that both shocks and appalls his progressive parents when his tirade turns into a racist rant. Charlie states he has better grades and SAT scores than his childhood best friend, Perry, who is biracial and is accepted to Yale.

“How the FUCK did Perry Peters get into Yale, and Charlie Mason get deferred?... It’s so— I’m sorry, but it’s so unfair—I am drowning over here, ok? I am— Because I am not one of those. I get that there are entitled white men who assume they get a seat without having to do anything to earn it, but I’m actually one of the people working really fucking hard to earn a seat, and every time I get close, it’s like, ew! Not you! No one wants you here, fuck off.”

While Charlie doesn’t grasp fully how white privilege works at unbalancing a level playing field and disrupting any chance at fairness, his father, Bill, the school’s headmaster, rails back at his son’s sense of entitlement:

“Life is not fair. It’s miserably unfair, but it’s a fact of life. Charlie, you really are to this cause.”

And, what parent doesn’t want the best for their kid? The parents understand diversity more than a numbers game as equal to a systemic change that would bring real results. For example, Sherri admonishes a co-worker for having only three photos of students of color out of fifty-two in the Admissions brochure. And, Bill rejoices in a 20 percent increase in students of color compared to last year’s 9 percent. Both don’t see that adding more students don’t change diversity, but instead, it cloaks the school’s status quo.

The pivotal moment in the play is Charlie’s solution to address his white privilege moving forward in life: to withdraw all his college acceptances, attend community college and donate his college tuition to endow a scholarship for a student of color at the school. The parents are apoplectic with rage at the decision. They, none-the-less, access their bevy of well-connected friends to overturn Charlie’s decision.

“‘The central arguments of the play revolve around thorny questions about access and opportunity. ‘White liberal Americans want the world to look different and sound different, but do they really want things to be different?’’”

“‘The play asks the left to take a look at how committed they are to their kid? The parents understand diversity more than a numbers game as equal to a systemic change that would bring real results. For example, Sherri admonishes a co-worker for having only three photos of students of color out of fifty-two in the Admissions brochure. And, Bill rejoices in a 20 percent increase in students of color compared to last year’s 9 percent. Both don’t see that adding more students don’t change diversity, but instead, it cloaks the school’s status quo.’”

“Admissions” is a mirror liberal whites need to see themselves. It leaves you understanding that good intentions concerning diversity isn’t enough.

“‘Admissions’ runs until November 30. Presented by the SpeakEasy Stage Company at the Roberts Studio Theater, Calderwood Pavilion, Boston Center of the Arts, 527 Tremont Street, Boston.

Jasper J. Lawson, PH.D.
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that and how, wherever those parts come from, the most important thing is that through third-party assisted reproduction, these children really do start as a wish."

That titular assertion sets the tone. We then learn that every child comes from four things: an egg, a sperm, a womb, and a home. "Some bodies" have sperm, or eggs, or a womb—a phrasing inclusive of transgender and nonbinary identities—and while parents may provide those things, so may a sperm donor, egg donor, or surrogate. The book is also inclusive of a wide variety of family structures, including those with one, two, or more than two parents. Irit Pollak’s bright and blocky illustrations show joyous parents and children as well as simply drawn images of egg, sperm, and womb.

Bergman said that academic research tells us, "It's pretty clear that kids want to know where they came from." She added, "They have a right to know where they came from. If you build a foundation that says, 'This is my family, this is how I created it,' and you're proud of that and you're up front about it, there's nothing to be secretive about. It's still okay to be private, because it's still your story and your child's story, but it's not a secret, and it's really important that kids get to know where they came from, right from the beginning."

In fact, she suggests that even when children are infants, parents should speak to them about their origins in very simple terms, such as, "Mommy and Mama wanted you so much and a nice man helped us have you, and here you are," or "Daddy and Papa wanted you, and there were some parts we needed from some women, and a really nice woman gave us the egg (or the seed, or whatever language you're comfortable with in the beginning), and then another wonderful woman carried you inside of her until you were big enough to come home to Daddy and Papa." Parents can make this story part of "the fabric of who the child is, so there's never a moment where the kid remembers you sat them down and told them where they came from. They always knew and it was no big deal." As children get older, parents can "layer in" biological facts, genetics, and information about the donor. You Began as a Wish offers language and imagery to help in the process.

For LGBTQ parents first starting out on their assisted reproduction journey, her advice for finding a welcoming clinic is to "Trust your gut" and "Ask questions." She explained, "You really want to be comfortable and happy and feel good. It's an intimate relationship; it's a long relationship, that lasts through the first trimester. The whole thing is a big collaborative effort," she added. "Whether you're using a surrogate, an egg donor, or a sperm donor; or a lawyer, psychologist, reproductive endocrinologist, insurance agent, or travel agent. This is the ultimate experience of 'It takes a village.' You really want that village to be people you trust and who have your back."

She added, "If anyone in that village doesn't make you feel good, replace them. You're paying for them. Your insurance probably isn't. Make sure that you're really happy."

Overall, she said, the process of assisted reproduction is "definitely easier" than when she first started in the field. "There are tried-and-true systems and structures and also laws that protect people—protect parents, protect surrogates, and protect donors," she observed.

There are also resources such as her own Your Future Family to inform and support not only prospective parents, but also their extended family and friends. "I wrote that book for everybody who's touched by third-party assisted reproduction: to normalize it, to take the shame out of it, to take the mystery out of it, to take the fear out of it, to make it something that seems accessible and doable and understandable," she said. "Less than 25 percent of U.S. families consist of biological, married, husband and wife and their mutual biological kids," she added. "That's just not the American family anymore, according to the 2010 Census."

"Family is not the old definition of family that we think it is. Family can be so different from that and in so many different constellations, and they're all wonderful and valid." Her books will undoubtedly help many families wishing on those stars.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGTBQ parents.
Legendary Puerto Rican astrologer Walter Mercado dies at 88

By DANICA COTO
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)—Television astrologer Walter Mercado, whose glamorous persona made him a star in Latin media and a cherished icon for gay people in most of the Spanish-speaking world, has died. He was 88.

Mercado was known throughout Latin American for the melodrama of his daily horoscopes, delivered on internationally broadcast networks such as Univision with an exaggerated trilling of the “r”. He favored colorful brocaded capes and huge gemstone rings, which he flashed while pointing at viewers.

Mercado never publicly discussed his sexual orientation but his screen presence was a source of comfort for many people in lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities throughout Latin American and Latin communities in the U.S., said Alex Fumero, a Los Angeles-based producer who has spent two years working on a documentary about him.

“This is a culture that’s been dominated by machismo and homophobia for a very long time,” Fumero said in a phone interview. “He was really brave.”

Fumero said Mercado’s silence on his orientation may have allowed him to keep the adoration of LGBTQ fans and maintain acceptance from conservative Latinos who could have rejected an openly gay television star.

Fumero said one LGBTQ activist told him, “You don’t ask about what you can see,” adding that he believes that was the attitude held by many from Mercado’s generation.

“It’s the plausible deniability that chauvinist or homophobic audiences need in order to give Walter the pass that they needed...to enjoy the message he was sending them,” Fumero said.

Fumero said he grew up watching Mercado and recalled his grandmother shushing every time the astrologer delivered his predictions: “If Walter was on TV, everybody had to be quiet.”

Hospital spokeswoman Sofia Luquis told The Associated Press on Sunday that Mercado died from kidney failure at the Auxilio Mutuo Hospital in San Juan late Saturday. He had been living in the suburb of Cupey and had spent several days in the hospital before his death.

Mercado was born in Ponce, one of Puerto Rico’s largest cities. Although he took university courses in pharmacology, psychology and pedagogy, he became a well-known dancer and theater actor and also appeared in several soap operas.

He worked briefly for TV stations based in the U.S. Caribbean territory before moving to South Florida, where he joined Univision.

Mercado, whose popularity began to soar in the 1980s, had a collection of more than 2,000 capes, including some with feathers, precious stones and unique embroideries.

His best-known catch phrase was “Above all, lots and lots of love.”

“He is one of those people who used his celebrity and power to reach millions in order to inspire people with good messages,” said Aida Levitan, who helped organize an exhibition at the HistoryMiami museum to honor Mercado.

She said hundreds of people showed up and wanted to meet him and take pictures, and he agreed to it all.

“It’s not easy at the age of 88 to face 500 people trying to take pictures. He never lost his cool,” Levitan recalled in a phone interview with the AP. “He used all his gifts and talents for the good of mankind, and that’s what makes him so appealing.”

Mercado, however, also faced some legal battles. In 1998, he got in trouble for endorsing alleged health and beauty products and was named in a class-action lawsuit that accused him of misleading people into buying beads with supposed special powers. The president of the jewelry company, Unique Gems International Corp., was later sentenced to 14 years in prison for defrauding 16,000 people in a $90 million scam.

In October 2010, Mercado announced he was changing his name to “Shanti Ananda.” That same year, he stopped shooting his segment for the Univision Spanish-language TV channel. Months later, he began to deliver daily horoscopes through El Nuevo Herald newspaper in Miami.

Mercado was hospitalized in December 2011 in Puerto Rico following a cold that turned into pneumonia. His health condition worsened, and he was transferred to a hospital in Ohio. It was later revealed that he had suffered a heart attack.

In 2014, he launched a website called passionlatinos.com that offered horoscopes, online dating and an array of products called “Captivating,” that included fragrances, candles, soaps and body lotions aimed at prosperity, sex, health, peace and love.

Execution looms for South Dakota man in co-worker’s stabbing

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP)—A man who stabbed to death a former co-worker who interrupted him during a burglary is set to be executed in South Dakota on Monday barring a last-minute stay.

Charles Russell Rhines brushed off a plea for mercy from 22-year-old Dominick Schaeffer in the 1992 slaying at a Rapid City doughnut shop. Now 63, Rhines last week unsuccessfully challenged the drug the state plans to use in the execution at the state prison in Sioux Falls.

Rhines argued the drug, pentobarbital, isn’t the “ultra-short-acting” drug he’s entitled to, but a circuit judge ruled it acts as fast or faster than other drugs Rhines cited when used in lethal doses. He’s appealing that ruling to the state Supreme Court.

Rhines has also asked the U.S. Supreme Court to block his execution. He argues that the jury that sentenced him to death had an anti-gay bias, a claim the court declined to hear before. He also argues that the state has denied him access to experts to examine him for cognitive and psychiatric impairments; the state argued that he was examined by mental health experts and found competent.

Gov. Kristi Noem has said she won’t block the execution.

Schaeffer was delivering supplies to Dig ‘Em Donuts when Rhines ambushed him, stabbing him in the stomach. Bleeding from his wound, Schaeffer begged to be taken to a hospital, vowing to keep silent about the crime; instead, he was forced into a storeroom, tied up and stabbed to death.

Steve Allender, a Rapid City police detective at the time of the killing who is now the city’s mayor, said Rhines’ jury sentenced him to death partly because of Rhines’ “chilling laughter” as he described Schaeffer’s death spars.

“I watched the jury as they listened to the confession...
Always, Sometimes or Never
by Judah Leblang | www.JudahLeblang.com
contributing writer

Recently, I’ve been listening to the debate over health care and the concern voiced by some of the more conservative Democrats (Biden, Mayor Pete, etc.) that many Americans are happy with their health insurance, and don’t want to go to a government-run single payer system.

While I worry about Elizabeth Warren’s electability, (and Bernie’s), for a variety of reasons, including their proposals to totally revamp our health insurance system, and the ways we, the American taxpayers—those of us unlike Trump—who actually pay taxes, would pay for it, I’ve become a convert to Warren’s point of view.

Based on my recent adventures in navigating the medical system, pricing drugs, and finding the help I need, I’m convinced of the need for real change. Back when I was in my 20s, I gave little thought to health insurance.

I was young, relatively healthy, and since I was a teacher at the Ohio School for the Deaf, I had excellent insurance provided by the State of Ohio. A decade later, I was in and out of school, and then working as a freelance sign language interpreter. Struggling with depression and IBS, I needed insurance, and found it through a small business association.

In my early 40s, I was lucky to find a half-time job doing writing and research at Lesley University, which provided generous benefits. (The benefits for part-time employees were reduced soon after, but I was ‘grandfathered in’ and maintained my relatively low-cost insurance).

Now, twenty years after I started my job at Lesley, I’m a semi-retired/self-employed writer who gets insurance through the Massachusetts state exchange, our version of Obamacare.

At 62, I’m trying to bridge the gap, to hold myself together until Medicare, (which is basically single-payer insurance or socialized medicine, if only those in Trump world would realize it), kicks in. In the meantime, I’m fortunate to live in Massachusetts where I have access to quality care, if only they accept my insurance, and if only the insurance will cover the bulk of what I need.

And therein lies the rub; I refer to Always, my ironically named health insurance provider, as “Sometimes,” since they seem particularly adept at denying the more expensive medicines or procedures—regardless of need.

A case in point: Over the past five years I’ve struggled with fatigue, a sense that my energy had gone from 60 to 0, as if I were running on fumes. A series of tests revealed that I had sleep apnea. But after trying a c-pap machine (a non-starter as I couldn’t sleep with it) and getting a mouthpiece or oral device (covered by Blue Cross, back when I had a real job)—which seemed to ease the apnea, but didn’t boost my energy—I petitioned for an in-lab sleep study.

The study was designed to get to the heart of the problem, to get data we couldn’t uncover in a home sleep study. After wrestling with the insurer and meeting with a specialist, I finally was approved for a study at Mt Auburn Hospital. But due to various issues—one of my leads came off, and the technician came in to rewire me several times...
Continued from page 4

of Charles Rhines on audiotape and their reaction to his confession was appropriate. Any person being held would be repulsed by the things he said and the way he said them,” Allen told KELO.

Rhines attended Schaeffer’s funeral, then moved to Seattle a few days later. Authorities thought the move was odd because Rhines had vowed to never return to Washington state, where he had spent time in prison. Allender said authorities initially interviewed Rhines and felt something was off, but Rhines wasn’t arrested until four months later—after Rhines told his former roommate about the killing.

Rhines wrote to the Argus Leader in May 2013, saying that when he saw a grieving mother on the news in an unrelated case, he realized what he had done to Schaeffer’s mother.

“Just at the cusp of her beloved child becoming an independent person, a responsible adult with a family and friends surrounding him and his mother waiting expectantly for grandchildren to arrive, the thing was off, but Rhines wasn’t arrested until four months later—after Rhines told his former roommate about the killing.”

Peggy Schaeffer, Donnivan’s mother, rejected the words as insincere.

Schaeffer’s family declined to speak with The Associated Press in advance of Rhines’ execution. In June, when a judge scheduled the execution, Peggy Schaeffer told reporters, “This step was one big one for justice for Donnivan. It’s just time.”

Kentucky Supreme Court dismisses gay pride T-shirt case

FRANKFORT, Ky. (AP)—The Kentucky Supreme Court has sided with a print shop owner who refused to make a gay pride T-shirt because he says it was against his religious beliefs.

The state’s high court dismissed the claim after two lower courts also ruled in favor of Lexington print shop Hands-On Originals. The company declined a T-shirt order from Lexington’s Gay and Lesbian Services Organization for the city’s 2012 Gay Pride Festival. The design said “Lexington Pride Festival” on the front.

The high court ruled Thursday that the gay advocacy group lacked standing to make a claim against shop owner Blaine Adamson because the city’s gay rights law was written to protect individuals.

While this result is no doubt disappointing to many interested in this case and its potential outcome, the fact that the wrong party filed the complaint makes the discrimination analysis almost impossible to conduct, including issues related to freedom of expression and religion,” the justices wrote in the ruling.

Adamson said after a hearing before the Supreme Court in August that the T-shirt he was asked to print “goes against my conscience.”

Lexington’s Human Rights Commission ordered Adamson in 2012 to print the shirts and attend diversity training. Adamson appealed and won rulings from the circuit court and state court of appeals. The appeals court said in 2017 the printing business was subject to the city’s fairness ordinance but nothing in that ordinance prohibits a private business from engaging in viewpoint or message censorship.

St. Louis official ‘horrified’ by gay discrimination defense

CLAYTON, Mo. (AP)—A top St. Louis County official is blasting legal staff for arguing that gay discrimination in Missouri is legal in a case in which nearly $20 million was awarded to a police sergeant.

The St. Louis Post-Dispatch reports that St. Louis County Executive Sam Page said Wednesday in a statement that he was “horrified and surprised” that argument was used” in Sgt. Keith Wildhaber’s case. Wildhaber says he was told to “tone down his gayness” and passed up for promotion 23 times.

County Counselor Beth Orwick says she instructed two lawyers working on the case not to make the argument. She says she was mortified and surprised when they wrote in a motion that the Missouri Human Rights Act “explicitly omits any reference to sexual orientation as a protected class.”

Information from: St. Louis Post-Dispatch, http://www.stltoday.com

Virginia women’s college updates transgender student policy

ROANOKE, Va. (AP)—A private women’s university in Virginia has announced a new policy allowing students who transition from female to male while at school to remain enrolled and earn their degree.

Under the new guidelines at Hollins University in Roanoke, enrolled students who transition from female to male will no longer be required to transfer to another institution. As for applicants transitioning from male to female, they no longer have to complete a full surgical transition before being eligible for admission.

Hollins’ Board of Trustees Chairwoman Alexa-andra Trower told The Roanoke Times that the changes adopted Saturday recognize gender plurality while maintaining the university’s identity as a women’s college.

The updated policy says the university will consider admission for any undergraduate applicants who “consistently live and identify as women, regardless of the gender assigned to them at birth.”

Applicants must identify as a woman on application materials. Students who were assigned female at birth but who now identify as male are not eligible for admission. The policy says individuals who identify as nonbinary, meaning a gender identity that’s not strictly male or female, are not eligible for admission, either.

Under Hollins’ first transgender policy in 2007, a person born male had to have completed a full surgical transition to female in order to apply. That policy allowed enrolled students to adopt a male identity, but if they took steps to transition such as taking hormones, having surgery or legally changing their name, they would only be able to finish the semester before the university required them to transfer.

That policy was revised in 2013 and 2016 before the most recent change, but the school has faced criticism from those who found previous versions of its policy “unnatural and invasive,” the newspaper reported.


Design concepts unveiled for Pulse memorial, museum

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—A memorial for Florida’s Pulse nightclub massacre will have a reflecting pool with rainbow-colored lines radiating from it, and a nearby museum will resemble a three-dimensional spirograph, according to design concepts announced Wednesday.

Forty-nine people were killed and dozens more were injured when a gunman opened fire at the gay nightclub in June 2016. It was the worst mass shooting in modern U.S. history until a gunman opened fire on Las Vegas concertgoers in 2017.

The design concepts are only a starting point for discussions on the Pulse memorial and museum and are open to revisions, according to organizers.

The designs were produced by several French architects and artists who worked with an Orlando architectural firm and a DePaul University professor.

Plans call for the memorial to feature a garden with 49 trees in honor of the victims who were killed. The museum will have open-air areas, a vertical garden, public plazas and a rooftop promenade, according to the design concepts.

A committee of Pulse survivors, architects and central Florida leaders picked the concepts following a public viewing of six finalists’ proposals. Members of the public left 2,300 comments about the six finalists, which had been whittled down from 68 submissions.

The memorial will be at the site of the former Pulse nightclub. The museum will be at the site of the former Memorial Union of the University of Florida.
The improbable World Series victory of the Washington Nationals over the Houston Astros was a captivating story of an underdog that finally conquered its demons, rewarding loyal fans whose hopes exceeded their expectations.

The most memorable moment of the series, however, happened not on the field but in the stands: the loud booing that erupted in Nationals Park during Game 5 when Donald Trump appeared on the Jumbotron. For once, the sea of red hats the president faced bore not his MAGA slogan but the home team’s early Ws.

Observers like MSNBC’s Joe Scarborough and Mika Brzezinski deplored the booing and chants of “Lock him up!” Democratic Senator Chris Coons high-mindedly scolded, “We’re better than this.” Faced with Trump shredding the Constitution, the senator issues a stern memorandum.

Our president was overdue for a taste of the real America outside his bubble. Granted, the liberal enclave of Washington is no Trump stronghold to begin with; but the booing was a salutary contrast to his staged rallies.

The notion that liberals should avoid unpleasant confrontations strikes me as ill-suited to our situation. We have a nasty fight on our hands to wrest our country from Trump's gang of vandals in 2020, and we cannot avoid it. Trump's chanting of Hillary Clinton around the stage at one 2016 debate is a demon in need of exorcising.

Endless hand-wringing. We need to fight back, not display refinement while America is trashed.

Getting medication isn’t much easier. I was recently prescribed a particular drug for a digestive issue—a medication specifically designed for my condition. A little online research confirmed that standard treatment was 10-14 days at a particular dosage. But when I trooped over the pharmacy, I was told that my insurer would only cover 9 pills in a 24-day period, enough to get me through only three days of treatment.

Eventually I filed an internal appeal, and I was allowed to get 30 pills, but I still may be spending hundreds of dollars out of pocket. Meanwhile, if I waited four-to-six weeks, I could get the same brand-name medication from Canada or the UK for a fraction of the price.

A friend suggested that being booed so lustily would let Trump portray himself as a victim yet again. But the way his face fell during the incident made it clear he was not welcoming it. This is a president who likes to say “everyone knows” all sorts of things that are not true. He thinks his lies alter reality. A ballgame crowd’s spontaneous booing doesn’t fit his narrative, so they must all be Deep Staters.

Instead of scolding a crowd for its honesty, we should embrace honesty ourselves by exposing Trump as a dangerous fraud who needs to be removed before he can do further damage. We should show that his tribalist incitements conceal his real tribal sympathies for robber barons, and that stoking division at home while betraying our only path forward is through cooperation.

This captures something that the immigrant—whose hopes exceeded their expectations—found so captivating. It was a story of an underdog that finally confronted its demons, rewarding loyal fans whose hopes exceeded their expectations.

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Rule would let faith-based groups exclude LGBT parents

BY KEVIN FREIKING
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Trump administration on Friday proposed a rule that would allow faith-based foster care and adoption agencies to continue getting taxpayer funding even if they exclude LGBT families and others from their services based on religious beliefs.

The announcement generated a sharp backlash from some Democratic lawmakers and LGBT advocacy groups. Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., said the Trump administration was working overtime to “implement cruel and discriminatory policies, and wasting taxpayer dollars in its obsessive pursuit.”

President Donald Trump has made addressing the concerns of evangelical voters a priority of his presidency.

The White House says the rule from the Department of Health and Human Services is needed to remove barriers that prevent some nonprofits from helping vulnerable people in their communities. It would apply to a broad range of organizations that receive federal support, such as those that get federal funding to help the homeless or prevent HIV. But the focus from supporters and detractors Friday was on foster care and adoption services.

Under the proposed rule, HHS would redo an Obama-era rule that included sexual orientation as a protected trait under anti-discrimination protections.

Rent Endures

By Jules Becker

“Rent” has had an enduring lease on life since its 1996 Broadway debut. The show’s on-going seasons of love have included a sizable Broadway run (closing in 2008), a respectable Off-Broadway stretch and numerous revival tenancies around the country.

The Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize-winning musical (which opened after its 29 year old author-composer Jonathan Larson’s passing from an aortic aneurysm resulting from Marfan syndrome) has repeatedly resonated with both literal and metaphorical insights about life, living and neighborhood as a kind of extended family.

While the show’s observations on drug addiction and AIDS now seem somewhat dated (the former now significantly opioid and the latter greatly living with AIDS), by turns rock-driven and love duet-rich score has a staying power that continues to hold loyal aficionados and attract new fans.

The Work Light Productions 20th Anniversary Tour at the Boch Center Shubert Theatre is likely to add to that following (if the standing ovation at the performance I saw is any indication) though this revival could do with a lot more of the musical’s Puccini-inspired Vie Bohème.

The audience certainly enters the Shubert fired up and eager. Theatregoers cheer heartily as the actors appear on stage in their characters’ signature shirts and jeans—with Cody Jenkins wearing a Jewish novitiate photograph Mark’s red scarf and a black and white sweater that could suggest a tallit (prayer shawl) without fringes.

As the familiar East Village-set story lines of fragile relationships—particularly that of songwriting guitarist Roger and club dancer Mimi—and tested friendships unfold, this iconic musical once again embraces straight and LBGTQ understanding, acceptance and love. In hindsight, the show’s tough love push-pull relationship between performance artist Maureen and lawyer Joanne ought to be as positive as the more supportive one between AIDS-ridden drag queen Angel and hip academic Tom Collins. Still, all of the love couples experience meaningful if different moments together.

That meaningfulness and the heart of the characters deserve stronger guidance. The playbook describes Evian Ensign’s direction as “Based on Original Direction by Michael Greif,” but his work does not really hold a candle to that of his predecessor. There are some fine voices here—particularly Shafiq Hicks as Tom on the haunting reprise of “T’ll Cover You” and Coleman Cummings as Roger and Caira Asante Lakota as Mimi on the tender “Without You” (substituting for Aiyana Smash at the performance this critic saw).

Hicks and Joshua Tavares as golden-hearted drag queen Angel prove very convincingly as a mutually caring gay couple. At the same time, there are other performers who sacrifice nuance to overload deliveries—for example Kelsee Sweigard as Maureen on the lyrically vivid “Over the Moon.”

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops said that restricting the work of faith-based organizations, as the Obama rule threatened to do, was unfair and serves no one, “especially the children in need of those services.”

The Family Research Council, a conservative advocacy group, said charities would no longer have to choose between “abandoning their faith or abandoning homeless children.”

“Thanks to President Trump, charities will be free to care for needy children and operate according to their religious beliefs and the reality that children do best in a home with a married mom and dad,” said Family Research Council President Tony Perkins.

But LGBT groups said the administration’s plan would reduce the pool of qualified parents wanting to adopt or foster a child. They said that nearly 125,000 foster children are awaiting adoption, and the rule would make even fewer families available to them.

“It is outrageous that the Trump administration would mark the start of National Adoption Month by announcing a rule to further limit the pool of loving homes available to America’s 440,000 foster children,” said Julie Kruse, director of federal policy at Family Equality. “The American public overwhelmingly opposes allowing taxpayer-funded adoption and foster care agencies to turn away qualified parents simply because they are in a same-sex relationship.”

Associated Press Writer Elana Schor in New York contributed to this report.
Police board member resigns after sergeant wins $20M verdict

CLAYTON, Mo. (AP)—The chairman of a St. Louis County police board has resigned and another board member said she is being replaced after a jury found that a sergeant was discriminated against because he’s gay and recommended that he be awarded nearly $20 million.

County Executive Sam Page said Monday in a letter announcing board chairman Roland Corvington’s resignation that the county has “not always done a good job” of addressing the unique challenges in the workplace for women, people of color and LGBT people. Board member Laurie Westfall said Page also told her she’s being replaced, the St. Louis Post-Dispatch reported.

The departures come days after a jury ruled in favor of Sgt. Keith Wildhaber in his discrimination lawsuit. He testified that former St. Louis County Police Board of Commissioners member John Saracino told him 2014 that he would need to “tone down his gayness” to secure a promotion to lieutenant. Saracino has denied that he made the comment.

The police board held an emergency meeting Tuesday and unanimously voted to initiate an independent review of the department. A statement announcing the probe Tuesday night said it would include reviewing “policies and procedures, the decision-making and promotions processes, and inclusion within the Department.”

The board, not the county executive, holds the power to fire a police chief.

Page has not said how many members of the five-member commission he planned to replace or whether he wants the board to fire Chief Jon Belmar, who has led the department since early 2014. By Friday, all five members of the police board will be serving on expired terms. Belmar didn’t respond to a voicemail and text seeking comment, and the three remaining board members either declined to comment or didn’t respond to requests to do so.

Corvington, a retired special agent in charge of the FBI in St. Louis who works as director of global security for Edward Jones, said the trial was “embarrassing.” The case included testimony about Wildhaber being passed over 23 times for promotion and being transferred in retaliation for filing a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Belmar himself testifi ed that Wildhaber’s lawsuit was a factor in his not being promoted.

“I sincerely believe the jury’s decision to award this verdict was a wake-up call to the department and its leadership that they have to be mindful of what is said and how it’s said and to be mindful of their conduct when engaging with their subordinates, their peers and the public for that matter,” said Corvington, who had served on the board since 2012.

Westfall, meanwhile, defended the board, saying that had it known about Wildhaber’s claims, it could have “defused” the situation. She also defended Belmar, saying she has “great respect for the chief.”

In his letter to county employees, Page also said diversity was a priority for him. Page said he met on Monday with LGBT leaders and that his staff diversity was a priority for him. Page said he met with the Anti-Defamation League to start a training program.

County officials have not announced whether they will appeal the jury’s decision.

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bashing Trump ignores how well we navigate our linguistic diversity. On 17th Street in D.C. where the pre-Halloween High Heel Race is held, I have seen the owners of an Italian restaurant converse in Farsi while their bartenders talked in Urdu and their kitchen staff spoke in Spanish. Two Ghanaian workers at a liquor store spoke to each other in Twi. Taxi drivers talked to each other in Amharic. All spoke English with their customers.

We are a better nation than Trump and his fearful mob can conceive. Just as he is not draining the swamp but repopulating it, his talk of the Wall and other provocations may drive a wedge, but cannot erase who we are.

Nats reliever Sean Doolittle explained why he declined to join his teammates at the White House on November 4: “People say you should go because it’s about respecting the office of the president. And I think over the course of his time in office he’s done a lot of things that maybe don’t respect the office.”

Doolittle’s wife has two mothers. “I want to show support for them. I think that’s an important part of allyship, and I don’t want to turn my back on them.”

Reconnecting with our values and reaching across our differences are the keys to victory. Take a lesson from the District of Champions.

Richard J. Rosendall is a writer, activist, and longtime Ward 2 resident, at rrosendall@me.com. Copyright © 2019 by Richard J. Rosendall. All rights reserved.
I want to start this column with a public service announcement. Years ago, I was one of the first people to publicly advocating the use of PrEP to combat exposure to HIV. Believe it or not, I took some flack for that—which I shrugged off, like so many trailblazers before me. Today, people speak about it openly. But PrEP is not a cure, nor is it without side effects. Truvada (the most popular of the PrEP meds) has been linked to numerous kidney issues. In fact, there is a class action lawsuit in the works (which I hope is a part of). The company that makes Truvada (Gilead) also makes the allegedly much safer Descovy. But don’t take my word for it. Be your own best advocate. Do the research. Perhaps make a switch. Just take care of yourselves.

In the trevasy that is “Dancing with the Stars”, Sean Spicer continues to elude elimination. At this point, the judges are going to have to give him negative scores just to jettison him. But an unlikely person is standing up for Spicer—Karamo Brown! Last week’s dumped dancer said, “Through this process, Sean’s trailer has been next to mine and I have literally every day been planting seeds in his heart. And literally, I could see each week those seeds blossoming and that’s why he got emotional. Sean is literally someone who I would’ve never thought I could be friends with, and I’m going to walk away from here calling him a friend.” But did he give him a diamond?

If you have been watching the current season of “The Great British Bake Off” on Netflix or in the UK, keep reading. If you want to be surprised when PBS runs the “Great British Bake Off” on Netflix or in the UK, keep watching. If you have been watching the current season of “The Great British Bake Off” on Netflix or in the UK, keep reading. If you want to be surprised when PBS runs the “Great British Bake Off” on Netflix or in the UK, keep watching.

Sony Pictures has announced a live-action adaptation of “Cinderella”...like we need another one (BTW, I believe the best version is Drew Barrymore’s “Ever After”). You may have already heard that news. But the new news is that the fairy godmother will be played by Billy Porter. His banner year continues, joining Porter in the cast is Idina Menzel, who will play the wicked stepmother.

For more surprises, check out www.BillyMasters.com—continued from page 1


drew barrymore

Drew Barrymore’s getting her own daytime talk show next year. Why? I have no idea. Am I the only one who doesn’t picture Drew being particularly conscious during daytime hours? While I wish her luck, I don’t see this as a good idea. Yes, anyone and everyone COULD have a talk show. But, that doesn’t mean they SHOULDN’T.

Sad news for those of you waiting for a “9 to 5” sequel. Dolly Parton announced it ain’t happening. “Well, actually I think we dropped that whole idea. I don’t think we’re going to do the sequel. We never could get the script where it was enough different than the first one, and that one turned out so good.” She did, however, add, “We might do a completely different thing together, Jane, Lily and I.” That different thing will likely be an appearance on the final season of Lily and Jane’s series “Grace and Frankie”. Tick-tock.

Our “Ask Billy” question this week comes from Justin in Chicago: “Did you see Aaron Carter’s penis? Everyone online is talking about it, but I can’t find it anywhere.”

Aaron says his “dick slip” was an accident, but I contend there are no accidents. Yeah, because everyone who does an Instagram Live video is fully aroused in loose-fitting shorts, right? We’re supposed to believe that Aaron was minding his own business, chatting with fans, and somehow his penis simply erupted out of his knickers? I think not. To be fair, it certainly appeared to be sizeable. However, one must also consider that Carter has the physique of a young Calista Flockhart. Frankly, a thimble could look enormous in that context. But since you asked, you can see it (Carter, not Calista) on BillyMasters.com.

When we’re slipping in a surprising “Ally McBeal” reference, it’s definitely time to end yet another column. For more surprises, check out www.BillyMasters.com—the site that tends to slip things in when you least expect them. If you have a question for me, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before some porn studio produces “The Great British Bang Off”! Until next time, remember, one man’s filth is another man’s bible.
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