Transgender New Hampshire state reps poised to make history

NEWMARKET, N.H. (AP)—Two New Hampshire politicians will make history next week when they’re sworn in as the state’s first openly transgender women to serve in the State House.

The Portsmouth Herald reports Gerri Cannon and Lisa Bunker will represent Somersworth and Exeter respectively when they take office on Jan. 2. Stacie Laughton became the first openly transgender lawmaker elected in New Hampshire in 2012. However, Laughton never took office because of a felony conviction.

Bunker became upset when President Donald Trump was elected in 2016 and decided to run. She says she later looked to Danica Roem, Virginia’s first openly transgender officer holder, for inspiration.

Cannon wants to improve issues surrounding health and human services. Bunker says she wants to focus on preventing gun violence and closing the opportunity gap.

Obituaries: Remembering those we lost in the past year.

Donna Red Wing, ’a force to be reckoned with’

By Luke Nozicka

courtesy Des Moines Register

Donna Russell Red Wing, a civil rights activist who campaigned for LGBTQ equality, died Monday afternoon at her home in Des Moines after an eight-month battle with cancer. She was 67. Red Wing, who was once called as “the most dangerous woman in America” by the Christian Coalition, spent more than three decades advocating for civil rights. She was described in an obituary as a well-known national leader in the fight for LGBTQ equality. She served as executive director of One Iowa from 2012 to 2016, expanding the organization’s work into new arenas after the battle for marriage equality ended, the group said in a statement. “Donna was a force to be reckoned with and will be greatly missed by individuals across the country,” said Daniel Hoffman-Zinnel, the organization’s executive director. “Donna inspired so many, including myself.”

The Year in Review

Jules Becker

The stories of real LGBTQ talents—and in some cases the presence of the actual talents—gave added distinction to the best and near-best theater of 2018. The childhood, college experience and adult insights of novelists

2018, The Year That Was

“That we’re Eskimo brothers!”

—Andy Cohen’s answer to what the public may not know about him and his good friend, Anderson Cooper. For those of you who don’t know, the term “Eskimo brothers” refers to men who have slept with the same person. In the case of women, I believe the term is simply lesbians.

By Billy Masters

This is a strange column—one might even call it queer. If you’re reading it in print, it will surely be 2019. But if you’re reading it online—perhaps at BillyMasters.com—2018 is likely drawing to a close. And to be honest, which of course I always am, I am writing this on New Year’s Eve. And yet, my 2018 wrap-up has already been published. So, in a way, this column falls between the cracks. One

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Obituaries
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Clem Pepe

Clem Pepe died peacefully in his sleep at his home on Friday, April 27, 2018. He is survived by his husband Larry Basile. Clem is also survived by his devoted mother Geraldine Pepe; his brothers Ralph, Paul, Steve, and Chuck; his sisters-in-law, Vicki, Kathy, and Nancy; as well as many loving nieces, nephews, and great nieces. Clem was involved in ACT UP (AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power). In 1991 he traveled to Kennebunkport, Maine to stage a “die-in” on the street in front of then President George W. Bush’s family compound to demand an increase funding for AIDS research. Clem graduated from The State University of NY at Buffalo in 1977 with a degree in Theater Arts, and lived for some time in Albany, NY. Clem met his future partner and husband, Lawrence Basile, in Provincetown in 1992 during the “summer of love.” They made their first home together in Boston’s South End shortly thereafter, Clem and Larry became prominent in Boston’s Gay Community through their activism and philanthropy. Partnering with many organizations and individuals, they worked for the advancement of civil rights, for the development of Boston’s gay youth, and on behalf of people with AIDS and HIV. Clem’s love for entertaining showed through in his many drag personas and his willingness to teach others his craft. Known as Kitty and Ciel he was beloved as an entertainer from Cape Cod to New York City.

Stephen Mindich, dies at 74.

Stephen Mindich, the owner and publisher of the now-closed Boston Phoenix and chairman of The Phoenix Media Communication Group (PMCG) died of pancreatic cancer last week. PMCG published in Boston, Worcester, Providence, and Portland; Stuff Magazine and Stuff@Night; owned WFNX Radio; Mass Web Printing; and TPI—a platform for newspaper personal ads for publications around the world.

Theodore “Ted” J. Schwalb
Killed in hit-and-run crash

For decades, in the South End and all over Boston, Ted Schwalb was renowned for his extravagant wit and warmth, his outsized personality and appetite for conversation, friendship, art and life. He was a compassionate bon vivant, and an enthusiast with a critical eye. A graduate of Marblehead High School, and Mass. College of Art, and an accomplished painter, he taught art at Stoneham High School for decades. He held hundreds of memorable dinners in his art-filled home, and when he traveled to Chicago to celebrate his 60th birthday, his friends lamented to the Boston Globe that the beloved South End personality would not be dining with them. After his retirement, he spent winters in Mexico, returning every Spring to Boston. He is warmly remembered by his sister, the Cambridge artist Brenda Star, his nephews and their families, and countless others.

Lee Godbout, 78
Fierce advocate for LGBTQ Equality

Lee (Lionel) Godbout, a dedicated fighter for LGBTQ equality and civic engagement, was fatally injured when he was struck by a car in Weymouth on August 31 while campaigning for Secretary of State candidate Josh Zakim. The crash is under investigation by police.

Godbout, a retired carpenter, was born on June 1, 1940 in Fairfax, VT. He volunteered with multiple organizations, including St. Margaret’s Hospital, where he helped soothe babies in the neonatal intensive care unit, Murphy Primary School in Weymouth, where he helped children read, and MassEquality, where he worked to help pass Marriage Equality for Massachusetts. Lee was a member of the Weymouth Democratic Town Committee, and a passionate supporter of progressive Democratic values. He worked on numerous campaigns supporting candidates at both the state and local levels.

Mark P. McGrath, Esq., 54
Lawyer. Athlete. Friend.

by Brian Ramos

On November 5th, we lost a fixture in the Boston LGBTQ community when Mark P. McGrath passed away at the age of fifty-four. Mark was a Bay Stater through and through; he was originally from Southampton, attended both UMass Amherst and Northeastern University School of Law and then was a longtime South Boston resident. Not surprisingly, he was an avid New England sports fan and could be found frequently at Fenway Park. Mark was known to so many in our community. He was an attorney with a litigation practice in South Boston, an ardent public defender offering his services pro bono, a tremendous athlete in Boston’s LGBTQ softball, basketball and football leagues, active in city and state politics having served as the LGBT Liaison to the late Mayor Thomas M. Menino, a benefactor to many area non-profits and a dog-lover, including his late Labrador Retriever, Bailey.

Shaking and Baking
by Judah Leblang | www.JudahLeblang.com
contributing writer

When it comes to pursuits like cooking, fashion, and interior decorating, I seem to be missing the gay gene. I have little to no interest in shopping for clothes, or in spending hours creating a meal, one which I will be consuming alone. (When I have friends over, I usually order take-out, as I’m afraid to subject them to my subsistency cooking). But now that I’m in my early sixties and “semi-retired,” I simply don’t have the excuse of busy-ness to avoid the kitchen. Instead, my laziness and lack of culinary initiative stand out in stark relief, like a charcoal drawing of the junior-senior citizen I am becoming.

I’m tired of living on sandwiches, pasta, and Panera. So, while I don’t typically make new year’s resolutions, I have decided to cook and bake a bit more, and to take a few more risks in the kitchen—a low bar indeed. Still, after living alone for 20 years and passing the milestone of turning 60 (ouch), I want to try new things, and to avoid becoming a total creature of habit. It seems that growing older can lead us in one of two directions: a) calcification, routine and a smaller life, or b) an openness to new experiences and stretching out of one’s comfort zone.

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Best of 2016 Small Stage Theatre

An American in Paris, Ogunquit Playhouse-Arguably the most exciting musical revival of the year.

Lettuce Eat Petunias, Boston Centre; A Dead Man's Diary, Arlekin Players; Allegiance, SpeakEasy Stage; Guards at the Taj, Underground Railway Theater; Ann덧, Theatre on Fire & Charlestown Theatre; A Man and a Woman, Theater at the Strand; Dancing at Lughnasa, Merrimack Repertory Theatre—The most exciting musical revival of the year.

Best of 2017 Small Stage Theatre

Bea, SpeakEasy Stage Company; A Raisin in the Sun, SpeakEasy Stage Company—The most exciting theatrical event of the year.}

Best of 2018 Small Stage Theatre

An American in Paris, Ogunquit Playhouse—Arguably the most exciting musical revival of the year.

Anything Goes, Reagle Music Theatre—Vibrant vocals from Leigh Barrett and especially Jared Trollo.

The Niceties, SpeakEasy Stage Company—Possibly the year’s best verbal fireworks.

A Dead Man’s Diary, Arlekin Players; Allegiance, SpeakEasy Stage; Guards at the Taj, Underground Railway Theater; NSFW, Theatre on Fire & Charlestown Working Theatre; Peter and the Pancake; Hub Theatre Company of Boston; Red Velvet, OWT(Bureau of Theatre); Shakespeare in Love, SpeakEasy Stage.

Best of 2018 Large Stage Theatre

An American in Paris, Ogunquit Playhouse—Arguably the most exciting musical revival of the year.

Anything Goes, Reagle Music Theatre—Vibrant vocals from Leigh Barrett and especially Jared Trollo.

The Niceties, SpeakEasy Stage Company—Possibly the year’s best verbal fireworks.

Best of 2018 Visiting Theatre

Mombian

Continued from page 1

terly, curated box of picture books that include LGBTQ+ characters and those of other under-represented identities. In doing so, it hopes to show publishers there's an ongoing market for such stories.

Flamingo Rampant micropress, created by queer parents S. Bear Bergman and j wallace skelton, has launched a Kickstarter for its third sea- 

son of "feminist, racially diverse, LGBTQ positive children's books" of fun, celebratory, adventurous stories.

And award-winning author and queer mom Jacqueline Woodson was named National Amba- 

sador for Young People's Literature by the Library of Congress. She also won the American Library Association's Laura Ingalls Wilder Award this year for books that have made "a substantial contribution to literature for children".

This year sadly saw the end of The Fosters, Fireform's groundbreaking drama about the lives of a two-mom couple and their five children. But Good Trouble, a spinoff starring two of their now-grown children, premieres in January 2019, with promises of guest appearances by the moms.

Social science affirmation: The longest-run- 

ning study on any LGBTQ-parent families, the National Longitudinal Lesbian Family Study (NLLFS), released results showing that young adults with lesbian parents are as mentally healthy as their peers. Evidence from dozens of other studies supports these findings, but the NLLFS' study of the same subjects since 1986 offers a de- 

tailed picture of lesbian-headed families that few

others can match.

Milestones in reproductive technologies: Lou- 

tise Brown, the first person created through in vitro fertilization (IVF), celebrated her 40th birthday in July. IVF, where egg and sperm are combined outside the body, has helped parents both queer and not overcome fertility challenges and allowed the rise of gestational surrogacy (since the surro- 
gate doesn’t normally use her own egg). Couples like my spouse and I, too, have used IVF to create our child using one of our eggs and the other's womb. At the same time, we should remember that IVF is only one of several family-creation op- 
tions for queer parents.

This year also saw the birth of the first two ba- 
bies by two-mom couples using "reciprocal effort- 

less IVF" a new, reportedly less costly technique developed by INVO Bioscience of Massachusetts that allows both members of the couple to share in carrying the child. After harvesting the eggs, instead of fertilizing and incubating them in the lab, they are placed with donor sperm into a de- 
vice that is inserted into the person's vagina. They fertilize and incubate there for five days, then the device is taken out and the embryos placed in the other person's womb for the remaining time until birth.

And a team of scientists in China used stem cells and gene editing to create healthy mouse pups from the genetic material of two female adult mice. The technique is too tricky and un- 
tested to be considered for humans quite yet, though.

A business first: Beth Ford was named CEO of Land O'Lakes agricultural cooperative. The mother of three is the first known queer woman and only the third queer person overall to lead a Fortune 500 company.

Good-bye to a leader: After 22 years as the exec-utive director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR), attorney and mother Kate Kendall in March announced she would leave "the job of a lifetime" at the end of 2018. NCLR, founded in 1977 to help lesbian moms fighting for custody of their children, now handles often groundbreaking cases for clients across the LGBTQ spectrum in a wide range of areas. Kendall has been pivotal in setting the organization's vision and strategies since she took the helm.

Read Part 1 of Mombian's Year in Review at www.baywindows.com

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.

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might even say it’s straddling years. Oh, I’ve been straddling things for years. Why, I could write a book. But for now, you’ll have to make do with this column.

Given the timing, I can’t tell you all about my New Year’s Eve, nor can I in good faith review Anderson Cooper and Andy Cohen’s more sophisticated effort in hosting the festivities. Mind you, not seeing it is no excuse — why, many of my colleagues regularly review things they haven’t seen. But, no, not your beloved Billy. Instead, I will extrapolate on last week’s news that Andy Cohen will soon be a daddy.

Oh sure, the cheap joke is, “Yeah, like scads of undergrads haven’t been calling him daddy for years.” But, no, I won’t go for the cheap joke — not in 2019. But, since it’s still technically 2018, I’ll allow it. Andy announced that his child of undisclosed gender will be born sometime in January and that he hired a surrogate. Certainly not the first time his semen has been inside someone he paid — and that’s the last cheap joke of the year.

One of my favorite ways of ending the year is to watch the Kennedy Center Honors. And, what a gala it was. They honored Cher. Reba. And a bunch of others who did not. Nyle Schlossberg seemed available. So, naturally, when you think of the Kennedy legacy, the obvious host is Latina spitfire, Gloria Estefan. In an advance photo promoting the telecast, the honorees were assembled, and you’d swear it was an exhibition at Madame Tussauds! Of course, one can’t capture movement in a still photo. Color me surprised to tune in and see Cher just as animated on the telecast — it’s like every time the camera panned to her, they simply hit pause. Thank God she opened her eyes and sprang to life once Cyndi Lauper appeared. She even jumped up and danced a bit. And that’s when I understood the problem — I believe that conert she was wearing restricted her breathing.

The marriage of Colton Haynes and Jeff Leatham is the gift that keeps on giving. They truly are the Liz and Dick of our generation — perhaps, more appropriately, the Dick and Dick. Which of them is the bigger Dick will have to be determined by a court of law. The more things change...

Ellen Degeneres did stand-up on "The Tonight Show." Johnny Carson waved her over to the couch. But she wasn’t necessarily the first woman he invited over. According to reports, when Roseanne made her first appearance on "The Tonight Show," a year before Ellen, Johnny also waved her over...but she was so terrified she just ran off the stage. As to Joan and Phyllis, they were always on the show as guests — not to do stand-up. So, they didn’t have to be invited over to the couch — they were booked on the couch.

Bruce Weber. Five models (identified only by their initials) filed a complaint in Manhattan federal court. Each of them claims that Weber used his power and position as a star photographer to inappropriately touch (and then some) several men against their will. Weber’s attorney begs to differ. "These new allegations against Bruce Weber are outrageous. Bruce Weber has never lied, recruited, or forced anyone to do anything and has never inappropriately touched a model. This lawsuit is nothing more than a media-hungry lawyer’s attempt to extort Mr. Weber with false, fictitious and legally frivolous claims." And who is the media-hungry lawyer for the lad? Lisa Bloom, spouse of my pal Gloria Allred. The more things change...

Darren Criss says he is done raping the gay community. Well, he didn’t say it like that. What he actually said was this: "There are certain roles that I’ll see that are just wonderful. But I want to make sure I won’t be another straight boy taking a gay man’s role." Am I the only one who finds it amusing that he refers to himself as a boy...taking a role from a gay man? I mean, he’s 31 — I think the boy days are long gone, bucko. And riddle me this — if Criss stops playing gay parts, what exactly will he do for work?

Penn Badgley, from "Gossip Girl", recently said this to the "Pink News": "If anybody exists at any kind of intersection of oppression beyond the box of white male, I’d say let’s make damn sure that they’re being represented by the people who have lived this experience and not have people who haven’t lived the experience portraying them." When asked if only LGBTQ actors should be cast in those roles, Penn said, "Yeah, I actually really do. In theory, in a totally just society, yeah, anybody can play anybody and that would be great. But that’s not the world we live in." Here’s another wrinkle for you, Penn. Say one needs to cast the role of a serial killer. Should only killers be allowed to audition because they “lived this experience”? It’s a slippery slope, Badgley.

A couple more reboots are in the works. First up is a new version of “Queer as Folk.” This one will be based on the original, far superior British version, helmed by the creator, and is planned for Bravo (which tells me no nudity). Then there is a second attempt to reboot "90210," which is being shopped around by the original cast — well, most of the original cast. We’re told Shannen Doherty and Luke Perry have thus far abstained. No Shannen, no interest.

An existing TV show is taking some time off — there won’t be a spring season of "Dancing with the Stars". Insiders speculate that this decision is due to the poor ratings last season had, but I have another thought. I think taking the season off and the bad ratings are due to the lack of "stars." Lure in actual "stars," and the ratings will follow.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Freddie in Hawaii who writes, “I just saw Ellen’s new comedy special. Was she really the first female comedians Johnny Carson invited to the couch? Not someone like Joan Rivers or Phyllis Diller?”

It’s true, the first time Ellen DeGeneres did stand-up on "The Tonight Show," Johnny Carson waved her over to the couch. But she wasn’t necessarily the first woman he invited over. According to reports, when Roseanne made her first appearance on "The Tonight Show" a year before Ellen, Johnny also waved her over...but she was so scared, she just ran off the stage. As to Joan and Phyllis, they were always on the show as guests — not to do stand-up. So, they didn’t have to be invited over to the couch — they were booked on the couch.

When our couch stories have nothing to do with casting, it’s definitely a new year and time to end yet another column. I’d love to chat more, but it’s New Year’s Eve and, frankly, I’ve got better things to do. But, the celebrations will continue all year long at www.BillyMasters.com — the site that straddles more than years. If you’ve got a question, send it to me at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Crisis gets cast in a straight role! Until next time, remember, one man’s fifth is another man’s bible.
One of my inspirations and role models for healthy aging is a thin, active, opinionated woman in her early ’80s. I first met Bea when I was 30, and she was about 50. Fast-forward thirty years, and I’ve watched as Bea created a family website and used the internet in her high school English classes back in the mid-’90s, before I knew the internet existed; returned to college in her early sixties to get a master’s in library science and a half-time position as a librarian at age 65; became the librarian at a private school at age 70; became a star AirBnB host in her late seventies at her home on the North Shore, with visitors from all over the world.

Bea has inspired me to pursue some of my own late-breaking dreams: becoming a writer in my forties, developing a one-man show at 55, and now, taking my new show on the road at 61. But I haven’t really sustained myself through food preparation—until now. A few nights ago, a friend invited me over for dinner. “What can I bring?” I asked, figuring I’d pick up a bottle of wine or a dessert. “Cornbread,” my friend replied.

My first impulse was to head over to Wegman’s and buy some. (I did get some, but I also bought cornbread mix, and decided to make my own). The recipe didn’t look too difficult. I simply needed to melt some butter, crack an egg, and mix milk, the egg, butter and cornbread mix into a batter. Then I’d pour the mixture into a baking pan—I had to buy an aluminum non-stick version, to go along with my one mixing bowl—pop the batter into a 375-degree oven and 25 minutes later I would have my own homemade cornbread. I was skeptical, nervous, doubtful that I could pull it off. But since I had my pre-made variety as a back-up, I followed the simple directions, and even managed to melt the butter without burning it. Ten minutes later and the batter was transforming into a golden square, soon after the sweet smell of cornbread permeated my apartment. I carefully removed the airy bread from the oven, cut a small corner off to taste, and discovered that baking—from a mix, at least — was ridiculously easy.

That night I showed up at my friend’s place with my homemade bread, and a small sense of pride. The cornbread was a perfect complement to his vegetarian chili. The next morning, I sampled the store-bought variety I’d purchased the day before, which was both denser and dryer than mine. Suddenly, a world of cakes, pies, and other delights is opening before my eyes. It seems that despite my insecurities in the kitchen, and my resistance to change, I can follow simple recipes. Who knows, maybe this will be the year when I finally develop some fashion sense.

Judah Leblang is a writer, teacher and storyteller in Boston. Find out more at judahleblang.com.
MAKE YOUR MOMENT WHERE THE MOVEMENT WAS MADE