WASHINGTON (AP)—A newly elected Virginia congresswoman is displaying a transgender pride flag outside her Washington office.

Rep. Jennifer Wexton is a Democrat from the 10th District in northern Virginia who was sworn in Thursday. The pink-, blue- and white-striped flag is displayed at the door to her office, along with the U.S. and Virginia flags.

Submitted by GLAD

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GLAD and Mutual of Omaha Settle HIV PrEP Case

By JESSICA GRESKO
Associated Press

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“I think she just has really tiny hands!”

— Pete Davidson at his New Year's Eve show at Chevalier Auditorium in Medford, Massachusetts, while discussing Ariana Grande’s quip about him having a "big dick".
American Moor returns to Washington
Keith Hamilton Cobb takes on fear and erasure in American theatre

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

The veteran actor channels and questions a bard four centuries gone, like the New Horizons probe reporting back to earth amid the cosmic noise from four billion miles away—though unlike manned missions, the probe didn’t stop to plant a flag as it passed Ultima Thule, an asteroid from the early solar system. Some claim possession of Shakespeare as they would a continent or a lunar crater, guarding their turf like gentrifiers calling police on black neighbors.

Keith Hamilton Cobb challenges this proprietorship, bringing his passionate, probing American Moor back to Washington’s Anacostia Playhouse as Democrats retake the House of Representatives. Cobb took his play last year to London, Boston, and West Orange, New Jersey, portraying a tall, powerfully built, handsome black thespian in middle age auditioning for Othello.

The tension in the audition room resonates with that of our nation’s history and its roiling present: the white director thinks he knows the large black protagonist better than the large black man standing before him. Confiding in the audience, the actor makes them his compatriots. Starring in his own play, Cobb critiques American regional theatre and its racial myopia from the inside as one who has loved Shakespeare since his youth—an actor who can do anything, his agent assures him, but whose prospective employers only see him as one thing.

“[T]hroughout my American life, whenever some white person, well-meaning or otherwise, has asked me to ‘be open’ they have invariably meant, ‘See it my way.’ And in this instance, in this play, that is unacceptable.” He recognized his acting vocation early the way a person knows he’s gay. Decades later, his seasoned brain and instrument have much to lend the enterprise, but the young director, confident he knows Shakespeare’s intentions because he studied under a teacher twice removed from a Brit, is not as collaborative.

Lacking a time machine to allow consultation with a dead playwright, we can only interpret him through ourselves. As with the casting of Hamilton, our cultural inheritance crosses the human spectrum. Is Jessye Norman less glorious a soprano than Elisabeth Schwarzkopf on account of pigment?

“You are afraid of me,” Cobb tells the director. He is an envoy from an unfamiliar world all around us. In our fear of displacement we squander our most precious resource: one another.

There are people who feed on brokenness, who feel diminished or threatened by others’ strength or wisdom. But we cannot thrive on smallness.
Drag queens may read to kids at a Louisiana library

By JANET McCONNAUGHEY
Associated Press

A Louisiana library has agreed to let Drag Queen Story Time take place in one of its meeting rooms, the ACLU of Louisiana said.

The Lafayette Public Library said in a statement emailed Friday that any group following its meeting room guidelines and patron behavior policy may use meeting rooms.

Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time organizer Matthew Humphrey said he confirmed a room reservation Friday, but did not want to publicize the event date.

"This was never a victory dance for us," Humphrey said. "We consider it a win because we’ll be using the library that we pay taxes for. But we’re just happy we can have our meeting."

He has said previously that the event aims to let children know that it’s OK to be different and it’s OK for other kids to be different.

Drag Queen Story Time was organized after a religious group sued the library because the University of Louisiana at Lafayette chapter of Delta Lambda Phi, a "gay, bisexual and progressive" fraternity, had scheduled a different event called Drag Queen Story Hour there for Oct. 5.

"Drag Queen Story Hour is apparently a national event. This event is local and is called Story Time," said Katie Schwartzmann, legal director for the ACLU of Louisiana.

Libraries and bookstores around the country have held programs in which men in drag read stories to children. Some have drawn protests.

The library agreed not to schedule a Drag Queen Story Hour while the suit was in court.

It also began using a room reservation form that required patrons to say they wouldn’t use the library for such purposes. Humphrey said that requirement was a problem.

"We felt the form was a bridge too far," Humphrey said. "The lawsuit can go on and on and on, as long as for now we have equal access to the library."

The judge told attorneys he plans to rule on the lawsuit soon, the library’s statement and Schwartzmann said.

Humphrey said his group has had about 1,300 members, though he doesn’t know how many live in Acadiana, south Louisiana’s Cajun country.

They include members of the LGBTQ community and parents, children and other supporters of the community, some of them from other states, he said.

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Discrimination challenge by Colorado baker can continue

DENVER (AP)—A judge says the latest legal challenge by a Colorado baker who refused to make a wedding cake for a gay couple can continue.

In a ruling Friday, U.S. District Judge Wiley Daniel rejected Colorado’s arguments that the federal court should stay out of the dispute over whether the state is treating Jack Phillips unfairly by prosecuting him for refusing to make a cake celebrating a gender transition.

The Supreme Court ruled in June that Colorado civil rights commissioners showed anti-religious bias when they sanctioned Phillips, a Christian, for refusing to make the wedding cake in 2012. Daniel said the commission’s decision to prosecute Phillips in the new case after the Supreme Court criticized it supports Phillips’ claim that it is acting in bad faith against him.

Oregon man who made racists remarks allowed to teach again

BEND, Ore. (AP)—An Oregon teacher who lost his teaching license after state education officials say he used racist nicknames for students, including calling a student of Asian descent “chopsticks,” “pasticke” and “cheap Chinese labor.” He also made demeaning comments about students’ weight and sexual orientation.

The bulletin reports the Oregon Teacher Standards and Practices Commission issued a new license that allows former Bend-La Pine Schools music instructor Jeffrey Simmons to be a substitute teacher.

Simmons lost his teaching license in 2013 following an investigation.

State education officials found that Simmons used racist nicknames for students, including calling a student of Asian descent “chopsticks,” “pasticke” and “cheap Chinese labor.” He also made demeaning comments about students’ weight and sexual orientation.

The newspaper could not reach Simmons for comment.

The commission is imposing four years of probation, requiring Simmons to complete two graduate-level courses on diversity and inclusion.
Nothing exacerbates a problem more than good intentions.

And, Ellen DeGeneres’s had no idea the Pandora Box hers opened trying to revise talks for comedian Kevin Hart to host the Oscars.

When Ellen invited Kevin Hart to her show, she provided a broader platform for Hart to explain his non-apology for previous public homophobic statements as an aggrieved victim. DeGeneres, however, didn’t take into account the outcome of her good intentions: she cannot speak for the entire LGBTQ community, and she cannot fully understand the ongoing struggle

A new year may motivate many of us to ponder new endeavors. For some, this may mean taking the first steps towards parenthood—so I wanted to offer some suggestions on what you may want to do first in order to start weighing those options.

Talk with each other. For anyone planning to

was denied coverage for medically necessary sur-
gical treatments.

The federal case, which is pending, said a state insurance plan excluded coverage for surgi-
tal treatment for gender dysphoria and that the woman had to pay thousands of dollars in out-of-

pocket costs for health care expenses not covered by her plan.

One of her attorneys, Peter Renn, called Rauscher’s bill dangerous.

“The medical community overwhelmingly rec-
ognizes that transition-related care is medically
necessary and can even be lifesaving,” Renn said.

The lawsuit said the state, in 2018, removed an
earlier exclusion of coverage for transition-related
hormone therapy and counseling in the Alaska-
Care plan.

Attorneys for the state, in court filings, ac-
nowledged the state does not provide coverage
for transition-related surgical treatment under
that plan but denied the plan discriminates.

House Bill 7 , also from Rauscher, would re-
strict what could be taught in sex education
classes.

The measure calls for a curriculum that pro-
motes abstinence. But it says the curriculum
could not teach on or advocate “the intrincacies
of sexual intercourse,” use of contraception, gender
expression or homosexuality.

Jessica Cler, Alaska state director for Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii, said
given rates of unintended pregnancies and sexu-
ally transmitted infections, the state should not
build barriers to comprehensive sex education.

It’s unclear how the proposals might fare. The
House has struggled to organize a majority ahead
of the session. Alaska has a Republican governor and
Republican-led Senate.

Laughter filed over gay inmate’s suicide at Indiana jail

ALBION, Ind. (AP)—A northeastern Indiana
county faces a wrongful death lawsuit alleging
that a gay inmate killed himself in its jail after be-
ing denied mental health treatment and enduring
harassment over his sexuality.

Markus Middleton’s partner is suing Noble
County’s sheriff, jail commander and jail staff.

The Kendallville News-Sun reports the federal
lawsuit alleges that Middleton was 23 when he
hanged himself in October 2017 after spending
25 days in the jail following his arrest on misde-
meanor false informing and resisting law enforce-
ment charges.

The suit contends the Albion, Indiana, man
was “continuously mocked, harassed, threat-
ened, and denied mental health treatment” even
though jail officials were told Middleton suffered
from bipolar disorder and serious depression.

A message seeking comment was left Thursday
for an attorney for the county’s liability insurer, Travelers.

Beckley to vote on LGBTQ discrimination ordinance

BECKLEY, W.Va. (AP)—Another West Vir-
ginia city is set to vote on adding protections for
LGBTQ people.

The Register-Herald reports the city of Beckley
will hold a first reading for the ordinance on Jan.
8. If it passes, Beckley would become the 13th
city in West Virginia to approve such an ordi-
nance.

The vote comes after Mayor Rob Rappold
asked the city council in November to consider
an ordinance prohibiting housing and employ-
ment discrimination against those who identify
as LGBTQ. A similar measure was proposed in
2014, but was tabled amid community opposi-
tion.

The current code aligns with federal law and
prohibits housing and employment discrimina-
tion based on sex, race and religion.

The Beckley Human Rights Commission
voted on Dec. 6 to amend city code to protect
LGBTQ.

www.register-herald.com

Bay Windows | January 10, 2019 | Page 5

Ellen, Black LGBTQ Lives Matter, too!

by Rev. Irene Monroe

contributing writer

7 Tips for Starting the Journey to Parenthood

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com

contributing writer

Bill would bar Alaska gender confirmation surgery coverage

By BECKY BOHRER

Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP)—A conservative Alas-
ka lawmaker has proposed barring the state from
paying for gender confirmation surgery and lim-
iting what is taught in sex education classes.

The measures from Republican Rep. George
Rauscher of Sutton were among more than 40
bills and proposed constitutional amendments
released Monday ahead of the new legisla-
tive session, which starts Jan. 15.

Among other proposals: Legislation from
Democratic Sen. Bill Wielechowski of Anchor-
age to pay residents the amount they missed out
on when Alaska Permanent Fund dividends were
capped the last three years.

House Bill 5 , from Rauscher, would bar the
state from paying for or offering as a benefit in-
surance coverage for gender confirmation surgery
or related drug therapy. Rauscher could not im-
mediately be reached for comment.

Last year, a transgender legislative librarian
sued the state, alleging discrimination, saying she

continued from page 4

was offered in response to the Hart controversy.
I’m saying these issues need to be addressed. Be-
cause [LGBTQ] youth need to know that they
have value and it’s OK to be who they are. We
have to stop low-key co-signing homophobia. It’s
not cool. We won’t tolerate jokes that do other-
wise.”

In 2011 CNN’s Don Lemon penned a mem-
oir, titled “Transparent” and came out of the clos-
et. Lemon knows first hand the string, embarrass-
ment, debasement and violence that comes from
the Kevin Harts in our communities.

“Yes if my son comes home & try’s 2 play
with my daughters doll house I’m going 2 break it
over his head & say n my voice ‘stop that’s gay’,” Hart
shared as parenting advice during a stand-up rou-
tine how he had advised his 3-year-old son having
a ‘gay moment’:

“It’s quite different for an African-American
male,” Lemon told Joy Behar on her then HLN
show. “It’s about the worst thing you can be in
black culture. You’re taught you have to be a
man; you have to be masculine.”

There are very few safe places for LGBTQ broth-
er of African descent to safely acknowledging
their sexuality as well as to openly engage the sub-
cject of their sexualities. Black LGBTQ sexualities
within African American culture are perceived to
further threaten not only black male heterosexu-
ality, but also the ontology of blackness itself.

And, the community’s expression of its intoler-
ance of LGBTQ people is easily seen along gen-
dere lines. For example, sisters mouth off about us

see MONROE, page 7

see MOMBIAN, page 7
Welcome to 2019—officially. And to kick it off, we’re reporting on the Golden Globes, even though I’m not there. I know you count on me to be your eyes and ears everywhere, but I had pressing business elsewhere. I did send my minions to report back to me and, well, even they were bored. Some quick quips: I don’t know who looked more annoyed to be there, Billy Porter or Johnny Galecki; every once in a while, you think Sam Neill is dead, then, poof, there he is; much like Keith Urban, I wouldn’t let anyone near me with a flu shot; Dick Van Dyke had firmer footing than Michael Douglas; Christian Bale, comedy genius; and is there anyone more breathtaking than my pal Justin Hartley? It’s important to note that these awards are less about who won than who was snubbed. That’s all.

If the Golden Globes taught us anything, it’s that not just anyone can host. The Oscars may be more than a month away, but they are still host-less. So, Ellen DeGeneres decided to flex her considerable power to strong-arm Kevin Hart back into the job—and strong-arm the viewing audience into accepting him. Apparently, Ellen and Kevin are good friends, and she thinks his past homophobic rants should not preclude him from the job. In what was presented as a spontaneous interview on her show, Ellen asked Hart about the controversy and why he stepped down. He then rambled on and on about...well, really, about nothing. She then allegedly surprised him by saying that she spoke up on his behalf to The Academy. I don’t know who she spoke to at The Academy—it may very well have been a receptionist, or even a temp. “We want him to host, whatever we can do, we would be thrilled, and he should host,” said whomever answers the phone at The Academy.

This pissed off many people—specifically gay people. Who was Ellen to speak on behalf of the gay community? Maybe she is friends with Kevin and forgives him, but not everyone agrees. Don Lemon—whose opinion is germane if for no other reason than he is a black gay man—said he doesn’t think Hart should be allowed to host. Lemon said Hart’s past “jokes” actually do represent the views of many black fathers of gay children. “That is a joke to Kevin. But the truth is, that is a reality for many little boys in the United States. Somewhere, a black dad is beating his black son.” Lemon added, “Apologizing and moving on does not make the world a better place for people who are gay or people who are transgender. Being an ally does.”

Let me say I don’t have a dog in this fight. I really don’t have any strong feelings about Kevin Hart—although I stand by my earlier statement that if you aren’t tall enough to get on Space Mountain, you can’t host the Oscars. Beyond that, I have no idea in the heart of Hart if he is homophobic or not. What I do know is that comics will say anything for a laugh—and I suspect Kevin Hart’s core audience would laugh at homophobic comments. So, while I don’t know if he’s homophobic, I do know he thought the comments were funny. Likewise, I think his non-apology apology seems to be what he thinks people want to hear. To get the gig, he has to appear contrite, so that’s what he’s doing—with a fair amount of indignation that we’d even think he was really homophobic.

The real question is, can people evolve? I suppose they do. Politicians do. People like Obama and Clinton changed their stance on gay marriage as their view “evolved” (although, like comics, I think politicians play to their audience). Ultimately, I believe in the free market. If The Academy wants Kevin Hart to host and he wants to host, he should host. And if people don’t like him, believe he is homophobic, or don’t buy his apology, they should not watch the Oscars. Kevin solved the problem for us—he (again) took himself out of the running to host...for now.

Since our last column was written on New Year’s Eve, I wasn’t able to tell you about Anderson Cooper and Andy Cohen on CNN. Not only was Andy almost arrested, but he almost took down the entire network with a Halloween mask for Kathy Griffin to get banned!

The duo welcomed an in-person special guest—Faye Dunaway. So, welcome to our first Fayewatch of 2019. Faye’s presence warranted the return of Cohen’s umbrella. “I have to give you an umbrella because you look too clean and crisp,” Andy gushed. When asked if it was her first visit to Times Square for New Year’s Eve, Faye cackled, “Oh, yes, absolutely. It may be my last. No, it’s nice to be here. We’re in New York, for God’s sake!” This “interview”, such as it was, had a several great moments. First, Anderson said one of his favorite movies was one Faye did with Robert Redford. “I’m blanking on the name,” said the newsman. Cut to Faye, who looked like a Dunaway in the headlights—“Now you’re making me blank on it.” Talk about a gaggle of senior moments! They continued talking about a movie neither of them could name. Meanwhile, I’m screaming at my TV, “Three Days of the Condor”? Anderson finally remembered it, and Faye smiled through those store-bought teeth and repeated the name. Priceless. Then Anderson mentioned that The Academy hadn’t yet settled on a host for the Oscars. “What about you?” said Cooper. Faye had a look on her face that basically said, “Look, I can’t remember the names of movies I’ve BEEN in. And, may I remind you of the last time I was on the Oscars? “La La Land”?”

Faye’s main purpose for stopped by was to
**Worldbriefs**

**Japanese lawmaker under fire for LGBT comment**

By YURI KAGEYAMA

Associated Press

TOKYO (AP)—A Japanese legislator is drawing criticism for his comment that “a nation would collapse” if everyone became LGBT.

Remarks by Katsuei Hirasawa, a veteran lawmaker of the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, were carried on Nippon News Network’s national broadcast Friday. Outrage has been pop-ping up on social media.

Hirasawa told a crowd in Yamanashi Prefecture in central Japan on Thursday: “Criticizing LGBT would create problems, but if everyone became like them then a nation would collapse.”

He also said he didn’t understand moves in Tokyo’s Shibuya Ward and other local areas to recognize same-sex marriage. Same-sex marriages are not recognized in Japan nationally.

Hirasawa, like many Japanese politicians, was lamenting the country’s low birth rate, which has been blamed on a lack of child care and help for working women, as well as sentiments that tend to shift the burden of raising children on women.

Last year, another ruling party lawmaker, Mio Sugita, came under fire after she said in a magazine that the government shouldn’t use tax money for LGBT rights because same-sex couples weren’t “productive.” Tens of thousands of people took part in protests outside the ruling party headquarters.

**Far-right Polish official steps back from radical comments**

By MONIKA SCISLOWSKA

Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP)—A new member of Poland’s right-wing government has appealed on Facebook for public support amid political outrage over his previous far-right and anti-Western statements.

The controversial appointment of Adam Andrzkiewicz as Poland’s deputy minister for digital affairs comes at the start of a year that will feature an election to a new parliament.

Andrziewicz, who was previously an MP in the far-right Confederation party, is facing a backlash after he posted on Facebook for public support amid political outrage over his previous far-right and anti-Western statements.

The appointment has been criticized by the opposition and human rights groups for its far-right politics.

**Mombian**

Continued from page 5

Flag

Continued from page 1

In a statement, Weston says she’s displaying the flag because she has family members and friends who are transgender. Chief of Staff Abigail Carter says Weston is an aunt to a transgen-


can share their experiences as parents and offer constructive insight. These people may also form the core of a support network (for babysitting or simply emotional support) once you become a parent.

Reach out to other LGBTQ parents. It can be both informative and calming to socialize with other queer families. If you don’t know many, find a local LGBTQ parents’ group through Family Equality Council (familyequality.org). Some even have events just for prospective parents. Also useful are the various online forums (such as Facebook groups) for LGBTQ parents and prospective parents.

Read. There are a growing number of books that delve into further details of LGBTQ family making (see the book lists I’ve compiled at mombian.com), although most focus primarily on same-sex, cisgender couples (an imbalance that I hope changes soon). You may also find some general-audience books on specific topics, such as single parenting, adoption, infertility, and multi-racial families, are relevant to your needs.

See a doctor. If you or a spouse/partner are considering a biological connection to your children, this should be an obvious move, if only to assess physical readiness. Your general practitioner may also be able to answer basic questions about fertility procedures or refer you to a specialist. Even if you will be a non-bio parent, however, it is useful to identify any potential health issues of your own before you start the marathon of parenting. Ask friends or members of LGBTQ parenting groups for names of local LGBTQ-friendly doctors, if you need one, or check HRC’s Healthcare Equality Index (hrc.org/hei).

Consult an attorney. A lawyer can answer legal questions you may have about donors, adoptions, and surrogacy under your state’s laws. For couples where one of you will bear the child, you may also want to get medical powers of attorney for each other before you start down the road to pregnancy. This will allow you to make medical decisions for each other in case one of you is incapacitated. Wills and advanced medical directives are likewise a good idea for any couple.

A lawyer trained in LGBTQ issues can also help you navigate the laws in your state to ensure that. Keep notes, make lists, and enjoy the exploration. Remember, too, that despite all the advice and opinions, you must ultimately choose the answers that feel right for you. Best wishes to all who are beginning the adventure this year.

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

**Monroe**

Continued from page 5

while brothers get both—verbally and physically—violent with us.

My son ‘better talk to me like a man and not in a gay voice or I’ll pull out a knife and stab that little n-word to death,’” Morgan told his audience at the Ryman Auditorium in 2011.

Ellen, however, is standing her ground in supporting Hart’s heartless apology. Hart is, too.

On the Wednesday morning segment of “Good Morning America,” Michael Strahan, however, interviewed Hart concerning the controversy.

“I’ve addressed it and said all I can possibly say. I’ve done all I can do. Don’t know what you’re looking for. I’m over it. Shouldn’t have to prove who I am.”

Although Hart’s now a crossover phenom, he still plays mostly to a black audience. And, I hope the young LGBTQ sisters and brothers who fell in love with Hart in the blockbuster hit “Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle” witnessed Hart’s defensiveness.

Strahan pushed Hart further on his response by asking, “How have you evolved?”

“I’m over it! I’ve said it many times. If you don’t see it. It’s you. I have nothing else to do or prove.”

While I will continue to argue that the African American community doesn’t have a patent on homophobia, it does, however, have a problem with it. As one who has purportedly evolved on LGBTQ issues, Hart squandered his elevated profile to educate the public how his evolution came about. Instead, Hart has become a cause célèbre by flipping the switch as an aggrieved vic-tim of attacks on his career rather than confront-ing the homophobia he purports not to be.

I’m glad Hart has a friend in Ellen. And, I know Ellen wants to save her friend and save the Oscars. But, Black LGBTQ Lives Matter, too! Perhaps over time, both will look back at this moment anew. At present, both, are co-actors to an ongoing problem in black communities - a problem we are still unevolved about and not completely woke to the deleterious effects of homophobia on its LGBTQ residents.

Ellen not only defends Hart’s stance, she also absolves him.

“You have grown, you have apologized, you are apologizing again right now. You’ve done it. Don’t let those people win—to host the Oscars.”

Ellen also sees herself as a peacemaker rather than an interloper. And, Ellen doesn’t realize she unleashed a monster—that have but for a minute publicly been dormant—in the simple gesture of reviving the resumption of Oscar host talk. And, the monster, is not Kevin Hart. It’s black homophobia.

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Rich and Expressive

Small Mouth Sounds, SpeakEasy Stage Company, Roberts Studio Theatre, Boston Center for the Arts, through February 3. 617-933-8600 or bostontheatrescebe.com

By Jules Becker

Is the world ‘too much with us?’ William Wordsworth warned exactly that in an early 1800’s sonnet to that effect. Bess Wohl surely agrees in her witty, insightful and often amusing 2015 play “Small Mouth Sounds.”

Here urban pressures are escaped and technological trappings are verboten during a week-long stay at a meditation retreat in the woods designed with disarming simplicity by Cristina Todesco. In fact, this clever playwright—who actually experienced a retreat herself—has written a largely silent but always involving 100-minute work in which words largely take a back seat to feelings, body language and reading the essence of others.

Now SpeakEasy Stage Company—in a taut ensemble—brings rich expression to the experience. Gigi Watson persuasively moves forward and her guests also do their part, among them,暹问 for the job.

Last week, Andruszkiewicz distanced himself from a kind of technology-centered OCD and took a seat around a modified thrust stage (theatergoers on three sides) of a cozily reconfigured Roberts Studio Theatre. Gradually the space on the fourth side—five diverse participants—three women and three men—occupy the space.

As in New York, SpeakEasy calls on audience members to take their seats around a modified thrust stage (theatergoers on three sides) of a cozily reconfigured Roberts Studio Theatre. Gradually six diverse participants—three women and three men—occupy the space on the fourth side—five in chairs and the sixth in a yoga pose on a mat. An unseen guru reviews the retreat rules—including speaking limited to specific Q and A, no food in dwelling areas and no phones—and guides the sextet via overhead speakers through such activities as writing down their intentions and sharing retreat ‘nooms’ two by two. Participants state disapprovingly at a secretly eating or laptop-using scofflaw. By contrast, they sometimes follow each other’s lead—for example removing shoes for meditation or letting go clothes-wise after Ron disrobes and runs naked into off-stage water.

She also brings a muted voice to her vulnerability as a personal ordeal pushes her to use her own cell phone. Nael Nacer catches ski cap donning Ned’s likeable quickness. He beautifully balances the humor and the angst of his ostensible question that actually explains why he covers his head at all times. Gigi Watson persuasively moves from a kind of technology-centered OCD and

Continued from page 7

will see European and local parliament elections that are crucial for the future of Poland’s ruling conservative party.

Observers say by appointing nationalist lawmaker Andruszkiewicz, 28, a former leader of the extreme-right All-Poland Youth organization, the ruling Law and Justice party wants to widen its voter base and neutralize right-wing competition. They say the ruling team expects Andruszkiewicz, a graduate of Bialystok University, to attract young, educated voters who are generally opposed to the ruling party.

Critics say his past statements against host U.S. troops in Poland, and against migrants and gays, should bar him from government posts. On Friday, the American Jewish Committee’s Central Europe office on Twitter called his appointment astonishing, given the reports of rising anti-Semitism in Europe.

The opposition Civic Platform party has also raised questions about whether Andruszkiewicz was properly vetted for any ties to foreign intelligence services, including Russia.

State officials argue that his views have evolved and his social media activity qualifies him for the job.

Last week, Andruszkiewicz distanced himself from his controversial past declarations, saying he was not making them as a lawmaker. But as a parliament member, he has criticized top European Union official Donald Tusk, Poland’s former prime minister.

On Facebook late Thursday, Andruszkiewicz said he was being subject to a “slanderous witch hunt.”

Austrian women celebrate country’s first same-sex marriage

BERLIN (AP) — Two Austrian women are the first same-sex couple to officially tie the knot in the predominantly Catholic country, following years of legal challenges from gay rights groups.

Public broadcaster ORF reported Tuesday that Nicole Kopaunik and Daniela Paier wed in a ceremony in Velden, southern Austria, shortly after midnight Tuesday.

The couple, both 37, had reportedly been engaged for four years.

Austria’s constitutional court ruled in 2017 that same-sex couples should have the right to marry from Jan. 1, 2019. Previously, same-sex couples could only enter into a registered partnership that granted fewer rights than marriage.

Austria’s current governing parties, the People’s Party and the Freedom Party, had strongly opposed granting same-sex couples the right to marry, but said they would respect the court’s ruling.
Rosendall
Continued from page 2

To make the work sing, the actor knows, requires bringing all of himself to it.

Independent film’s low budgets gave black filmmakers like Ryan Coogler and Barry Jenkins freedom to tell their stories their way rather than subordinate their projects to the whims of indifferent studio bosses. Their success offers a transformative moment at whose heart are artists holding to their visions and self-belief. In a similar spirit, the actor in Moor prods the director to risk all for love, like Desdemona—in this case love of the play, love of theatre.

At the start of the most diverse Congress in history, Nancy Pelosi invoked President Reagan’s farewell address. Reagan said of his “shining city upon a hill,” “[I]f there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to any-one with the will and the heart to get here.” We have slid so far, Reagan sounds liberal. The “heterogeneous 116th” has only begun to fight.

The current spate of black film auteurs recalls the enrichment of Hollywood by German film-makers who bed the Nazis in the 1930s, and the migrants whom Trump now slanders like a cut-rate Iago poisoning his marks’ minds. The voices we need most, in the arts as in our imperiled republic, are often those we are least inclined to welcome.

Flexing still-powerful sinews, the actor urges: “Please... put down your little brief authority, as you are certainly most ignorant of what you are most assured, and talk with me.” At stake are not just line readings but the very things pledged in Philadelphia in 1776: “our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”

American Moor, directed by Kim Weild, is at Anaconda Playhouse from Jan. 11 through Feb. 3. Richard J. Rosendall is a writer and activist who can be reached at rosendall@me.com.

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asked the Supreme Court to weigh in. The high court could announce as early as this month if it will do so.

The appeals court ruling said the military’s plan appears to rely on the “considered judgment” of appropriate military officials. It noted that the plan “appears to permit some transgender individuals to serve in the military.”

Military policy until a few years ago had barred service by transgender individuals. That changed under President Barack Obama’s administration. The military announced in 2016 that transgender individuals already serving in the military would be allowed to serve openly. And the military set July 1, 2017, as the date when transgender individuals would be allowed to enlist.

But President Donald Trump’s administration delayed the enlistment date, saying the issue needed further study. While that study was ongoing, the president tweeted in late July 2017 that the government would not allow transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. Military.” He later directed the military to return to its policy before the Obama administration changed.

Groups representing transgender individuals responded by suing the administration in the District of Columbia, Maryland, Washington state and California. The Trump administration lost early rounds in those cases, with courts issuing nationwide injunctions barring the administration from altering course. As a result, transgender individuals continue to serve openly and transgender individuals have been allowed to enlist in the military since Jan. 1, 2018.

In March 2018, the Trump administration announced that after studying the issue it was revising its policy. The new policy generally bars transgender individuals from serving or enlisting unless they serve in their biological sex and do not seek to undergo gender transition.

An exception allows the service of transgender service members who previously relied on the Obama-era rule. Groups representing transgender individuals have responded by arguing that the policy is essentially a ban on the service by transgender individuals.

The lawsuit in the District of Columbia was filed by the National Center for Lesbian Rights and GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders. NCLR Legal Director Shannon Minter called Friday’s decision “a devastating slap in the face to transgender service members.”

The third judge, Ronald Reagan. The third judge, Ronald Reagan. He later directed the military to return to its policy before the Obama administration changed.

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Two of the three judges who ruled in the case were nominated by Republican presidents. Judge Thomas Griffith was nominated by George W. Bush and Judge Stephen Williams was nominated by Ronald Reagan. The third judge, Robert Wilkins, was nominated by President Barack Obama.

In recognition of Chris’s contributions to Boston Pride and to the LGBTQ community, the Board of Boston Pride has voted to name Chris Harris as an Honorary Parade Marshal for the upcoming Boston Pride Parade on Saturday, June 8, 2019.

About Boston Pride

Boston Pride produces events and activities to achieve inclusivity, equality, respect, and awareness in Greater Boston and beyond. Fostering diversity, unity, visibility and dignity, we educate, communicate and advocate by building and strengthening community connections. Boston Pride Week 2019 will be held May 31 – June 9.
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let the international viewing audience know that she would be back on Broadway playing Katharine Hepburn in “Tea at Five” by my dear friend Matthew Lombardo (and kudos to Faye for mentioning his name on CNN—writers usually get overlooked). At this point, Cohen really stepped in it when he said, “You beat Katharine Hepburn for an Academy Award, if I remember.” Faye peered at him and said, “How did you know that?” How indeed. Dunaway got her first nomination for “Bonnie and Clyde” and lost to Hepburn. When she won her Oscar for “Network”, Hepburn wasn’t nominated. So, Andy, I’m calling this one our first ever Faye-Pas. To her credit, Faye didn’t accept the compliment. She simply said, “I didn’t t, unfortunately.”

Madonna made a surprise appearance at NYC’s Stonewall Inn on New Year’s Eve. Perhaps it wasn’t a complete surprise—the day before, the Inn posted on Instagram, “We are insanely proud to announce Madonna is a Stonewall Ambassador supporting Stonewall Day + the 50th anniversary of Stonewall!” On the night, Madonna resembled the fun, kicky Material Girl we all grew up loving. She had a crazy bow in her hair and lots of clunky, dangling jewelry. She donned glasses to read her lengthy remarks about how the Stonewall Inn is the birthplace of Pride. And then she sang an acoustic version of “Like a Prayer” with her son David playing guitar, which almost made you long for the days Madonna showed off her guitar skills. You can see the video on BillyMasters.com.

Ricky Martin rang in the New Year with a new addition to his growing family. “We are excited to announce that we have become parents of a beautiful and healthy girl whom we have named Lucia Martin-Yosef,” Ricky posted on Instagram. Actually, he wrote it in Spanish. In that case, Felicidades!

In some sad news, just before the New Year, we learned that actress June Whitfield died. Best known for her role as Edina’s mother on “Absolutely Fabulous”, Whitfield had an extraordinary career. She was 93.

Closer to home, I was terribly sad to hear about Derek Keeling’s passing. You may remember this talented (and gorgeous) man from the reality show to find stars for the Broadway revival of “Grease”. In addition to “Grease”, he also toured in “All Shook Up”, “Million Dollar Quartet”, and “Happy Days: The Musical”. Rest in peace.

Our “Ask Billy” question comes from Gary in Detroit: “We know you always watch Lindsay Wagner movies on New Year’s Eve. What vintage Wagner works did you watch this year?” Believe it or not, Lindsay Wagner is ALWAYS working. We started with “Samson”, a Biblical epic which was actually released in some cinemas in 2018. Lindsay was Samson’s mother—lest you forget she was bionic. Her son was played by newcomer Taylor James, who has a body of Biblical proportions. The second flick came courtesy of the Hallmark Channel. “Mingle All the Way” featured Lindsay alongside the luscious Brant Daugherty, who I know almost nothing about. I vaguely remember him from “Dancing with the Stars” a while back. Brant is a charming and appealing actor—who perhaps comes off somewhat gay...not that there’s anything wrong with that!

When we’re coming off very gay, it’s definitely time to end yet another column. We ran long and it’s late, so we’ll quickly remind you to check out www.BillyMasters.com—the site that welcomes gays and straights alike. If you have a question, dash it off to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before someone from The Academy asks me to host the Oscars! So, until next time, remember, one man’s filth is another man’s bible.
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