Conway resident lives by 'activism is my rent' adage

By DOMENIC POLI
Daily Hampshire Gazette

CONWAY, Mass. (AP)—About 40 bumper stickers decorate the back of Mary McClintock’s Hyundai.

They consist of messages such as “I’LL BE POST-FEMINIST IN THE POST-PATRIARCHY,” “Support Organic Farmers” and “Buycott Bottled Water.” But there is another saying, which does not appear on her hatchback, that speaks to her.

Poet Alice Walker is credited with saying something along the lines of, “Activism is my rent for living on the planet.”

These words serve as an adage for how McClintock has lived much of her life.

The Conway resident has been an activist “since forever,” advocating for the LGBTQ community, volunteering to feed the hungry, organizing women’s rallies, helping inmates transition back into society, protesting for peace and connecting people with public resources.

McClintock, who grew up in northern California and attended Keen News Service

by Lisa Keen
Knowing Service

In a move that LGBT legal activists see as “deeply worrisome,” the U.S. Supreme Court on Friday (January 17) said it will review two appeals in which the Trump administration is seeking to make it much easier for employers to exclude health insurance coverage for some medical procedures by saying such procedures violate their religious beliefs or moral conscience.

The cases, Trump v. Pennsylvania and Little Sisters v. Pennsylvania, originated as lawsuits by a wide variety of groups to stop new Trump administration regulations around the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Original ACA rules required most employers to include full coverage for certain preventive care, such as contraception. The ACA excluded churches from the requirement, and a later Supreme Court ruling, in Hobby Lobby v. Burwell, extended that exemption to corporations owned and operated by families.

But the new Trump regulations propose to extend exemptions to “science-based,” religious, and moral objections to a larger and wider range of employers.

“The Trump rules set the stage for targeted, discriminatory exclusions of insurance coverage for reproductive care, gender transition care, and family health benefits for workers with a same-sex spouse, among other things for which an employer might claim a religious objection,” said Jenny Pizer, senior counsel at Lambda Legal.

Pizer characterized as “deeply worrisome” the Trump regulations’ “effectively limitless religious exemption.”

The Supreme Court consolidated both cases out of Pennsylvania, both of which were lost by the Trump administration at the Third Circuit U.S. Court of the Appeals.

The Third Circuit panel upheld a national injunction issued by the district court to stop the new Trump regulations. The Supreme Court consolidated both cases out of Pennsylvania, both of which were lost by the Trump administration at the Third Circuit U.S. Court of the Appeals.

A federal appeals panel of Republican appointees ruled Friday (January 17) that the state of Indiana must treat same-sex married couples the same as male-female married couples when determining who to list on a child’s birth certificate.

The case, Henderson v. Indiana, originated when the state of Indiana refused to list the non-biological mother of a child born by her female spouse on the birth certificate of the son. The lesbian couple sued, noting that Indiana would list a non-biological father on a birth certificate of a child born by his wife.

Indiana argued that birth certificates were meant to reflect biology, but the appeals panel noted that Indiana law states that a “man is presumed to be a child’s biological father if [he] and the child’s biological mother are or have been married to each other and the child is born during the marriage…” The state, it said, was refusing to provide a similar presumption if the child’s biological mother was married to a woman.
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### Democrat looking to unseat Sen. Collins wins key endorsement

**By DAVID SHARP**

**Associated Press**

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—A national organization devoted to getting LGBTQ candidates elected to public office is endorsing the U.S. Senate in Maine former Google executive Ross LaJeunesse, a Democrat who wants an opportunity to unseat GOP Sen. Susan Collins.

The Victory Fund announced Thursday its endorsement of LaJeunesse, who said it will add to the “momentum and energy” of his campaign in the face of Democratic establishment support for Maine House Speaker Sara Gideon.

“Victory Fund is changing the face of public service in the United States by empowering more elected officials to serve openly and honestly. Mainers believe in those values, and I’ll be a fighter for equality and justice in the U.S. Senate,” LaJeunesse said in a written statement.

### Congreswoman Ayanna Pressley revealed she has the autoimmune disorder “alopecia areata” that has rendered her hairless.

Pressley revealed her bald head publicly opened the troubling conversation about black hair — especially for African American females.

Our children across America are being humiliated and punished because of racist rules and policies that discriminate against their hair texture and natural hairstyles. Last year the video of an African American high school wrestler forced to cut off his dreadlocks to compete went viral.

The referee, who was white, stated “his hair and headgear did not comply with rules, and that if he wanted to compete, he would have to immediately cut his dreadlocks — or forfeit.”

Pressley, known for her signature Senegalese twists — as her personal identity and political brand — had been criticized as being “too ethnic” and “too urban.” However, to young black girls, Pressley’s hairstyle was both an inspiration and an affirmation to rock proudly.

African American women and girls endure some of the harshest punishments concerning our hair, thereby permitting racist workplaces, institutions and educators to discriminate against us without repercussion. In 2017, Mystic Valley Regional Charter School, in Malden, banned black twins Deanna and Maya Cook from playing after school sports and from attending their prom because they wore hair extensions to their prom because they wore hair extensions to their prom.

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In the blockbuster hit “Black Panther,” the beauty of black unstraightened natural hair was placed front and center. Lupita Nyong’o as Nakia wore Bantu knots. Letitia Wright as Shuri flaunted a bald head. While many African American women today wear their hair in afros, cornrows, locks, braids, Senegalese twists, wraps or bald, our hair — both symbolically and literally — continues to be a battlefield in this country’s politics of hair and beauty aesthetics.

For example, in 2007, radio personality shock jock Don Imus insulted the Rutgers women’s basketball team, calling them “some nappy-headed hos.” He struck a raw nerve in the African American community -- our hair. “Nappy” derogatorily referenced as a racial epithet, as Imus did, is the other n-word in the African American community.

While many sisters today might use a hot comb on their hair, hot combs called straightening combs too, were around in the 1880s, and sold at Sears and Bloomingdale’s catalogs to a predominantly white female clientele. Madam C.J. Walker, the first African American millionaire for her inventions of black hair products, didn’t invent the hot comb; she popularized its use by remedying the perceived “curse” of natural black hair with her hair-straightening products that continue to this day bring comfort to many black women.

Black hairstyles are not criticized when they are being appropriated by white culture, especially when white celebs or models wear our coiffed styles. In 1979 across Bo Derek donned cornrows in her breakthrough film “10.” In 1980

### Pressley disrupts Eurocentric aesthetic about hair

*by Rev. Irene Monroe*

**Contributing Writer**

Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley revealed she has the autoimmune disorder “alopecia areata” that has rendered her hairless. Pressley revealing her bald head publicly opened the troubling conversation about black hair — especially for African American females.

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Mombian
Continued from page 1

The main parenting storyline of the original series, which ran from 2004 to 2009, centered on characters Bette (Jennifer Beals) and Tina (Laurel Holloman). In Season One, they go through various antics while searching for a sperm donor—an overserved trope among shows that depicted two-woman couples in the mid-2000s. Fast forward through some break-ups and reunions, and they have baby Angie in Season Two.

We see only a few storylines related to Angie, however, notably one in which her moms try to get her into an elite preschool by showing that they’re the most diverse family vying for the spot. (That same storyline was used by ABC’s Modern Family two years later for gay dads Mitchell and Cameron and their daughter Lily.) In a later season, too, Bette and Tina try to adopt, but this fails through.

Character Helena Peabody (Rachel Shelley) also had children, but they didn’t live with her and played a minimal part in the show.

About transgender character Maxi’s (Daniela Sea) pregnancy, the less said, the better. While a trans man being pregnant could make a fine storyline, this one was handled clunkily and only served to underscore the character’s otherness.

Shane (Katherine Moennig) also acts for several episodes as guardian of her nine-year-old half-brother Shay. We see Shane struggle with that responsibility, though, and Shay eventually goes back to live with their father.

The new show has brought parenting even more fully into more characters’ lives, as all of the returning cast members are now dealing with children in some fashion. (Minor spoilers for the season follow) The new cast also includes Angie (Jordan Hour), now 16, with storylines of her own. Bette and Tina, though no longer together, are both very involved in her life. We find out, too, that Angie has a crush on her best friend Jordi—a sign that we’re moving beyond fear of perpetuating the myth that LGBTQ parents will create LGBTQ kids. Statistically, some of us will have them, though, and that’s just fine.

We also see Alice (Leisha Hailey), also from the original series, now in a relationship with Nat (Stephanie Allyine, a real-life queer mom), who is sharing custody of her two kids with her ex. Alice tries to learn parenting skills like dealing with a sick child or packing snacks for a swim meet, while also figuring out how she fits into the family.

And Shane, who struggled in the original show to balance her guardianship responsibilities with the freedom she wanted in her life, is facing the same struggle again because her ex-wife Quinn, who wants to reunite, is pregnant. Shane must decide whether to help her parent.

Shane is hesitant, but after advising Angie on her relationship with Jordi, sees that there’s something rewarding about parenting. She says she’ll do it. After Quinn’s first ultrasound, however, Shane is afraid that she isn’t feeling the deep emotions a prospective parent should. Quinn wisely advises, “You’ll feel exactly what you’re supposed to feel on your own time.” That’s as good a piece of parenting advice as I’ve ever heard.

Parenting wisdom among the show’s melodrama shouldn’t surprise viewers. New showrunner and co-executive producer Marja-Lewis Ryan and her wife had a baby last year, and original showrunner and LW/Q co-executive producer Ilene Chaiken is a mom as well.

While LW/Q will never be focused on parenting in the same way as, say, Modern Family or The Fosters, Freeform’s 2013-14 drama about a two-mom couple and their five kids, it feels natural that several of the LW/Q characters have or want kids or are trying to decide if they do. Advances in acceptance, legal protections, and reproductive technologies have made it increasingly easy for queer people to become parents (even as we recognize that our LGBTQ parents have existed for decades and our full history goes back, arguably, to Sappho). And a 2019 study by Family Equality has shown that 63 percent of LGBTQ millennials—the “Generation Q” of the show’s title—are considering starting or growing their families.

The show’s writers recognize this shift. In the season finale, real-life writer and professor Roxane Gay guest stars as herself, being interviewed by Alice on her talk show. Alice asks her, “Can you be a bad queer?” referencing Gay’s book Bad Feminist, which calls for broadening what “feminist” means to include those who may not adhere to some perfect ideal. Gay answers, “Historically, in the queer community, we’ve tried to resist heteronormative ideas. And, so, these days, to be a bad queer is probably to want a wife and two kids and a picket fence.”

We see the tension of that in Shane, the least conformist of the three original characters, as she grapples with whether she can be a parent and still be herself. Yet Bette and Alice are also parents. Are they “bad queers”? Hardly.

But the definition of “queer” now includes parents as well as those who aren’t, by choice or circumstance. It makes sense, then, that even on a queer show that’s not “about” parenting, we’re seeing more parents and more “everyday” parenting moments. Yes, some of us may want a picket fence—but we can paint it in rainbow colors.

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

SCOTUS
Continued from page 1

regulations from taking effect. The regulations sought to enable a wide array of employers to deny coverage for procedures, by saying they have “conscience-based,” religious, or moral objections.

The National Center for Lesbian Rights and GLBTQ Legal Advocates and Defenders (GLAD) joined other civil rights groups in a brief at the appeals court level. They argued the Trump regulations would provide an exemption to “nearly every employer or university with a religious or moral objection from complying.”

The Trump administration’s petition to the Supreme Court argued that the administration was trying to resolve lawsuits brought by “many employers” who have religious and moral objections to certain coverage. It said the federal Religious Freedom Restoration Act requires its proposed regulations. The RFRA says the federal government may not “substantially burden a person’s free exercise of religion without demonstrating a compelling interest in doing so.”

But openly lesbian Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey led a brief at the district court level, saying states have a compelling interest in “protecting the health, wellbeing, and economic security of their residents.”

The brief was joined by California, New York, Michigan, Illinois, 15 other states and the District of Columbia.

Pizer said that Lambda Legal has warned “from the beginning that even on a queer show that’s not ‘about’ parenting, we’re seeing more parents and more ‘everyday’ parenting moments. Yes, some of us may want a picket fence—but we can paint it in rainbow colors.”

Jasper J. Lawson, PH.D.
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Conway

Continued from page 1

kindergarten and first grade in Hawaii, is employed at Community Action Pioneer Valley, where she works as a community collaboration coordinator. She also works with the Franklin County Resource Network, a group representing more than 60 social and human service agencies. She is proud to say about 600 people receive its newsletter and about 50 attend its monthly meetings. McClintock co-chair’s the resource network’s Franklin County Hunger, Franklin County Transition from Jail to Community, Public Policy task forces.

As part of its work with Community Action Pioneer Valley, McClintock helped establish the Look4Help Public Resource Directory, a free, web-based public information service that connects people with nearly 1,000 agencies, programs or services at more than 450 locations. The website is look4help.org.

“It’s a great resource for everybody,” she said, adding that it’s “better than randomly Googling around.”

Being true to herself

McClintock, 62, lives a life of activism by living her life. She realized her homosexuality in 1975, as an 18-year-old student at Mount Holyoke College, though fear of repercussions prevented her from telling anyone for a year.

She was living in San Francisco for six months in 1978 when the Briggs Initiative came up for a vote in that state. Officially called California Proposition 6, the failed ballot initiative sought to ban gays and lesbians from working in the state’s public schools. It is named after its sponsor, conservative former state legislator John Briggs. McClintock said she “did phone bank- ing and envelope stuffing” to help defeat the measure and worked to put “a human face to this human issue.” She said gay icon City Supervisor Harvey Milk, the first openly homosexual elected official in California history, was instrumental in the initiative’s defeat.

McClintock eventually settled in Conway and rented out part of a two-family household. She recalled a time in the late 1990s or early 2000s when teenagers drove by shouting homophobic remarks at her two tenants. This proved to McClintock that more education was necessary and she got involved in LGBTQ community organizing.

She has organized several performances by lesbian playwright/actor Carolyn Gage, as well as a concert by a lesbian band from Arkansas. She also helps organize pot-lucks and other events for lesbians and recently helped organize an intergenerational lesbian event. Though she is not involved in Franklin County Pride, she has attended the marches and rallies, carrying a sign that on one side says “Still lesbian after all these years” and on the other side “Someone was brave before me, I walk in her path.”

She tells a story of a college friend who never returned to school after being withdrawn and admitted to a mental hospital on suspicion of being a lesbian.

But, she said, the 1970s were a much different time.

This was before the internet—and it was difficult for people questioning their sexual orientation to find books and other materials to help them cope. She is nostalgic for the community spaces in the area that served as safe havens and gathering spots for members of the LGBTQ community, though she is pleased gays and lesbians feel more comfortable in the world.

Fighting for peace

The 1970s and ’80s were a long way away from widespread public support for gay adoption of children, same-sex marriage and the legislation that repealed the U.S. military’s policy of barring homosexuals from serv- ing openly. McClintock, and its relieved people can live their lives with more choice, though having more people sent to war was never one of her goals.

McClintock and friend Susan Dorazio were going to a peace vigil in Amberst every week and decided to start their own at the Greenfield Common in September 2002, about six months before the start of the war in Iraq. She said she and Dorazio were walking up to the greenfield when they, by coincidence, were met by two other women, armed with signs, who were walking up from the east for the exact same protest at the exact same time.

Vigils have been held at the common every Saturday since, with a recent focus on stopping a war with Iran.

“Sometimes it’s a few people,” she said, “and sometimes it’s a lot of people.”

Monroe

Continued from page 2

“People Magazine” credited Derek for making the style a “cross-cultural craze.” In 2018 when Kim Kardashian posted a video of herself flaunting braids to Snapchat, she credited them as wearing “Bo Derek braids.” Just last week at the men’s fall/winter 2020/2021 fashion show in Paris models presented creations by Comme Des Garçons wearing cornrow wigs.

Appeals

Continued from page 1

ried to a woman. That, it said, contradicted the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in Obergefell v. Hodges, which struck down state laws treating same-sex couples differently in marriage licensing.

The appeals panel said the Indiana laws governing birth certificates “are products of a time when only opposite-sex marriages were recognized in Indiana” and that they also fail to recognize the “possibility” that a female-female couple could have two biological mothers (one who donates an egg and one who carries the child in birth).

The panel said Obergefell does not allow a state to provide all husbands the presumption of being fathers “while denying an equivalent presumption to parents in same-sex marriages.” Obergefell held that same-sex couples must have the same rights and protections under state marriage laws as opposite-sex couples.

The Henderson decision also noted that the U.S. Su- preme Court ruled in Pavan v. Smith in 2017 that same- sex couples are entitled to marriage “on the same terms and conditions as opposite-sex couples.” The Pavan case involved a refusal of the Arkansas health department to issue a birth certificate for a same-sex couple’s child that included both mothers.

The Indiana case panel included Judge Joel Flaum and Judge Frank Easterbrook (both appointed by Presi- dent Reagan) and Judge Diane Sykes (an appointee of President George W. Bush). Easterbrook authored the opinion.

Sykes, who has been considered one of President Trump’s short-list nominees for a U.S. Supreme Court seat, appeared to ready to rule against the lesbian couple during oral argument. According to reports, she said, “You can’t overcome biology.”

The couple who pressed the challenge, Ruby and Ashlee Henderson, lived in Lafayette, Indiana, and had one child before they were able to marry, following the Obergefell ruling. After they married, they tried to get their child’s birth certificate amended to show them both as parents; the state refused.

The 10-page opinion took an extraordinary amount of time to produce: 2.5 years. The case was argued in May 2017.

The Seventh Circuit jurisdiction includes Illinois, In- diana, and Wisconsin. Meanwhile, in the same week the Henderson decision was released, Lambda Legal argued in federal district courts in Georgia and Maryland that a similar disparity is taking place for same-sex couples whose chil- dren are born abroad.

“Children born abroad to married different-sex par- ents who are U.S. citizens are routinely recognized as U.S. citizens,” said Lambda in a press release about the cases, “but the State Department is deliberately misap- plying federal statutes to deny similar treatment to the marital children of same-sex couples.”

In Georgia January 16, Lambda filed suit on behalf of an Atlanta male married couple whose child was denied U.S. citizenship because she had been born in England where the surrogate mother lives. And in Maryland earlier this month, Lambda filed suit for another male cou- ple who married in California and had their daughter using a surrogate mother in Canada. The State Depart- ment in both cases is claiming the children were born “out of wedlock” even though both couples were legally married at the time they had their children.

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I recently met a grizzled panhandler walking along 16th Street in downtown Washington. He was cursing that nobody would hire him because of his criminal record. He told me that he slept in an alley, and pointed to a trash can that he had searched four times that day.

He was afraid of dying in the cold, but didn’t feel safe in homeless shelters. He carried a knife. Somehow I was less concerned about a convict with a knife walking beside me than about the unconvicted fellow five blocks south who was joking and complaining about being impeached.

Why did that homeless man return to the same trash can several times a day? It was beside a stream of people who could afford to waste food. Not only was he familiar with the most promising trash cans, he knew the locations of several ATMs where kind souls could get him cash. Such is the life of a street survivor in our throwaway culture.

“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it.” So said Gregory Peck’s Atticus Finch to his daughter Scout in 1962’s To Kill a Mockingbird. His performance as the quintessential white savior defending a wrongly accused black man won him an Oscar and inspired many people to become lawyers. His halo was snatched away when Harper Lee’s novel Go Set a Watchman, published in 2015, revealed that Atticus served on the white supremacist Maycomb County Citizens’ Council.

Mockingbird was perfectly designed to make white people in the civil rights era feel better about themselves. Six decades later, there is more diversity among filmmakers. The current movie Just Mercy, starring Michael B. Jordan and Jamie Foxx, which also concerns an unjustly accused black man, is partly set in Monroeville, Alabama, the real place that inspired the fictional

see ROSENDALL, page 8
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Top Obama fundraiser backs Biden in 2020 contest

By BRIAN SLODYSKO
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)—One of former President Barack Obama’s top fundraisers endorsed Joe Biden on Friday, a pledge of support that’s likely to boost the former vice president’s ability to raise cash for his 2020 campaign.

Rufus Gifford was Obama’s finance director during the 2012 campaign and raised massive sums that helped secure his reelection. He has been courted throughout the primary by other Democratic contenders and was supportive of former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg’s campaign.

But ultimately Gifford, a former ambassador to Denmark, said he became convinced Biden is the best choice Democrats have of beating President Donald Trump—and he expects there are other high-profile figures in the party who may soon follow suit.

“In an era of political chaos, Joe Biden a steady hand. And we need more of that right now,” Gifford said.

Gifford’s endorsement of Biden was first reported by Politico.

Throughout the primary, many of the party’s biggest fundraisers and donors have stayed on the sidelines, or given to multiple candidates. While that has started to change in recent months, many have yet to leverage their personal connections and networks to package together large sums for candidates, a term often referred to as “bundling.”

At the same time, Sens. Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, who have both sworn off holding big-dollar fundraisers, have taken in eye-popping sums from small-dollar online contributors.

That’s left candidates like Biden, who rely on a traditional big-dollar donors, at a disadvantage.

Now, with the Iowa Caucuses a week and a half away, more could be shifting off the fence. That’s could be particularly helpful for Biden, who struggled to raise money over the summer and posted a lackluster $15.2 million, which trailed Warren, Sanders and Buttigieg.

“I’ve had a lot of informal conversations with people who have been sitting on the sidelines or have supported other candidates who dropped out of the race. And many have the same feeling I have: he’s our best shot to beat Trump and is the responsible, experienced president we need,” Gifford has given contributions to several candidates and helped Buttigieg raise money. As a gay man, he said he was initially conflicted.

“It took me so long to get off the fence because I have loyalty to Pete as the first viable LGBT presidential candidate and who has run the most inspired campaign,” he said. “Ultimately, for me, this feels like coming home.”

Continued from page 2

The Victory Fund chose LaJeunesse over two other LGBTQ candidates—activist Betsy Sweet, who is bisexual, and attorney Bte Kidman, who identifies as nonbinary, meaning not strictly male or female. The Victory Fund said it gave the nod to LaJeunesse based on his resume, experience and fundraising.

He serves on the board of the LGBTQ Victory Institute, which works to build and support a pipeline of LGBTQ public leaders in the U.S. and around the world. Victory Institute is a sister organization to Victory Fund.

“We need more LGBTQ candidates. America needs us, too. We have a set of experiences that are important to making this country live up to its potential. The more queer people running for office, the better,” LaJeunesse said.

Also in the race is Gideon, the speaker of the Maine House, who received early backing from the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

LaJeunesse downplayed any sense of inevitability with Gideon’s candidacy, saying he is doing the hard work to meet with people and earn votes. He also said he has skin in the game, providing part of the $600,000 that is being used to launch his campaign.

“We’re independent-minded folks. We don’t necessarily like it when D.C. tried to dictate who our nominees is going to be,” he said.

Kidman attacked the Victory Fund for highlighting a white millionaire who serves on a related organization over two people who have been involved in LGBTQ issues in Maine for years.

“As the first openly nonbinary person in U.S. history to run for Senate, I would be remiss if I did not note that Victory Fund has a history of favoring wealthy, cisgender gay candidates over transgender people in federal races,” Kidman said. Cisgender refers to someone whose gender identity corresponds with the sex the person was identified as having at birth.

Collins, who is seeking a fifth term, is considered among the most vulnerable Republican senators, a new position for her in a state where rising polarization and partisanship is clashing with a culture of independence. Long viewed as a centrist, she angered Democrats for voting for conservative Brett Kavanaugh for the Supreme Court, and critics also say she has not done enough to stand up to President Donald Trump.

LaJeunesse, who left Google after becoming disenchanted, said he thinks his story of how his family struggled in Biddeford to make ends meet and how his parents nearly lost the family home will resonate with voters in a state where economic growth and wages lag behind other states in the region. His father was a truck driver and his mother baby-sat and cleaned homes to help make ends meet.

“I’m not in this race to make a point. I’m in the race to win it. I’m in the race because I think I’m the best candidate to beat Sen. Collins,” he said.
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I barely know who Calum Scott is, and yet I identify with him. The "Britain’s Got Talent" winner took to social media to discuss his weight fluctuations whilst on the road. He posted three shirtless pics from his 2018 tour which were only weeks apart but showed a drastic difference in definition. He added "I always yo-yo with my weight because I love wine and carbs but I learned that’s ok. It’s about making sure you train hard and eat well, then the treats are well deserved. Who is getting fit in 2020?" He had me till he mentioned training hard and eating well!

Perhaps Calum Scott should have a conversation with Jessica Simpson. In the sometime singer’s upcoming autobiography, she reveals an addiction to diet pills for more than 20 years. Simpson traces her issues back to a conversation she had with Tommy Mottola on her 17th birthday. She did an audition for him at Columbia Records, and he offered her a recording contract—if she lost 15 pounds. "That’s what it will take to be Jessica Simpson." And to think she thought she was already Jessica Simpson!

By the by, I unearthed an interview Jessica did with Oprah Winfrey over a decade ago when she bemoaned the battle of the bulge. "I’ve tried every diet diet, every diet there is, but never to the extent where it’s unhealthy." How can I get my hands on those healthy pills?

Actor Orlando Brown (not to be confused with Orlando Bloom) has accused Nick Cannon of "performing oral sex on him." One hopes Nick took off his turban first. Cannon wasted no time in laughing off the accusation, adding that this is "another example of when we allow our young artists to be prematurely exposed by this demonic business and left out to fend for themselves." He also chastised any media outlet who repeated the accusations. "I hold you accountable." In other words, "I accuse!"

With these endless (and probably pointless) impeachment hearings, many people around the country are missing out on something very important—watching "The View" every morning. So perhaps you didn’t see when Sir Patrick Stewart formally invited Whoopi Goldberg to join the cast for season two of "Star Trek: Picard".

In other casting news, RuPaul continues her reign as queen of drag. The danger Stevenson faces as a black attorney from Harvard, just by being there and persisting, is palpable. The portrayal of the prisoners whose cells are next to that of Foxx’s Walter McMillian is humanizing in a way we rarely see.

Stevenson says, "We have a system of justice that treats you better if you’re rich and guilty than if you’re poor and innocent." According to the actual justice initiative (EJI), which he founded, "Mr. Stevenson and his staff have won reversals, relief, or release from prison for over 135 wrongly condemned prisoners on death row..." EJI is also behind the powerful lynching memorial, the National Memorial for Peace and Justice, which opened in Montgomery in 2018.

Reform is hard. As Paul Butler describes in Chokehold, "Ban the Box" policies (for which I myself testified in 2012) "prohibit employers from conducting criminal background checks until late in the application process. The hope was this would give people coming home from prison a better chance at landing an interview, but studies have shown that BTB policies have actually done more harm than good for black men. When employers don’t have actual information about whether people have a criminal background, they tend to assume that young African American men do."

Butler writes, "The truth is that the vast majority of black men have never committed a violent crime. It’s a stereotype that ... can be supported by a selective view of the evidence."

The homeless, including former prisoners, transgender people, and veterans with PTSD, represent systemic failures, as in criminal justice. Filmic truth-telling like Just Mercy can further efforts like Stevenson’s to change the narrative.

Things are not always as we imagine. If we stop throwing our fellow human beings away, all of our streets can better reflect the society we have long told ourselves we are.

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

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By THOMAS BEAUMONT
Associated Press

DUBUQUE, Iowa (AP)—Pete Buttigieg finds himself in a place that he could hardly have contemplated when he began running for president a year ago: He likely cannot finish lower than second in the Iowa caucuses if he wants to advance in the Democratic presidential nominating campaign.

But less than two weeks before the first preferences of the 2020 presidential campaign are recorded, that’s the narrow path he is navigating as his strong campaign organization, competitive poll numbers and wildly successful fundraising meet a reckoning moment.

Can he now meet lofty expectations, or is he relegated to the category of candidates with exceptional promise only to come up short?

“I’m not sure a win is necessary, but he’s got to be in the top two, I would think, to have any chance of moving on,” said Joe Trippi, campaign manager for former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean’s 2004 presidential campaign.

Each of the top four candidates in Iowa faces his or her own version of the challenge. But the 38-year-old former mayor of a midsize Midwestern city, presenting himself as the worthiest Democrat to stand against President Donald Trump, faces a particular burden of proof, and now the very plausible potential of a top finish in the first nominating state.

Buttigieg told supporters Wednesday he’s within striking distance, but stopped short of predicting victory. Still, advisers say finishing lower than second makes the lift heavier in next-up New Hampshire, where he is well-positioned.

“You have to ask yourself, ‘Who is more risky?’” Trippi said.

Buttigieg, who would be the first openly gay president, faces risks not unlike Obama, who was the first African American president. Dean did, too, as voters questioned his gravitas to take on George W. Bush in 2004. A month before the Iowa caucuses that year, Dean was on magazine

Iowa.
Divine (who also brought the show to London the following year), I was delighted to see that one of the original producers—Alan Eichler—was a producer for this revival. The all-star cast included a surprisingly skillful Traci Lords, a scene-stealing Miss Coco Peru, and the legendary Mink Stole playing twins! I’d be remiss if I neglected to mention the presence of gay porn star Wesley Woods, who showed off some stage skin—and his penis. One of the performances was filmed—and that show was introduced by Kathy Griffin. We’ll keep you posted on where and when you can see it. In the meantime, you can check out Wesley’s wood on BillyMasters.com.

In some happy news, Jesse Tyler Ferguson has announced that he and hubby Justin Mikita are expecting their first child—and he isn’t even showing! The baby is due in July.

Remember back in December when there was all that brouhaha over the Hallmark Channel and a commercial that featured a lesbian wedding? First the network ran the ad. Then some people complained, and the network pulled the ad. Then everyone else complained, so they reinstated the ad. With such strong leadership, I’m SHOCKED that CEO Bill Abbott has been ousted. Actually, he may have resigned—in that way that absolutely no one has ever left “The View” voluntarily (with the exception of the divine Meredith Vieira).

Our “Ask Billy” question is about a subject I’d been following. Mark in Boston writes, “On Gavin DeGraw’s podcast, Julianne Hough’s husband Brooks Laich recently said that he is taking a break from their marriage to ‘really dive into his sexuality’. WTF? He’s really hot, so if you have any nude photos, that would be great, too.”

You may recall last year, Julianne defined herself as “not straight”—and I will once again remind you that this “not straight” woman once dated Ryan Seacrest, who I always thought was using Julianne to get to Derek, but that’s another story. Recently, Julianne’s hubby, hockey player Brooks Laich, posted on Instagram some of his goals for 2020: “I want to learn more about intimacy and my sexuality”. Perhaps he should call Ryan...or Derek. Needless to say, his comment to DeGraw (on the podcast they co-host) didn’t surprise me. I wouldn’t be surprised if at the end of his exploration, he learned that he’s just a little bit gay. Still, I don’t think that’s a deal breaker for Julianne. Alas, no nude photos have surfaced thus far. But he’s hot enough shirtless for me to run some of those pics on BillyMasters.com.

When Julianne could possibly be someone’s bae...again, it’s definitely time to end yet another column. Here’s something interesting—when I was researching the “Ask Billy” question, I was shocked to find a staggering number of photos of Brooks Laich all over Gavin DeGraw. You don’t think...nah, too easy. Speaking of easy, check out the latest news and nudes on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that’s a sure thing. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before one of those nude sailors competes on “Dancing with the Stars”. So, until next time, remember, one man’s filth is another man’s bible.

2020

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“Gov’t Iowa or finishing second, Pete can overcome those doubts within the rest of the Democratic Party,” Trippi said. “Anyone who worries about whether the country was ready for the first black president, those worries vanished when Obama won Iowa.”

Buttigieg is also doing well in New Hampshire. Campaign aides say a top finish in Iowa would lead to a competitive New Hampshire.

But danger lies ahead for Buttigieg. He polls very low among African American voters, who make up roughly two-thirds of the electorate in the South Carolina primary.

And while the half dozen strategists who have advised top-tier Democratic candidates in Iowa say Buttigieg doesn’t have to win, several say finishing behind Biden would be trouble.

“So if you have any nude photos, that would be great, too.”

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