Once casts a spell

By Jules Becker

"Once," a musical based on the 2007 John Carney film of the same name, is a disarming combination of the personal and the collective. With the original by turns sweet and snappy Glen Hansard-Marketa Inglová score, this appealing show smoothly moves between offbeat romance and ensemble harmonies and buildups. Enda Walsh’s seemingly simple book has symbolically named Guy—a Dubliner who fixes vacuum cleaners—casts a spell.

Nile Scott Hawver as Guy and Mackenzie Lesser-Roy as Girl in SpeakEasy Stage production of "Once." Photo credit: Maggie Hall Photography

MA House approves gay conversion therapy ban

By STEVE LeBLANC
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP)—Massachusetts House lawmakers have approved legislation that would ban so-called gay conversion therapy for minors. Supporters of the ban say the practice—which aims to alter a person’s sexual orientation—is widely discredited by medical and mental health associations and can lead to depression and suicide in young people.

Opponents say the ban would impose criminal liability on health professionals who counsel children struggling with unwanted same-sex attraction or gender confusion.

Supporters of the bill say it wouldn’t impose criminal liability.

The House passed the bill Wednesday by a 147-8 vote. It now heads to the Senate.

A similar bill was approved by

Both sides of the binary:
Exhibit explores gender, fashion

By TRACEE M. HERBAUGH
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP)— When actor Billy Porter unveiled his combination tuxedo-ball gown at the Oscars last month, it got people talking.

Porter, the black and gay breakout star of the FX series "Pose," had bucked traditional Academy Award attire—fancy frocks for the ladies and basic tuxedos for men.

A photo of Porter’s eye-catching Oscar garb is included in a new exhibit at Boston’s Museum of Fine Arts that opens to the public on Thursday. The show titled, "Gender Bending Fashion," examines moments in history when clothing transcended and muddled our understanding of gender.

The show was inspired, in part, by what’s happening right now in fashion, said Michelle Finamore, a fashion historian and curator.

"The lines are getting more and more blurred," she said.

"Gender Bending Fashion" is the first large-scale exhibit of its kind to be

Of Budget and Bias
by Dana Rudolph

President Trump’s proposed 2020 budget, released March 11, reinforces his intention to let foster care and adoption agencies discriminate against LGBTQ people and others in the name of religion, using taxpayer money.

There is legislation pending that could stop these religious exemptions to nondiscrimination laws, however.

Here’s what you need to know.

The president’s budget includes the line item: “Protect the religious liberty of child welfare providers.” It has no funding amount attached to it, but the Every Child Deserves a Family campaign, which works to pay by credit card over the phone please call Jeff Coakley at 617-464-7280

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Once
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but means to develop a career in music—and Girl—a Czech who plays piano, has written her own compositions and cares for her daughter Ivonka—demonstrate mutual chemistry but remain on the threshold of romance. At the same time, the many music-playing characters join together with Guy to practice and put together a CD of songs. Through the musical, the Czech immigrants bolster Girl’s and their own hopes and dreams. Eventually the Dublin and Czech musicians work passionately and precisely to create Guy’s heartfelt CD.

Fans of this wistful show and newcomers to its charms alike will easily fall under the spell of the SpeakEasy Stage Company edition in the fittingly cozy Roberts Theatre space of the Calderwood Pavilion. Along the way—as in the film—the characters diverse individual odysseys are explored. Fans of the touching screen performances of the characters will note from the start whether Guy will head for New York with his recording of songs. Through the musical, the Czech immigrants bolster Girl’s and their own hopes and dreams. Eventually the Dublin and Czech musicians work passionately and precisely to create Guy’s heartfelt CD.

Familiarity aside, the SpeakEasy staging proves a magical one.

Under Paul Melone’s careful direction, the cast become a harmonious musical ensemble despite diverse views about capitalism and life. Steven Ladd Jones provides strong musical direction for cast members as they actually play various string and percussion instruments—including piano, cello, violin, bouzouki, accordion and tambourine. Their musical skills are most evident on the first act-closer “Gold” and its later reprise. Illyse Robbins’ choreography crisply captures the distinctive moves of Dublin and Czech dances. The dancing actors often come together heartily in telling moments of unity between the characters’ cultures. Eric Levenson’s scenic design smartly evokes the no-nonsense ambiance of the characters’ surroundings. Karen Perlow’s nuanced lighting significantly enhances the intimacy of the music shop work on the CD and Guy and Girl’s sweet moments looking out on Dublin and the stars.

Nile Scott has the right mix of insecurity and heart as Guy, and Mackenzie Lesser Roy is even better—strikingly spontaneous and passionate yet conscience-guided as Girl. Supporting standout include Billy Butler’s hot-tempered music store owner Billy, Jeff Song’s alternately defensive and self-validating Bank Manager, who quite candidly identifies himself as a “penis person” in contrast to straight Billy. Butler and Song convincingly develop the understanding and mutual respect between their characters. Other strong performances include Jacob Brandt’s weary service worker and would-be area manager Andrej and Marta Rymer’s flirtatious but well-intentioned Czech confidante (for Girl) Reza. Hawver and Roy make the Oscar-winning “Falling Slowly” lyrically embraces choice even in the face of challenge. SpeakEasy Stages’ individual and collective talents rise to the show’s challenges with a production that will win your heart. You may decide to see this winner more than once.

Art
Continued from page 1

hosted by a major museum. It is comprised of mixed-media: paintings, record covers and photographs. But a highlight for viewers will surely be the 70 gender-bending ensembles from big-name designers, such as Rei Kawakubo, of Comme des Garçons, and Walter Van Beirendonck, a member of the influential avant-garde group “Anwerp Six.”

One notable inclusion is the tuxedo that actress Marlene Dietrich wore in the 1930 film “Morocco.”

Dietrich has long been hailed as a hero for gender fluidity. It wasn’t uncommon for her to wear top hats, shirts with French cuffs and cuff links, and pant suits tailored for men.

“She was both sides of the binary in that she was either extremely feminine or extremely masculine,” Finamore said.

The exhibit references the 1920s, a time when women first cut their hair short. Then it progresses to the 1960s and The Peacock Revolution, when menswear shifted from plain and simple to flamboyant, colorful and tailored to the body. The ‘60s is also when unisex attire became mainstream. And present day is thought to be the height of gender fluidity in fashion.

Each of these moments represent a cultural shift within society, said Jo Paloetti, author of the books "Sex and Unisex: Fashion, Feminism, and the Sexual Revolution" and "Pink and Blue: Telling the Boys from the Girls in America."

In the 1920s, women secured the right to vote and started working outside the home for the first time. The 1960s brought the sexual revolution, gay rights and second-wave feminism—people pushing back against traditional roles.

Today, as the world questions the very relevance of gender definitions, cultural questions are taking visual form in fashion, Paloetti said.

“We are asking what it means to be man or woman,” she said. “Are these terms just a proxy for stereotypes?”

The show is on display through Aug. 25.
A grim memory flashed through my mind when I saw an early death count from the March 15 terrorist attack in Christchurch, New Zealand: 49 was the same number killed in Orlando’s 2016 Pulse massacre. In this case, the victims were not partiers at a nightclub, but worshippers at prayer. Now as then, they were targets of hate.

“Hello, brother” were the last words of a man at the door to Al Noor mosque, spoken to the killer just before he opened fire with a semiautomatic rifle. In an instinctive act of decency bracketing just before he opened fire with a semiautomatic rifle, a woman living nearby waved fleeing people into her home. If we are to be saved from gun violence, such as with background checks and bans on semiautomatics, the deeper problem is our simultaneous acceptance and ignominious denial of white supremacy. It is all too easy to deny the existence of something you take for granted. People who despise the Klan can still engage in redlining, racial profiling, or voter suppression. Will Connolly, the teen who cracked an egg over Australian senator Fraser Anning’s head for his victim blaming after the mosque shootings, pledged to donate most of the GoFundMe money raised for his defense to help the victims.

Conversion

Continued from page 1

lawmakers last summer but stalled in the session’s final hours. Republican Gov. Charlie Baker has said he’s inclined to sign the measure.

The bill would make Massachusetts the 16th state to adopt a ban. Democratic State Rep. Kay Khan, the bill’s sponsor, said the language was carefully crafted to protect First Amendment rights—something critics say the ban would infringe upon.

Rep. Sarah Peake said that when she decided to come out as a lesbian, one of the scariest challenges she faced was telling her parents.

“It was scary because I had many friends who when they came out to their parents, their parents took them to what we know now to be sort of a quack therapist to put them into conversion therapy,” the Provincetown Democrat said. “My friends were miserable. They were isolated from their parents. They were isolated from their community. They were isolated from their natural support groups.”

Rep. Shawn Dooley opposed the ban, which he said is too restrictive.

The Norfolk Republican asked what might happen if an 8-year-old boy came into a doctor’s office saying he thinks he is an 8-year-old girl.

“Maybe that therapist wants to push back. Maybe that child isn’t transgender. Maybe that child’s gay. Maybe that child’s bi. Why not give every opportunity for that therapist to explore that? Why can’t the therapist say ‘no, you’re not’,” Dooley said. “We are taking away that ability of the therapist. We are taking away that ability to have some further discussion.”

Massachusetts Family Institute President Andrew Beckwith said the ban would prevent parents from taking their children for any therapy, because no professionally trained counseling would be available that aligns with their convictions.

“Counselors should be free to act in the best interest of a child, and parents should be free to choose a wait and see approach if a minor child wants gender reassignment surgery,” Beckwith said in a written statement.

The bill would still allow non-licensed religious or faith-based counselors to provide pastoral counseling. The ban would continue to allow adults to seek conversion therapy if they want.

Advocates pushing for the ban said being LGBTQ is not a disease that requires a cure.

Arkansas and Tennessee. (Alabama, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Virginia) whose laws now allow religious exemptions in foster care harm children by limiting the number of homes available and raise “alarming questions” about what would happen if children end up in settings “hostile to their” or LGBTQ identities.

Several pieces of legislation could help avoid these scenarios. The Do No Harm Act, introduced in both houses February 28, would ensure that the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993, meant to prevent the government from “substantially burden[ing] a person’s exercise of religion,” cannot be used to allow discrimination.

Additionally, the Every Child Deserves a Family Act, introduced with bipartisan support in the past five Congresses, is expected to be introduced again this spring. The bill would withhold federal child welfare funds from states that discriminate against prospective parents or youth in care on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity (and for prospective parents, marital status), and allow redress in federal courts.

Mombian

Continued from page 1

to end discrimination in child services, said in a statement that while such a line in a budget proposal is not statutorily binding, “the wording sends a dangerous signal to child welfare agencies that they can discriminate based on a religious limbus test.” Additionally, the HHS Budget in Brief that came out at the same time reiterates the role of HHS’ new Conscience and Religious Freedom Division “to ensure protection of the conscience and religious freedom rights of individuals and entities working in health care and human services.”

President Trump had already personally signaled his encouragement of such discrimination. At the National Prayer Breakfast on February 7, he said, “My administration is working to ensure that faith-based adoption agencies are able to help vulnerable children find their forever families while following their deeply held beliefs.”

Understand what’s behind that: The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) this past January granted South Carolina a waiver from federal nondiscrimination policy so that federally funded adoption and foster care agencies in the state may discriminate based on a person’s religion, LGBTQ identity, or other factors that do not harmonize with the religious beliefs that the agency espouses. The waiver came after Miracle Hill Ministries, a Protestant foster care agency, turned away a Jewish woman from serving as a mentor to foster youth because she did not share Miracle Hill’s beliefs. The state’s Department of Children and Family Services told the agency it must comply with federal nondiscrimination policy or lose its contract, but Governor Henry McMaster (R) intervened and requested a waiver from HHS, which was granted.

After the waiver was requested, South Carolina also passed a bill to become one of ten states (Alabama, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Virginia) whose laws now allow religious exemptions in child services. (Similar legislation has been introduced in Arkansas and Tennessee.) All but Alabama allow them to do so even if they receive taxpayer money.

Supporters of religious exemptions have argued that laws which cut public funds for agencies that discriminate have forced religiously-based child service agencies to close and are thus reducing the number of homes for children. Yes, some agencies have chosen to close rather than place children with LGBTQ parents. But as Emily Hecht-McGovern, former chief policy officer of Family Equality Council, explained to me in 2017, this has made “no discernable impact” on children finding homes. These agencies did not make that many public placements to begin with, and the ones that closed were able to transfer all their cases to other agencies.

Last fall, LGBTQ and child welfare advocates defeated federal legislation that would have permitted religious exemptions in child services across the nation, and momentum is building to further oppose religious exemption laws. In the past two months, 43 U.S. senators and 95 U.S. representatives have signed letters to HHS Secretary Alex Azar, strongly condemning the South Carolina waiver. And at a March 14th Senate Finance Committee hearing on the president’s budget, Senator Ron Wyden (D-OR), the ranking member, said in a statement that religious exemptions in foster care harm children by limiting the number of homes available and raise “alarming questions” about what would happen if children end up in settings “hostile to their” or LGBTQ identities.

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Most prominently, the Equality Act, introduced in both houses (and with much fanfare in LGBTQ media) two days after the president’s budget, is meant to “prohibit discrimination on the basis of sex, gender identity, and sexual orientation” in a wide variety of programs and services. It specifically notes that “Barring discrimination in foster care and adoption will increase the number of homes available to foster children waiting for foster and adoptive families” and “will ensure improved treatment and outcomes for LGBT foster children.”

Contact your own members of Congress and ask them to cosponsor these bills if they haven’t already (or thank them for doing so). Follow the Every Child Deserves a Family campaign (everychilddeservesafamily.com) on social media for updates on federal and state happenings. With over 440,000 children in foster care, over 120,000 waiting to be adopted, and nearly 20,000 aging out of foster care each year without finding a permanent home, according to the latest federal data, preventing bias in child services should be a critical national imperative.

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

GOP Sen. Collins signs onto law to extend LGBT protections
By DAVID SHARP
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP)—GOP Sen. Susan Collins of Maine is signing on as sponsor of a comprehensive nondiscrimination bill, the only Senate Republican to back the LGBT rights movement’s top legislative priority.

Collins said she’s worked throughout her career to end discrimination and that “all Americans deserve a fair opportunity to pursue the American dream.”

“It is time we ensure that all people are judged on their talents and abilities, and have full access to the services they need and the opportunities they seek. This bill marks the beginning of that process, and I urge my colleagues to join me as we take steps to build bipartisan consensus around the Equality Act,” Collins said Wednesday in a statement.

The Equality Act of 2019, introduced Wednesday, would extend protections based on sexual orientation to employment, housing, public accommodations and public services. Many states, including Maine, already have adopted such protections.

In the Senate, Collins is the lead GOP sponsor of the bill. The lead Democratic sponsors are Oregon’s Jeff Merkley, Wisconsin’s Tammy Baldwin and New Jersey’s Cory Booker.

The Maine Human Rights Act was amended to ensure LGBT protections in 2005, and it was subsequently upheld by a state referendum. Gay marriage became legal in Maine in 2012 following a referendum. The policy was then repealed by the New Hampshire House this week.

The bill would require an applicant to get notarized statements from health care providers stating that in their provider’s opinion, an individual is male, female or neither and is reasonably expected to continue as such for the foreseeable future. New birth certificates would be issued, but the original certificates would also be kept.

Supporters say birth certificates already can be changed for a variety of reasons, including adoption or someone who has had gender reassignment surgery. Opponents argued that birth certificates record “facts, not feelings.”

The bill now goes to the Senate.

Sen. Reed says Pentagon shouldn’t adopt new transgender rule

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP)—U.S. Sen. Jack Reed says the Defense Department shouldn’t move forward with a new policy that will largely bar transgender troops and military recruits from transitioning to another sex.

The Rhode Island Democrat said Wednesday the policy, which will also require most individuals to serve in their birth gender, is a “discriminatory and potentially unlawful plan” to ban highly-qualified and skilled individuals from serving. He’s the ranking member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and a former Army Ranger.

President Donald Trump has said transgender troops are disruptive.

Reed says they’re serving honorably and “we must not allow bigotry to impede our military’s critical mission.”

The policy will likely force the military to eventually discharge transgender individuals who need hormone treatments or surgery and can’t or won’t serve in their birth gender.

NH House approves birth certificate changes in transgender cases

CONCORD, N.H. (AP)—Transgender residents and those who don’t identify as either male or female would be allowed to change their name and sex information on their birth certificates under a bill passed by the New Hampshire House this week.

The bill would require an applicant to get notarized statements from health care providers stating that in the provider’s opinion, an individual is male, female or neither and is reasonably expected to continue as such for the foreseeable future. New birth certificates would be issued, but the original certificates would also be kept.

Supporters say birth certificates already can be changed for a variety of reasons, including adoption or someone who has had gender reassignment surgery. Opponents argued that birth certificates record “facts, not feelings.”

The bill now goes to the Senate.
New Pentagon transgender rule sets limits for troops

By LOLITA C. BALDOR
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Defense Department has approved a new policy that will largely bar transgender troops and military recruits from transitioning to another sex, and require most individuals to serve in their birth gender.

The memo outlining the new policy was obtained Tuesday by The Associated Press, and it comes after a lengthy and complicated legal battle. It falls short of the all-out transgender ban that was initially ordered by President Donald Trump. But it will likely force the military to discharge transgender individuals who were diagnosed with gender dysphoria after April 12.

The order says the military services must ensure that troops must be formally counseled and given a chance to change their decision before the discharge is finalized.

In a statement Tuesday night, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the ban “cowardly.”

“The President’s revival of his bigoted, disgusting ban on transgender servicemembers is a stunning attack on the patriots who keep us safe and on the most fundamental ideals of our nation,” the California Democrat said. “The President’s year-long insistence on his cowardly ban makes clear that prejudice, not patriotism, guides his decisions.”

Palm Center, a California research institute, protested the new policy Tuesday. Director Aaron Belkin said, “The Trump administration is ready to move forward. But restrictions on transgender servicemembers would be allowed to serve openly. And the military set July 1, 2017, as the date when transgender individuals would be allowed to enlist.”

see PENTAGON, page 6

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Rosendall
Continued from page 3

Trump, meanwhile, was busy calling asylum seekers “invaders” and defending Pirro.

On March 13, in a Breitbart interview, Trump casually threatened a coup: “I can tell you I have the support of the police, the support of the military, the support of the Bikers for Trump—I have the tough people, but they don’t play it tough—until they go to a certain point, and then it would be very bad, very bad.”

Perhaps Trump really believes that mobs of CPAs and landscape architects on their Harleys would storm government and newspaper offices on his behalf. Here and there, he may be right. But to expect military and police officers en masse to disregard their oaths? That is a fantasy, and have been slammed by members of Congress as discriminatory and self-defeating.

The memo was signed by David L. Norquist, who is currently serving as the deputy defense secretary.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., said in February that barring service by transgender individuals "would cost us recruits at a time when so few Americans are willing to serve." She spoke at a hearing in which transgender troops testified that transitioning to another sex made them stronger and more effective members of the military.

Until a few years ago service members could be discharged from the military for being transgender, but that changed under the Obama administration. Then-Defense Secretary Ash Carter announced in 2016 that transgender people 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.

If his tenure as president is ended, whether by impeachment, 25th Amendment, or election, he will either go peacefully or be removed.

The beasts our presidential man-child has unleashed will ultimately devour him. Words come to mind from Georg Büchner’s play Danton's Death: “He thinks he can keep the wild horses of revolution waiting outside the brothel like patient hacks. But they’ll be strong enough to drag him to the guillotine.”

In the event of an oversight by the current White House resident, as with “last night’s trick who won’t go home” (to quote an old friend), it will suffice for the Secret Service to lift him off the floor and deposit him unceremoniously outside the northwest gate.

Richard J. Rosendall is a writer and activist who can be reached at rrosendall@me.com.

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After Trump took office, however, his administration delayed the enlistment date and called for additional study to determine if allowing transgender individuals to serve would affect military readiness or effectiveness.

A few weeks later, Trump caught military leaders by surprise, tweeting that the government won’t accept or allow transgender individuals to serve “in any capacity” in the military. “Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail,” he wrote.

His demand for a ban triggered a legal and moral quagmire, as the Pentagon faced the prospect of throwing out service members who had willingly come forward as transgender after being promised they would be protected and allowed to serve. And as legal battles blocked the ban from taking effect, the Obama-era policy continued and transgender individuals were allowed to begin enlisting in the military a little more than a year ago.

An estimated 14,700 troops on active duty and in the Reserves identify as transgender, but not all seek treatment. Since July 2016, more than 1,500 service members were diagnosed with gender dysphoria; as of Feb. 1, there were 1,071 currently serving. According to the Pentagon, the department has spent about $8 million on transgender care since 2016. The military’s annual health care budget tops $50 billion.

Last year, all four service chiefs told Congress that they had seen no discipline, morale or unit readiness problems with transgender troops serving openly in the military. “Our military must be focused on decisive and overwhelming victory and cannot be burdened with the tremendous medical costs and disruption that transgender in the military would entail,” he wrote.

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Last year, all four service chiefs told Congress that they had seen no discipline, morale or unit readiness problems with transgender troops serving openly in the military. But they also acknowledged that some commanders were spending a lot of time with transgender individuals who were working through medical requirements and other transition issues.

The five transgender troops who testified in February said their medical transitions took anywhere from four weeks to four months and they did most of it on their own time. All said they were fit to return to deploying afterward.

Surgeon denies posting homophobic comments on social media

By KELLI KENNEDY and FRIEDA FRISARO
Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP)—A prominent gender-reassignment surgeon resigned from a University of Miami clinic after he was accused of posting photos of patients’ genitalia with racist and homophobic comments on Instagram, but he denied making the comments and said Thursday that the account was hacked.

Dr. Christopher Salgado also told The Associated Press that he planned to continue his efforts to support transgender people and provide surgery for them.

The Miami Herald on Wednesday published what it said was an anonymous petition to the American College of Surgeons alleging that the University of Miami Health System surgeon posted graphic photos of male and female genitalia in various stages of surgery, along with hashtags seen as racist and homophobic, on his personal Instagram account (@sexsurgeon). The account has since been deleted.

American College of Surgeons spokesman Dan Hamilton said in a statement that the college had not received such a petition and that Salgado is not even a member. He is a member of the American Society of Plastic Surgeons, according to its website. The organization did not respond to an email Thursday.

The alleged petition described the hashtags that appeared with the photos as “horribly inappropriate,” and questioned whether Salgado violated patient privacy laws.

“Transgender patients are an incredibly vulnerable population as it relates to seeking medical care,” the petition said. “We experience violence, neglect, misgendering, sexual assault, and more. To see a surgeon who claims to specialize in treating transgender patients using racist, homophobic, and transphobic hashtags ... is beyond unacceptable.”

Salgado, a 50-year-old section chief for the hospital’s LGBTQ Center for Wellness, Gender and Sexual Health, told the AP in an email Thursday that he had posted various photos of gender-reassignment patients’ genitalia and that all of the patients had given their consent. But he said the hashtags, which “I had never seen in my life,” were added by someone who had hacked his account. Salgado said the petition was sent by a patient with gender dysphoria who was going through a difficult time in life.

Salgado said he loves the transgender popula-
Bay Windows welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and accompanied by a mailing address and phone number. Because of space limitations, letters should not be more than 200 words.

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"We don't rape someone that's raped; why do we kill someone that's killed?"

— Governor Gavin Newsom on his decision to put a moratorium on executions in California.

I'm terribly disappointed in Felicity Huffman when it comes to this whole college admissions scandal. Frankly, I expected more from her. But since I'm capable of having two contradictory thoughts at the same time, I must also admit that I feel bad for her. Yes, she did something wrong. But how can you lump in Huffman's $15K payment to bump up her daughter's SAT scores with parents who paid half a MILLION dollars to get their daughters into college? I have absolutely no respect for Lori Loughlin and designer Mossimo Giannulli—and that was even before this scandal broke.

And before I saw those videos of her birch daughter who I suspect has done many things with an oar that didn't include sculling. But really, Fed? You send a SWAT team to Felicity's house at dawn in bulletproof vests to bring her in like she's El Chapo, while Loughlin blithely flies in from her latest/last Hallmark set in Canada? Oh, the humanity! I'm rooting for Felicity to just pay a fine and be done with this. But Loughlin and Moss should be locked up and forced to watch "When Calls the Heart" on an endless loop.

Vice President Mike Pence invited the Irish Prime Minister to his home for a Saint Patrick's Day brunch. Nothing strange about that—except the Irish Prime Minister, Leo Varadkar, is gay and brought his male partner. And, of course, Pence has supported conversion therapy. Maybe it was all a plot—get the Irish gays drunk on beer, corned beef and cabbage, and then try to convert them with Mrs. Pence in a seductive flannel teddy. If that was the plan, it failed miserably. Turns out, Pence and Varadkar met last year, and the VP invited Leo and his partner to visit. So that's what they did. Varadkar made a speech about how the world has changed since he was young. "I stand here leader of my country, flawed and human, but judged by my political actions and not my sexual orientation, my skin tone, gender, or religious beliefs. And I don't believe my country is the only one in the world where this story is possible. It is found in every country where freedom and liberty are cherished. We are, after all, all God's children." And that, kiddies, is how you do it. If you end with a bit about God, what's Pence gonna say?

At roughly the same time as this Irish summit, the Massachusetts House of Representatives voted 147-8 to ban gay conversion therapy on minors. It now must pass the Massachusetts Senate, but that is said to not be a problem.

There yet another related story courtesy of Ben Camille, the host of "The X Factor" in Malta (a lovely place where I've vacationed and highly recommend—just avoid the buses). Last week, Camille spoke out against conversion therapy after receiving a letter from a fan. "If you are a boy or a girl and you feel you have not yet come to terms with your own sexuality, there's absolutely nothing wrong with that. I can't believe I'm actually saying this but there's absolutely nothing wrong with being gay. If you're gay, embrace it. If you are gay, thank your lucky stars. As if you are straight, as if you are bisexual. Thank your lucky stars that you have identified your sexuality. That you know what it is, because that means you can find love." BTW, the very sexy Camille is straight, married to a woman, and has a daughter Elle. Well, I assume Elle is a daughter—who knows these days!

Last week, I told you that I got to sit with legendary television producer Norman Lear. This week, Norman got some bad news. The reboot of "One Day at a Time", featuring a Cuban-American family led by Rita Moreno with a lesbian granddaughter, has been critically acclaimed. Alas, the ratings have been low, and Netflix announced that the third season will also be the last. Still, there is some hope. A grassroots group is trying to get the show picked up—#RenewODAAT. I suppose it could end up at another network. The 96-year-old Norman Lear was inconsolable: "At my age, I can testify that you are never too old to have your heart broken." ¡Buena suerte!

A couple of weeks ago, we heard lurid allegations about Michael Jackson (all of which I believed). This week, crazy R. Kelly was in the hot seat. Speaking of seats, one of his exes said something which caught my eye. Lisa Van Allen said: "He likes dildos. I know he likes fingers in the butt with him on all fours." She added, "He does like penetration". Now, is it just me or does this sound strikingly similar to one of the allegations against MJ? I'm just thinking—if Jackson had met R. Kelly when he was a little boy, everyone would have had a happy ending.

Have I ever told you about Michael Jackson and Britney Spears? Allegedly, Michael was a big "fan" of Justin Timberlake, and invited him to visit Neverland—an invitation extended to so many boys before. This was back in the day, so Justin brought his girlfriend, Britney. When they arrived at the gate, MJ was told Justin and Britney were there. He allegedly threw a fit in the house and cried, "Why did he bring HER?" That anecdote is a way to work into our next story. Remember that Jackson musical "Don't
Continued from page 6

tion and has spent years caring for them. "I apologize to any person for hurting their feelings as this began as educational," Salgado wrote in his email. "I have dedicated the past nine years to the care of this patient population and will not let this detract from my love for them."

Salgado said he was not fired but resigned from his position. He sent the AP a photo of an email that he said was from the department chair accepting his resignation in February. A statement in the email read, "Please note that we cannot determine whether you have been hacked as we were just about to start the investigation of this matter."

University of Miami hospital spokeswoman Lisa Worley said in a statement that Salgado is no longer employed there. She declined to offer further details. "The University of Miami is committed to promoting and supporting diversity in its students, faculty, and staff and finds any transphobic comments unacceptable," Worley wrote. "As health care providers, we continue to have a team of experts dedicated to delivering the full continuum of care for gender reassignment patients."

Salgado was featured on an episode of "I Am Jazz," a television show on the TLC network featuring South Florida transgender teen Jazz Jennings. The network and Jennings' publicist both declined comment in emails to the AP. The Florida Department of Health said in an email Thursday that it cannot comment publicly on whether it has opened an investigation.

**Oregon House moves to update LGBTQ language in statute**

By ANDREW SELSKY
Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP)—The Oregon House of Representatives moved on Wednesday to scrub language offensive to LGBTQ residents in a bill that also specifies that sexual orientation is not a physical or mental impairment.

The bill passed the House 58-2 and goes to the Senate. Rep. Rob Nosse, who is gay, said on the House floor that the state’s anti-LGBTQ laws date back to the 1850s when Oregon was a territory, and helped put some people into mental hospitals and the state penitentiary for expressing their love or true gender. The laws were enforced until the 1970s, Nosse said.

"It was taken for granted that being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender meant that you had a mental disorder and unfortunately ... remnants of those sentiments still remain in our legal code, and that’s why we have this bill," the Portland Democrat said.

The measure modernizes language referring to transgender people, deleting "transsexualism" and "transvestism," from Oregon’s employment anti-discrimination law. The bill clarifies that sexual orientation isn’t considered a physical or mental impairment and that a person doesn’t have a disability solely to sexual orientation.

"By removing offensive, outdated terms such as ‘transsexualism’ and ‘transvestism,’ and striking the association between transgender people and those with ‘sexual behavior disorders,’ this bill affirms the dignity of transgender Oregonians," said Nancy Haque, executive director of Basic Rights Oregon, in earlier testimony. The group works to ensure equality for LGBTQ residents.

Two Republicans, Rep. Mike Nearman of Independence, and Rep. Werner Reschke of Klamath Falls, were the only two House lawmakers who voted against the bill. They did not speak about the bill on the House floor. Asked why he voted against the bill, Nearman said in an email that its supporters claim the measure is just changing language. He did not elaborate. Reschke did not respond to requests for comment.


"To Oregon’s transgender community: please know we’ve voted to remove all edic outdated and offensive terms from state law. Now onto the Senate with [at]RobNosse," Power tweeted.

The Oregon Trail Lawyers Association said the bill would not erode existing protections for any individuals.

While individual transgender people may receive various diagnoses or health care, those conditions or limitations are distinct from an individual’s gender identity, said Cierra Brown, the chair of the LGBT bar association of Oregon, in written testimony supporting the bill.

"This bill draws a line between tangible conditions—which the disability law should protect on equal terms for all Oregonians—and inherent identity," said Brown, whose group is called Opalla.

Follow Andrew Selsky on Twitter at http://twitter.com/andrewselsky

**Justices reject B&B owner who denied room to gay couple**

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER
Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP)—The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday left in place Hawaii court rulings that found a bed and breakfast owner violated the state’s anti-discrimination law by refusing to rent a room to a lesbian couple.

The justices rejected an appeal from Aloha Bed & Breakfast owner Phyllis Young, who argued that she should be allowed to turn away gay couples because of her religious beliefs.

"Mrs. Young will rent a bedroom in her home to anyone, including those who are LGBT, but will not rent to any romantic partners other than a husband and wife," her attorney, James Hochberg, said in a statement. "This kind of governmental coercion should disturb every freedom-loving American no matter where you stand on marriage."

The case involved an effort by Diane Cervelli and Taio Bufford of Long Beach, California, to book a room at Aloha Bed & Breakfast in 2007 while they were visiting a friend nearby.

When they specified they would need just one bed, Young told them she was uncomfortable reserving a room for lesbians and canceled the reservation.

Cervelli and Bufford filed complaints with the Hawaii Civil Rights Commission. Young told the commission she is Catholic and believes that heterosexuality is "natural and inherent identity," said Brown, whose group is called Opalla.

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mosexuality is wrong, according to the appeals court ruling.

The commission found the business illegally discriminated against the couple and issued Cervelli and Bufford “right to sue” notices.

They filed their lawsuit in 2011.

“The freedom of religion does not give businesses a right to violate nondiscrimination laws that protect all individuals from harm, whether on the basis of race, gender, or sexual orientation,” Peter Renn, an attorney who represents the couple, said in a statement.

Last year, the Hawaii Supreme Court rejected Young’s appeal of a lower court ruling that ordered her to stop discriminating against same-sex couples.

Associated Press reporter Mark Sherman in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

Kansas archdiocese denies enrollment to gay couple’s child

KANSAS CITY, Kan. (AP)—A decision by the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas to deny enrollment to the kindergarten child of gay parents has prompted thousands of people to sign dueling petitions.

The Kansas City Star reports a recent online petition supporting the archdiocese’s decision has received more than 7,000 signatures. An earlier petition signed by almost 2,000 members of Kansas City-area Catholic parishes asks officials to change their minds.

Local parishioners learned of the decision when the Rev. Craig J. Maxim of St. Ann Catholic Church wrote a letter to parents last month telling families the archdiocese said the child’s parents cannot “model behaviors and attitudes consistent with the Church’s teachings.”

Maxim wrote this creates a conflict for those children and could be a source of confusion for other children.


Jussie Smollett pleads not guilty to lying about attack

CHICAGO (AP)—“Empire” actor Jussie Smollett pleaded not guilty Thursday to charges accusing him of lying to the police about being the victim of a racist and homophobic attack in downtown Chicago a few weeks ago.

Lawyer Tina Glandian entered the plea on behalf of the 36-year-old actor during a hearing in Cook County Circuit Court after Judge Steven Watkins was assigned to oversee the case, including the trial.

Watkins granted Smollett’s request to be allowed to meet with lawyers in New York and California, but said the actor must give the court at least 48 hours’ prior notice. He scheduled the next hearing for April 17.

Smollett, who left the courthouse without speaking to reporters, is charged with 16 counts of disorderly conduct.

Prosecutors allege that Smollett, who is black and gay and plays the gay character Jamal Lyon on the hit Fox TV show, hired two friends to help him stage the attack on him in downtown Chicago early on the morning of Jan. 29. They say Smollett was unhappy about his salary and wanted to drum up publicity to help his career.

Smollett has denied that he staged the attack and maintains he is innocent. His attorneys have called the charges against him “prosecutorial overkill.”

There were several supporters outside the courthouse doors as Smollett arrived for the hearing, including some who waved signs. Activist Wisdom Cole led a few chants in support of the victim of a racist and homophobic attack in downtown Chicago.

“Jussie has been a person of high caliber and character. He comes from an activist family. He has a consistent track record and history of supporting marginalized people ... and so his track record is not on par with the idea of a hoax,” she said.

Check out the AP’s complete coverage of the Jussie Smollett case.

Continued from page 9
Stop ‘Til You Get Enough’, which was supposed to debut in Chicago? It’s been pulled, and will be replaced by “Once Upon a One More Time”—a musical using the music of Miss Britney Spears. Someone go to Jackson’s crypt and see if it’s spinning!

Hugh Jackman has just signed on to head a revival of “The Music Man” on Broadway. The show is scheduled to open on October 22, 2020. So if you missed out on buying an overpriced ticket to see Jackman on his world concert tour, you can save up and buy an overpriced ticket to see him in a Broadway musical.

We got a double dose of Jussie Smollett last week. I must confess, I found the return of “Empire” as entertaining as ever, and Jussie’s new music outstanding (if not somewhat derivative). Alas, practically no one was watching. The ratings drop and Smollett’s issues could lead to FOX cancelling the show. Meanwhile, Jussie was at the Cook County courthouse, where he plead not guilty. I guess this means a plea deal ain’t happening. On the positive side, the judge ruled cameras will be allowed in the courtroom. So, if “Empire” is cancelled, Jussie still has a TV gig.

Lance Bass produced a documentary called “The Boy Band Con: The Lou Pearlman Story”. The doc features many members of bands led by the shamed, jailed, and now deceased impresario. But one name is conspicuously absent. For years it’s been rumored that Nick Carter got the lion’s share of “attention” from Lou—attention which is said to have scarred him. He skipped this project, so we won’t hear his story. We’ll have to settle for Ashley Parker Angel from “O-Town”, who is best known for long, luxurious footage filmed in the shower—kinda like that previously virginal bachelor. We’re told Lou had all the unedited footage squirreled away for his own “use”.

There is a Carter who is in the flick—Aaron Carter. It’s said that Lou focused on him once Nick started growing pubes. And, of course, Aaron ain’t one to turn down publicity. In fact, he posted a photo of himself recently with the following caption: “I think I look fucking great!” Check him out on our website and decide for yourself.

If Aaron thinks he looks so freaking good, I’ve got a job for him—“The Magic Mike Musical” is currently holding auditions for men 18-30 “in excellent physical shape”. They are accepting video submissions that include “a brief pop/rock song not longer than one minute in length that shows off range” (sorry, Aaron) and “a brief contemporary or hip-hop dance clip no longer than two minutes in length that shows off athleticism, technique, and any specialty skills (gymnastics, tumbling, etc.). No nudity.” To think I was about to volunteer my services to screen the videos. You had me, then you lost me.

We have two stories about unwanted oral attention. The first comes from Andrew Rannells’ memoirs, where he talks about an encounter with a priest. “He hugged me tightly. I felt safe and heard and understood. Then, with unexpected force, he kissed me. On the lips. He muscled his tongue into my mouth and held the back of my head still. ‘Then he released me and made the sign of the cross on my forehead. He smiled.’ I don’t want to question Rannells’ veracity, but this entire episode sounds strikingly similar to a scene in “The Thorn Birds”!

Not to be outdone, Tyler Posey is enjoying Starz’s “Now Apocalypse”. Once again, he’s batting for our team. “I was excited to play a gay character, because I’m really comfortable with my sexuality.” How comfortable? “As soon as I committed to the project, I was all in. I’m shoving my tongue down some dude’s throat, and I don’t know how much else I can say, but we jerked off in the alley in the first episode. Bring it on.”

This leads to a very quick “Ask Billy” question from Morris in NYC: “Tyler Posey is SO hot on ‘Now Apocalypse’. I really wanna see his dick. Has he done a nude scene?”

Not officially. But, of course, we do have photos of his dick. We’ve even got a video of it in action—courtesy of an online chat he had where he pleasured himself to climax. You can do the same on BillyMasters.com.

When we’re bringing you a pocket full of Posey, it’s time to end yet another column. You can find all this and more on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that always delivers the starz. If you’ve got a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before someone uses the Lou Pearlman documentary as their “Magic Mike” audition tape. So, until next time, remember, one man’s filth is another man’s bible.
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