**Yes on 3: 50 Days to Election Day**

By Marilyn Humphries

Over 500 Massachusetts residents rallied in Copley Square to support the upholding of statewide protections for transgender individuals in the Commonwealth. The “Yes on 3: 50 Days to Election Day” rally was hosted by Freedom for All Massachusetts to urge a “yes” vote on the third ballot question in the Massachusetts general election on Nov. 6, which asks voters to decide whether they support a law that protects individuals from discrimination.

**House race will mean NH’s first black or gay congressman**

By MICHAEL CASEY

DOVER, N.H. (AP)—The Republican and Democrat in New Hampshire’s 1st Congressional District race understand they have the chance to make history but are approaching their roles as trailblazers a little differently.

Democrat Chris Pappas is embracing the fact he could become the state’s first openly gay congressman while his Republican opponent, Eddie Edwards, is directing questions away from the fact he would be the first African-American House member in the predominantly white state whose black population is less than 2 percent.

Instead, he wanted to keep the focus on the issues.

Both men survived a crowded primary field Tuesday night that had 17 candidates and offer voters a clear contrast. They are competing to fill the seat left open after Democrat Carol Shea-Porter chose to step down after four non-consecutive terms. "For me as an individual, it means my message has resonated with folks," Edwards told The Associated Press, speaking from his home in Dover. "In terms of a black person who is conservative, that is nothing new for our party. The first blacks ever elected to Congress were Republicans. This is a legacy of our party. That is not the narrative that has been painted but that is certainly the legacy of the party."

Edwards, a Trump supporter who has served in the Navy and was a small town police chief, insisted that "race doesn't make you special."

**Talent carries Kiss**

By Jules Becker

Never underestimate the power of the imagination. The singular fortune of emotionally conflicted gay window dresser Luis Albeno Molina in the 1993 Tony Award-winning musical "Kiss of the Spider Woman" is that dictators do. Imprisoned in the show’s back story by a fascist Argentinian regime for corrupting a minor, the film-loving protagonist escapes the pain and torture of prison treatment by dreaming of and imagining spell-binding fictional 1940’s actress Aurora in many of her greatest roles.

**Second Time’s the Charm**

Queer-Inclusive Middle Grade Sequels and Sophomores by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com

I know we’ve made progress towards increasing the number of LGBTQ-inclusive middle grade books when three come out within weeks of each other that are not just new books, but sequels or sophomore efforts. The authors are also all queer themselves! Don’t let the celebrity authorship of The Magic Misfits: The Second Story, by actor Neil Patrick Harris (Little, Brown), fool you. Harris can write—and this sequel to his 2017 The Magic Misfits, like its predecessor, also shows his skills with magic. (He was president of the Academy of Magical Arts from 2011 to 2014.)

**“Makeup. Five pounds of makeup.”**

— Cher explains why she looks so good in "Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again". She adds, "Also the director really liked me. I think he took extra special care to light me." As it should be.
The latest book reintroduces us to the diverse group of “misfit” friends, each of whom has a different skill in the magical arts, and focuses on Leila, who has two dads. When a famous psychic arrives in town at the same time as a couple claiming to be Leila’s birth parents, while a ghost is haunting a local hotel, the friends suspect something fishy and must uncover the truth.

At the risk of spoilers, however, I should add: The couple claiming to be Leila’s birth parents want to take her away from her dads. They don’t succeed and are in fact imposters—her real birth mother is revealed later and is a much more sympathetic character.

Still, the mere idea that a birth parent (or fake one) might try to take a child from adoptive parents could be concerning for some young readers. Harris does clearly show, though, that Leila can succeed and are in fact imposters—her real birth parents and committed to her dads—and they to her. That’s a good message. Many children may be both understandably curious about her birth parents and committed to her dads—and they to her. That’s a good message. Many children may even delight and find strength in how Leila and her friends eventually foil the imposters.

There’s an echo of Lemony Snicket here (un surprisingly, since Harris starred in the television adaptation of that series), in the bumbling bad guys and clever wordplay, but without Snicket’s pall of gloom and dismay. Like the first Misfits book, this one is also embedded with puzzles, ciphers, and how-to pages of magic tricks, adding to the overall fun of the story. With an underlying theme of knowing one can rely on friends and family, it’s sure to find lots of fans.

The Lotterys More or Less, by Emma Donoghue (Arthur A. Levine/Scholastic), the sequel to The Lotterys Plus One, continues the adventures of the Toronto family consisting of two same-sex couples (one male, one female) who became best friends and decided to grow a family together through both childbearing and adoption. Now they are raising seven multiracial, multiethnic, neurodiverse children, all named after trees, in a sprawling, 32-room house.

Their second story is again told through the eyes of their nine-year-old middle child, Sumac, who feels responsible for making sure their family’s winter holiday celebrations go according to plan. But an ice storm traps one dad and a brother out of the country; their visitor from Brazil gets injured and needs care; and then the city loses power. Can Sumac make sure their holiday is still a success?

The story unfolds as a slice of the Lotterys’ variegated and chaotic life, complete with sibling rivalry (and cooperation), parental exhaustion (and love), and an interweaving of the many traditions—old and new—reflecting the family members and their neighbors. The parents are of Jamaican, Mohawk, Scottish, and Indian ancestry; neighbors include a Muslim and a Jewish family. Sumac is of Filipina and German descent. And while the parents’ queerness is never a focus, there are queer-positive tidbits woven in, like a reference to Pride and the mention of a family friend who uses “they” pronouns. Additionally, Sumac’s sibling Brian is gender creative.

Donoghue doesn’t make this feel like a checklist of diversity categories, though, but rather an image of what life is actually like for many families and communities today, celebrating differences even while helping each other and coming together to create something more than the sum of its parts. And if real life contains more friction between such groups than in this book, readers should be inspired by Donoghue’s vision of what could be, and thoroughly enjoy spending more time with the Lotterys.

You Don’t Know Everything, Jilly P., by Alex Gino (Scholastic), isn’t a sequel to their Stonewall Award-winning George, but is similarly insightful and warm. Instead of focusing on a transgender identity as in George, Gino in their second novel looks closely at race and Deaf culture.

Twelve-year-old Jilly, who is White and hearing, has a new baby sister who is Deaf, and is friends online with a Deaf, Black boy her own age. She wants to do the right things to support her sister and friend, but makes some mistakes as she tries to understand their perspectives. An aunt who is Black and raising two children with her spouse is among those offering her guidance, especially in dealing with racist relatives.

Gino commendably goes beyond superficial messages to dig into subtler systemic racism, and also tackles one of racism’s most pernicious manifestations—the shooting of a Black teen by police.

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Blue wave builds as red regime unravels
by Richard J. Rosendall | rrosendall@starpower.net
contributing writer

Our politics are like a major storm watch. Most of us think we are not in the flood zone, that others bear the risk. But our civic foundations are eroding, and much of what our forebears won for us could be swept away. Yet hopes are rising as the Trumpist storm feeds on itself. Paul Manafort has flipped. Special Counsel Robert Mueller is tightening the noose. As Hurricane Florence bore down on the Carolinas, Donald Trump disputed the official death toll from last year’s Hurricane Maria in Puerto Rico, a debacle for which (as always) he gave himself an A+. Meanwhile, the purported Deep State turned out to be led by the president’s own staff. Trump’s driftiness increases against his predecessor, his defeated rival, his critics, reporters, and athletes. As he unravels, he resembles Captain Queeg in The Caine Mutiny. He is both dangerous and ridiculous. He is an improbable leader, which is why few took his candidacy seriously. Demagoguery is not defeated by pretending it doesn’t work. The most strident promised patriots are those attacking American institutions and saying “I’d rather be a Russian than a Democrat.” Defeating them requires persuading voters, not calling them stupid. Democratic candidates are learning this lesson. They are listening to voters and addressing their needs while conservatives cackle past the graveyard mocking “Trump Derangement Syndrome.”

Smartphone warriors on platforms like Red- dot wield woe-of-the-top verbal missiles like “Ben Shapiro ABSOLUTELY DEMOLISHES Libbard Feminazi Charlie Kirk.” This recalls the plague victim in Monty Python’s “Bring out your dead” scene who says, “I’m not dead!” Trump’s true believers hurl schoolyard taunts at Bob Woodward’s detailed reportage, yet it remains very much alive. Appealing to reason instead of passion is harder, but success in that effort is more enduring.

In sorting out candidates, we do well to consider what people’s best roles are. Everyone who excels at what they do doesn’t merit a promotion. Here are two examples: Sen. Elizabeth Warren is sharp-witted and effective at grilling witnesses. Stormy Daniels’s attorney Michael Avenatti is bold, scrappy, and well suited to taking on Trump’s nihilist right. Neither should be president. The Democratic standard bearer needs to connect with independents as well as party stalwarts. Avenatti, age 47, at least passes the entry-level test of whether presidential candidates are closer to 48 than 78. Most Democratic presidential aspirants meet basic criteria of smartness, diligence, sanity, and non-troughousness. Several, however, are over 70. It is time for the Democratic team to freshen its bench.

It holds well for 2020 that the midterms have brought so many new faces, including a record number of women. There are signs of a turning tide. Ohio billionaire and Republican donor Les Wexner has renounced the party and praised President Obama. Boston billionaire Seth Klarman, previously New England’s biggest Republican donor, is giving millions this year to Democrats. The Pew Research Center reports a surge in turnout for this year’s U.S. House primaries, especially among Democrats. Many Centrist Democrats have adopted popular progressive policies. Our besieged constitutional system shows resilience. Restoring our republic requires adding votes, not subtracting them through ideological puri- fication. As Joe Biden likes to quote his father, “Don’t compare me to the Almighty. Compare me to the alternative.”

News broke on September 16 that Christine Blasey Ford has come forward with her allegation that Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh sexually assaulted her more than thirty years ago in high school. She told The Washington Post about it before Kavanaugh’s nomination, and passed a polygraph test administered by a former FBI agent. Stephanie Mencimer notes in Mother Jones that the alleged witness in the case, Mark Judge, who attended Georgetown Prep with Kavanaugh, has written about rampant drunken partying there. That might explain his inability to remember the incident.

Senate Republicans have used a process com- plaint about the lateness of the charge to distract from its credible substance, inadvertently demonstrat- ing why victims of such assaults hesitate to speak up. Power trumps all for the Republicans, who are in a hurry to install a wildly unrepresentative right wing majority on the court while they can. The battle over what kind of country we will be goes on.

Richard J. Rosendall is a writer and activist who can be reached at rrosendall@one.com. Copyright © 2018 by Richard J. Rosendall. All rights reserved.

Kiss
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The role of the iconic movie diva—originally made famous by legendary actress-dancer Chita Rivera—ought to be as arresting as that of Molina himself. Surprisingly the latter performance in Bertone’s staging bespeaks a spirit that tellingly soars higher than the evocative arrangement of usually bewitching Aurora.

Unreason is a word virtually never associated with gifted director-choirleader Rachel Bertone. Early this year she powerfully captured the vivid and always-timely warnings about hatred and apathy of the Tony-winning musical “Cabaret” in a Moonbox Productions revival that proved one of the season’s finest efforts. Even so her staging of fellow John Kander-Frederick Ebb gem “Spider Woman”—with Terrence McNally’s savvy book— fails to reach that kind of brilliance.

This earnest revival does catch the touchingly evolving interaction of Molina and new Marxist cellmate Valentin Arengui Par. What it lacks is a full embrace and expression of the gesamter beauty of Aurora’s wide-ranging radiance.

Shortcomings aside, Bertone’s staging benefits from considerable talent. Eddy Cavaos in his Lyric Stage debut is a revelation as Molina. His performance sharply moves from Molina’s early diffidence and uncertainty about his future to caring and love for Valentin and a willingness to make sacrifices for him. Cavazos also catches Molina’s remarkable feeling in the pathos-rich “Marna, It’s Me.”

Taavon Gamble effectively moves from ho- mophobia to understanding as Valentin appre- ciates the beauty of Molina’s imagination. He properly builds the revolutionary’s feeling on “The Day After That.” The scene in which Valen- tinx sexually bonds with Molina—who agrees to make calls for him outside the prison—is both moving and tender.

The only real problem is Lisa Yuen’s partially realized evocation of the title character and dream-evoking Aurora who appears bewitch- ingly in Molina’s creative cinematic escapes from a tough reality. She has a likeable quality here, but her performance needs to bewitch the audience as much as Aurora’s fiery screen work and films do Molina. Yuen’s renditions of the title number and “And the Moon Grows Dimmer” should be both haunting and passionate. Her Aurora should weave a spell of gosamer delight around the audience. Here the charms are external rather than all-embracing.

There are satisfying moments from supporting players. Luis Negron wisely understates the ma- nipulative strategies of the villainous warden as he attempts to identify Valentine’s girlfriend and fellow revolutionaries. Johanna Carlisle-Zepeda is properly affecting as Molina’s mother. The pris- oner ensemble has the right booming solidarity on the anthem-like “Over the Wall.”

Design talent—notably Marian Bertone’s vivid costumes, Franklin Meissner Jr.’s nuanced lighting and Janie E. Howland’s rightly grim prison set—provides its own compensation.

Bertone’s revival falls short of her seminal “Cabaret.” Still, her probing, “Kiss of the Spider Woman” does have moments when it touches the heart with insight about freedom, friendship and love.

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“In America, unlike anywhere else, your race your background your ethnicity, your gender, your sexual orientation has nothing to do with you being special,” he said. “What makes you special is what you give back to your community what you give back to your family.”

Pappas was more willing to say that his victory in November would send a message that went beyond the issues he is campaigning on like fight- ing the opioid crisis and supporting renewable energy.

“It’s important to be honest about who you are. I think that sends a positive message to others out there who are questioning whether they have a place in their own communities,” said Pappas, speaking at his family’s Manchester restaurant. “At the end of the day. It’s a message we do have to send—that people are welcome regardless of who you are or who you love. There is a place for you in this community and in this state.”

Along with possibly making history, the two candidates offer voters a clear contrast. Edwards is expected to continue pushing an agenda that includes support for gun rights, lim- ited government and repealing the Affordable Care Act. Pappas, a former state lawmaker who is serving his third term on the governor’s Executive Council, has campaigned on expanding access to health care, combating climate change and sup- porting abortion rights.

Pappas is also expected to make Trump an issue and argue that he could serve as a check on the president’s policies.

“We have to show in this election that we are better than what Donald Trump represents,” Pappas said. “We have to repudiate his disgus- ting statements and some of the policies that we’ve seen on full display. We have a policy of family separation where we have 500 kids yet to be reunited with their parents because of what this administration has done. We shouldn’t be standing for that in this country.”

Edwards, who has received the support of Trump’s lawyer Rudy Giuliani and other Trump supporters, said it’s time to stop bashing the presi- dent and to find a way to work with him.

“The American voter, the Granite State voter, the families they want people who are going to work together to make sure their life is better,” he said. “Sending people to Washington who want to create conflict over and over again doesn’t help any of us. The folks who think we can just attack the president, remove him ... you think the next president will have an easier shot at this?”

Edwards also said the fact that Trump faced al- legations from several women for sexual miscon- duct would not keep him from supporting his “American First” agenda. He also tried to draw a distinction from his criticism for his primary rival state Sen. Andy Sanborn for alleged sexual harassment in the statehouse and Trump’s alleged misdeeds.

“I’m not the moral police. This is what people understand,” he said. “What you do in your personal life—you have those consequences and you have that burden. What you do in your pub- lic life on taxpayer’s dime is a different matter alto- gether. For me when I look what the president has done for America purging America first, that is the agenda I support.”
Vermont’s 2 main gubernatorial candidates debate at fair

By WILSON RING
Associated Press

TUNBRIDGE, Vt. (AP)—Vermont’s two main gubernatorial candidates went head to head in their first debate of the general election season Friday, with each making their pitches about why they were in the best position to help the state move forward.

With a background from the Tunbridge World’s Fair of squawking geese and bleating lambs, Republican Gov. Phil Scott said his vision remains making Vermont more affordable for the people who live here.

In Scott’s first two years, there have been no increases in taxes or fees, income taxes were cut by $30 million, and his policies prevented $71 million in property tax increases and eliminated the tax on Social Security for low- and moderate-income Vermonters, he said.

“We’re doing great work, the right thing,” Scott said during the debate that was part of The Dave Gram Show on WDEV radio and held under a gazebo overlooking the fairgrounds as it came to life on a Friday morning. “We’re doing the hard work, a joint effort of the team I put together. We just have more work to do.”

Scott’s Democratic challenger, Christine Hallquist, a former utility executive who quit her job to run for governor, said more needs to be done to improve the lives of ordinary Vermonters, people she believes have been left behind by the economic progress the state has seen over the past several years.

“We can talk about all the jobs that have been created, but if people aren’t seeing real growth it’s not benefiting them,” said Hallquist.

The debate, with pauses for commercial breaks, lasted just over an hour. It focused on a host of issues, with both candidates offering their competing visions for the economy and rural development, education, the environment and renewable energy.

It was generally polite, but their different philosophies did show through.

“You seem to be lured to just that natural, knee-jerk reaction of raising taxes to solve every problem; have you found any ways to actually save money?” Scott asked Hallquist during a part of the debate when the candidates were allowed to ask each other’s questions.

“Come on, Phil,” Hallquist answered. “I’m a businessperson. I’ve been around a long time, worked with a lot of businesses and I ran an electric utility where we managed to keep rates flat for five years straight. ... A good businessperson doesn’t just do cost control, because cost control puts you out of business. You’ve got to have a long-term vision of how you are going to grow your economy.”

The Vermont governor’s race is getting more attention than usual from outside the state because of Hallquist’s position as the first openly transgender candidate to win a major-party nomination for governor.

While it was not part of the issues debate, Hallquist did discuss her gender identity. She said she decided to run for governor in January after hearing Muslim Girls Making Change, a slam poetry group from the Burlington area in which the young women use poetry to spread their message about being Muslim in America.

“They talked about what it was like to face harassment every day at school because of who they are. And I cried,” Hallquist said “That’s when I made the decision to run because I could certainly understand and relate to that, because I was different when I was growing up.”

Study to focus on partner abuse among college gays, lesbians

DURHAM, N.H. (AP)—Researchers at the University of New Hampshire are working on what they say is the largest study ever conducted about sexual violence in the college LGBTQ community.

The university says 15 colleges and universities around the country are participating in the work. Researchers expect to survey more than 20,000 students and 10,000 faculty and staff members.

The survey work is being conducted by Katie Edwards at the University of New Hampshire and Heather Littleton of East Carolina University. Edwards, a professor of psychology and women’s studies, says the work will allow researchers to “rigorously evaluate a new model of sexual stigma.”

Edwards also says the work will help identify risk factors to help reduce the rates of partner violence among lesbians, gays, bisexuals and others.
YesOn3
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based on gender identity in public places, such as bathrooms, restaurants and businesses. The law has been completely in effect in the Commonwealth since July 8.
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All photos by Marilyn Humphries
Transgender ex-student sues Alabama school over mistreatment

HUNTSVILLE, Ala. (AP)—A former student has sued a north Alabama school district, saying she was harassed and physically assaulted because she was transgender, while administrators turned a blind eye.

Zelda Menefee filed a federal civil rights lawsuit Tuesday against the Huntsville city school system, former superintendent Casey Wardynski and eight other teachers and school employees.

The 19-year-old Menefee says she was bullied by students and teachers at Grissom High School until she finally quit school in May 2016 and earned a high school equivalency diploma.

Menefee began transitioning from male to female in summer 2014, the lawsuit states. She changed her first name, changed identity documents to indicate a female gender, began wearing female clothing and using female restrooms.

She enrolled at Grissom as a freshman in January 2015, the complaint states.

"Every child deserves the right to feel safe at school," attorney Abbey Clarkson said in a statement. "Zelda Menefee was deprived of that right. She woke up every single school day for over a year knowing she would likely be bullied, harassed, ridiculed, and discriminated against at school that day."

Huntsville school district spokesman Keith Ward told local news outlets that he can't comment on pending lawsuits.

Menefee was placed in the boys' physical education classes, where students commented about her clothes and harassed her, the lawsuit states. It goes on to say she reported at least two instances to the physical education teacher, who did nothing about it. Eventually, she says she was allowed to enroll in girls' physical education, but the teacher wouldn't let her dress in the girls' locker room or have a locker with the other girls in the class.

Menefee also said she was not allowed to use female restrooms at the school and was later given permission to use the nurse's restroom.

The complaint states that an administrator once made her change out of a knee-length skirt she wore to school into a pair of athletic pants and a T-shirt.

Administrators refused to investigate complaints about bullying, discrimination and assault, Menefee says. The lawsuit says she was specifically threatened for being transgender, punched in the stomach by students passing in the hallway and had food thrown at her during lunch. One student assaulted Menefee and pulled off her wig in the hallway, but administrators did nothing, the lawsuit says.

The lawsuit says teachers and students refused to call Menefee by her chosen female name and told her she wasn't a girl. One teacher called her "sit," according to the complaint. She was pictured in the yearbook under the name James Menefee, despite asking that she not be pictured in the yearbook at all, and she says the school cancelled a beauty pageant because she wanted to participate.

Menefee eventually quit Grissom in May 2016, stating on her exit interview form that the reason was "dislike of school experience."

The lawsuit seeks a jury trial on allegations that the school suppressed Menefee's First Amendment rights, violated Title IX anti-discrimination guarantees, and failed to supervise and train school staff. Menefee demands money damages.

Suit over Michigan gay couples denied adoptions can proceed

DETROIT (AP)—A federal judge has declined to dismiss a lawsuit which says Michigan is illegally allowing faith-based groups to reject same-sex couples who want to adopt children or become foster parents.

U.S. District Judge Paul Borman said in an order issued Friday that the couples had successfully argued that the faith-based groups' religious screening practices harmed them.

The Detroit News reports that Borman wrote in his order that the groups' practices denied the couples "the same opportunities to work with a child placing agency that is available to every other family in Michigan seeking to adopt."

The American Civil Liberties Union filed the lawsuit in September 2017, alleging that Michigan violated the U.S. Constitution by allowing groups to use a religious test to carry out public services.


City considers resolution critical of Drag Queen Story Hour

LAFAYETTE, La. (AP)—Two members of the governing council in a Louisiana city are pushing a resolution critical of their local library's plan to host a "Drag Queen Story Hour."

The resolution by Lafayette City-Parish Councilmen Jared Bellard and William Theriot is to be considered by the council on Tuesday.

The Advertiser of Lafayette reports that the resolution states that the event, aimed at young children "is not an age-appropriate educational event.

The event at the Lafayette Public Library is set for Oct. 6.

Drag Queen Story Hour programs—men in full drag reading stories to children—have been held at libraries and book stores around the country. Organizers say they promote acceptance of people who "defy rigid gender restrictions."

The events have drawn protests in some cities.

There is a routine to Sunday nights. After toiling away on the column for days, I send it off to the various gay and alternative publications around the world with the good sense to carry my scribblings, post it online to BillyMasters.com, and done off close to dawn. When I awoke from my slumber this past week, I found two incredibly different e-mails. First was an e-mail with the subject “Great Column”—which always warms the cockles of...well...my two incredibly different e-mails. First was an e-mail with the subject “to dawn. When I awoke from my slumber this past week, I found scribblings, post it online to BillyMasters.com, and doze off close column for days, I send it off to the various gay and alternative questions: 1) if the lights were out, how does he know the others out, and somebody started masturbating, so we all did.” I have two or anything—we were all just in these chairs, and the lights were drunk and partying—I don’t even know if we were staying over and it was just a group of us. And instead of just getting roaring as a “circle jerk”. “What it was,” he says, “was over at John’s house, and Paul McCartney to the collection from ..According to Macca, he
ly this is anecdotal information, and we got a new anecdote to add to the collection from Paul McCartney. According to Macc, he and John Lennon once partook in what is commonly referred to as a “circle jerk”. “What it was,” he says, “was over at John’s house, and it was just a group of us. And instead of just getting roaring drunk and partying—I don’t even know if we were staying over or anything—we were all just in these chairs, and the lights were out, and somebody started masturbating, so we all did.” I have two questions: 1) if the lights were out, how does he know the others were really masturbating, and B) Who cleaned up?
The live presentation of “Big Brother” on Thursday was Julie Chen’s first on-camera appearance since the ouster of her hubby, Leslie Moonves, as CEO of CBS. Most of the show was unevenful...I say as if I watched it. But at the very end, she signed off sitting next to ousted Brett and said, “From outside the Big Brother House with Brett, I’m Julie Chen-Moonves. Goodnight.” I’m told you could hear a pin drop in the control room when the Chenbot, for the first time in her professional career, went off script and used her married name. Apparently she’s standing by her man. Unless it was a plug for the upcoming version of “A Star Is Born”, in which case she should have signed off as Julie Chen-Moonves-Maine-Howard!
Elsewhere in reality TV, “Bachelor in Paradise” ended with one contestant headed to “Dancing with the Stars” (and given the pathetic lineup of “stars”, Grocery Joe certainly qualifies), two engagements, and one breakup. Make that one engagement and two breakups. The morning after the finale, it was revealed that crazy Jenna had cheated on Jordan (the self-proclaimed male model). An alleged screen cap of text messages Jenna sent to another guy has her saying, “I know you’re upset about this week’s episodes but I told you yesterday and I keep telling you that this is all for my business. Me and Jordan aren’t together for real. I don’t even like him let alone love him. I’m better than him and once I’m able to break it off for good and make up some story to make him look bad if it’ll make you feel better. He means nothing to me and never has. None of the other guys I go out with mean anything.” Exactly how many other guys? There’s one less now—Jordan dumped her ass.
We’re hearing about more guest stars for the upcoming season of “Will & Grace”. David Schwimmer is in about five episodes as Grace’s boyfriend. Chelsea Handler turns up as a power lesbian (so much for the “only-gay-people-can-play-gay-roles” argument). Jon Cryer is in a Jack/Karen storyline. Thank God Minnie Driver returns as Karen’s nemesis Lorraine Finster. In the same episode, we’re told Adam Rippon makes a cameo as himself (I’m thinking he could be a potential date for Jack—after all, he already slept with Rudy Galindo). And in the biggest news, Will gets a boyfriend—Matt Bomer. Sigh, the hot gays always hook up with straight guys.

With the final season of “The Big Bang Theory” looming, Jim Parsons has his next project lined up. Look for him to continue producing with his partner/hubby Todd Spiewak. NBC has ordered a pilot of “The Inn Crowd”, which is about a gay couple who open an inn in a small town. And, of course, hilarity will ensue. The series is actually based on a 1999 “New Yorker” article by Tony Horwitz. Hmm—that doesn’t sound dated at all.

When last we left Colton Haynes and Jeff Leatham, the actor filed for divorce from the florist after six months of marital bliss. That was back in May. So where are we now? Still in limbo. Leatham was seen visiting Haynes in Vancouver on the set of “Arrow” in July to celebrate Colton’s 30th birthday. The two flew back to LA together, still wearing their wedding bands. According to one of those “unnamed sources”, “They aren’t officially back together but they are trying to figure things out and headed in that direction. They are spending time together and really want it to work out. They love and care about each other immensely and would love to find a way to make it work. They aren’t rushing to make it official and are just taking their time working on their relationship. Things are a lot better and it’s going well for them.” Am I the only one who

Chelsea Handler

Grocery Joe

Julie Chen

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Judge: Kansas deputy’s demotion not due to sex orientation

LAWRENCE, Kan. (AP)—A judge has ruled that a Kansas sheriff’s deputy was demoted because he couldn’t succeed at the police academy and not because of alleged discrimination based on his sexual orientation.

U.S. District Judge Daniel Crabtree last month dismissed a lawsuit filed by Kyle Appleby, who alleged Douglas County Sheriff’s Office employees discriminated against him, attacked his masculinity and called him a homophobic slut.

Appleby sued the Douglas County Commission last year alleging that sheriff’s employees participated in “sex stereotyping.” He said he has been openly gay at work since 2008.

Appleby was promoted in 2015 from a county corrections officer to sheriff’s deputy. His promotion was contingent on completing training at the Lawrence Police Department academy.

He was demoted after failing to complete the academy.

The lawsuit alleged employees made offensive comments about Appleby’s masculinity, such as saying he had “drag queen eyebrows.” Appleby also alleged his superiors’ comments during training indicated that they thought he was “not sufficiently masculine to be a law enforcement officer,” the Lawrence Journal-World reported.

Appleby’s attorney and county officials declined to comment Tuesday.

Crabtree’s ruling stated that the allegations may be true, but that the lawsuit doesn’t prove how the comments factored into his demotion. The judge also said evidence gathered from depositions showed that Appleby failed to perform at the academy to a degree that was unusual among Lawrence law enforcement.

“Many of the officers testified that plaintiff’s sexual orientation played no role in their reports, and several officers testified that they never even knew plaintiff is gay,” Crabtree wrote. “Sheriff Ken McGovern based his decision on safety issues and his belief that plaintiff lacked the required skills to protect himself and others.”

Appleby has worked at the sheriff’s office since 2006 and is still employed as a corrections officer.


Doctors group recommends support for transgender children

By CARLA K. JOHNSON
AP, Medical Writer

A doctors group took a stand in support of transgender children Monday, offering advice in what it called “a rapidly evolving” field.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommended support for kids who change their names or hairstyles to affirm their chosen gender identity. The group said children are more likely to have better physical and mental health with such support.

The policy describes interventions including hormones to suppress puberty and even surgery for teens on a case-by-case basis. It calls for advocacy in favor of laws protecting transgender youth from discrimination.

The recommendations, published in the journal Pediatrics, come at a time when the Trump administration has put the brakes on such protections.

A study earlier this year found nearly 3 percent of U.S. youth identify as transgender or by other nontraditional gender terms.

The doctors group, which represents 67,000 physicians who treat children and young adults, previously has made public statements in response to so-called bathroom legislation involving transgender people, but this is its first policy statement.

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California law affirms gender-related care for foster youth

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—A new California law signed Friday by Gov. Jerry Brown ensures access to counseling, hormone treatment and surgery for transgender foster youth.

The bill “will empower transgender foster youth to live authentically and simply be themselves,” said Democratic Assemblyman Todd Gloria of San Diego, the law’s sponsor.

Such treatment would be covered by Medi-Cal, the state’s health
insurance program for low-income Californians and those in foster care.

All Medi-Cal recipients already have access to hormone and surgical treatments if they are deemed medically necessary. But the law more clearly states “gender affirming” health and mental health care as a right for foster youth and allows them involvement in developing their case plans.

The socially conservative California Family Foundation said such treatment is dangerous. Michael Laidlaw, an endocrinologist for Sutter Health, testified against the bill earlier this year. “Doctors and psychologists have absolutely no say in the lives of children who experience gender dysphoria confusion,” he said.

The American Psychological Association says many children who experience gender dysphoria do not continue it into adulthood.

Several dozen LGBT, children’s rights and health care groups backed the legislation. Gloria spokesman Nick Serrano said care workers, special advocates and health care providers would be closely involved in the counseling and treatment process for foster youth. Foster youth older than 12 may consent to mental health counseling and treatment under California law, while medical and surgical care requires consent from a foster youth’s parent, social worker, licensed counselor, a judge or, in some cases, the youth, according to the law.

California is the first state to explicitly affirm gender-affirming health care simply because of who they are,” Rick Zbur, executive director for Equality California, said in a statement. “Our transgender and gender nonconforming youth in foster care will now have life-saving—and historic—protections.”

The state Department of Health Care Services noted in the bill’s supporting statement that “gender Americans at the national level.”

Some states including California, Oregon and Montana allow individuals to change the gender on their birth certificates without a note from a doctor, but it’s unclear how many jurisdictions allow parents to select a nonbinary option for their newborns. The option could be used by parents of intersex children or by parents who want their child to be able to choose a gender at a later date.

Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio is expected to sign the bill, which will go into effect Jan. 1. Prior to 2014, New Yorkers seeking to change the gender on their birth certificates had to have undergone gender confirmation surgery first. Legislation Johnson introduced then allowed people to change their birth certificates without surgery but left the requirement for a doctor’s note in place. The new law eliminates it.
thinks this anonymous source is Leatham? And why is it every time I type his name, I type “Leatherman”? Freudian slip, no doubt. The couple’s relationship status was confirmed by Gus Kenworthy. “I mean, I don’t know if it’s really my place to speculate. I believe he told me that they’re working on things. I think that they’re in a good place. I don’t know if they’re back together or if they’re not going to be together, but I think that they’re in a good place.” That cleared up...absolutely nothing!

“I want someone to call me ‘Daddy’,” says dreamy Russell Tovey. Sigh, if I must. To be fair, Tovey wants to be called “Daddy” in the biological way. “I remember being at school, junior school, and already wanting to be a dad.” With a scuttled engagement, he doesn’t seem close to achieving that goal. But he’s got a plan. “Now I’m 36, I’m giving myself three years. If I haven’t met someone that wants kids, I’m going to do it myself.” Ara boy, Russell—grab the bull by the horns. I mean, if it was good enough for The Beatles...

And he’s putting himself out there—just not online. “It’s so much more exciting when you’re in a bar and you catch someone’s eye and you smile and go over and shake someone’s hand. That is far sexier than being sent someone’s dick pic.” While I agree with Russ in theory, please feel free to continue sending me dick pics!

Someone who I suspect doesn’t mind getting a dick or two in his inbox is Andy Cohen. It was an interesting week for Mr. Cohen. First, he had a story in “Attitude” magazine in the UK where he spoken openly about his sex life, including the use of poppers and bottoms (they kinda go hand-in-hand). After saying he’s been out since 1988, he added, “I was always out in my career so there was a freedom to that, and I’ve always been outspoken, and gay people say they connect with that and it makes me happy, too.” At the same time, the “National Enquirer” had a story allegedly exposing Andy Cohen’s Internet X-Ploits. I’ll save you the four-plus dollars and tell you what it said. Andy made it clear he wanted no part of kissing or affectionate touching—only no-strings-attached sex. “I believe you have to agree to that just to sign onto Grindr!” Um, that describes virtually everyone I know! The insider adds, “Andy made it clear he wanted no part of kissing or affectionate touching—only no-strings-attached sex.” I believe you have to agree to that just to sign onto Grindr! Andy allegedly has a thing for “redheads, young ginger boys. He lusts over Prince Harry and once admitted to wanting Justin Bieber.” Again, virtually everyone I know. In fact, I think he’s admitted all of this on his show. YAWN!

In a few weeks, tens of thousands of gays will descend on Anaheim. It’s once again time for Gay Days Anaheim. The annual event (which I helped found) takes place October 5-7, Columbus Day weekend. There are oodles of special performers sprinkled throughout the weekend, including Garrett Clayton headlining the Saturday night Kingdom dance party! Check out the full schedule at GayDaysAnaheim.com.

Our brief “Ask Billy” question is more of a statement from one of our esteemed proofers. Nate in Key West says, “Did you see Steve Howey on the season premiere of ‘Shameless’? WOW— he should always be naked.” Howey does enjoy his nudity—and, thankfully, “Shameless” does too! Seems to me that during his hiatus, Steve did nothing but work out—he clearly isn’t eating! During the scene in question, he says he’s so hard, he can hold up a bath towel without his hands. You can see how he does it on BillyMasters.com.

When I’m on the lookout for my own “Shameless” towel rack, it’s time to end another column. Because the Emmys are on a Monday this year, you’ll know who won by the time you read this column. But if there’s any inside dish, you’ll read about it on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that’s known for poking around. Whatever your point of view, feel free to send your comments to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Howey pokes someone’s eye out! Until next time, remember, one man’s filth is another man’s bible.
THE TAKE
WITH SUE O'CONNELL

SHE HAS A LOT TO SAY...
SO DO HER GUESTS

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