Man fights many battles

By Jules Becker

Emile Griffith was a legendary fighter, but his inner bout may have been the most important one of his life. The black St. Thomas, American

Victor Almanzar as Luis and Kyle Vincent Terry as Young Emile in the Huntington Theatre Company’s production of Man in the Ring © Photo: T. Charles Erickson

Teen arrested after gay bars receive threatening calls

BOSTON (AP)—A New Hampshire teen has been arrested for allegedly making threatening calls to gay bars in Boston.

Boston Police say the 16-year-old Hampton, New Hampshire resident was arrested by police in New Hampshire late Friday.

WHDH-TV reports the teen, who wasn’t being named by authorities because he’s a minor, allegedly made “threatening” and “bigoted” calls to dbar in Dorchester and The Alley in downtown Boston.

The station reports the bars received similar calls earlier this month in which the caller also threatened to shoot up the establishments.

Those calls came days after a mass shooting at a bar in Thousand Oaks, California.

Boston Police say the teen is being held as a “fugitive from justice” because he’s wanted on other outstanding warrants. He’ll be arraigned in Boston later.

An evening with Michelle

by Rev. Irene Monroe

Contributing Writer

First Lady Michelle Obama swept into Beantown Saturday as part of the national book tour promoting her memoir “Becoming” that was held at the TD Garden. The evening before the event, my spouse and I were gifted front row seats.

photo by jules becker

"Me in the clouds searching for @ZacEfron's nudes."

— Gus Kenworthy’s caption for an Instagram shot looking at the sky. Silly boy, you won’t find nudes of Zac Efron up there. You’ll find them on BillyMasters.com.

For The HIV/AIDS Community

Submitted by

Boston Living Center

In 1988, a holiday tradition was born during the height of the AIDS epidemic when a founding member of the Boston Living Center, Peter Daniel Clark, and a group of friends living with HIV/AIDS came together for a modest meal to celebrate another year of life. Each year the tradition has grown to include more members of the HIV/AIDS community for a sumptuous holiday gathering at the Hynes

World AIDS Day Events

#worldAIDSday

You Gave Me What? Why Did This Happen To Me?

Saturday, December 1, 12:00pm to 4:00pm

Thelma Burns Building, 575 Warren Street, Roxbury MA 02121

You Gave Me What? is an annual theatrical production of Ms. Julia Tripp of Tripp Consulting/Epiphany Theater Troupe that centers the voices of people experiencing living with HIV/AIDS. Through monologues we are a witness to their evolving stories of coming to terms with HIV in the midst of their hopes and dreams and as a means to engage and educate community.

Food, Music, Community Resources, HIV/STI Testing, Prizes, HIV Doodles by Farah Jeune, World AIDS Day Panel: Abigail Batchelder PhD MPH, Shibani Mukerjee, MD PhD, Bisola Ojikutu, MD MPH

https://yougavemewhat.eventbrite.com

https://www.gofundme.com/tripp-world-aids-day

Lovesick Film Screening

Monday, December 3, 5:30pm to 8:00pm

Fenway Health, 10th floor auditorium, 1340 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02215

World AIDS Day Panel:

Bisola Ojikutu, MD MPH

Robbie Craig, Co-Director, Our Lives Matter

Abigail Batchelder, PhD

Shibani Mukerjee, MD PhD

Get Tested:

You Gave Me What? is free to attend. A small donation of $10-$20 is appreciated.

Food:

Bar, State of the Art Catering, Susan Di Tomasso, Lavender Restaurant, Revolutionary Food Truck, TJ’s Food Truck

Music:

Mighty Vipers, Life’s a Mystery, Wireless

Community:

Our Lives Matter, RNC, Boston Medical Center, Boston Planning & Development Agency, State of Massachusetts, The Dept. of Health and Human Resources of Massachusetts, Boston Housing Authority, AIDS Action Committee, South End Community Store, Black Health Network, Medical Foundation of Greater Boston, Boston, MA 02215

Twitter: @BostonLivingCenter

Facebook: The Boston Living Center
Monroe
Continued from page 1

OMG! the event was simply magical. And, the audience was wildly excited.

Michelle Norris, a former NPR host, interviewed Michelle Obama. The two Michelles had a fabulous time lollygagging and laughing, making us all privy to their intimate conversation.

Michelle conveyed a universal message of hope. However, her message of self-empowerment to women-young and old-spoke a truth across generations, centering it as the theme for the evening. Walking into T.D. Garden mothers had daughters in tow and both carrying “Becoming.”

Michelle Obama’s concept of “swerve” is connected to one of the many messages in her book. The idea grabbed my attention, not only in the delightfully relatable and meaningful way she conveyed the concept, but also caught my attention in ways she shared examples from her life. “Swerve,” is about embracing flexibility: “Swerve” is the ability not to be tethered to a perceived rigid trajectory of your life, but rather “Swerve,” is embracing flexibility.

Michelle’s stop at the Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester was to inspire a future generation of young leaders often not thought as such.

Alana Underwood, a senior at Berklee College of Music told the Boston Globe. Underwood was one of the twenty young sisters chosen as part of the Black Girls Rock program to visit with the First Lady.

The book as in her promotional tour takes the audience into the interior of her life-from a happy working-class childhood growing up in a multicultural community on the South Side of Chicago, through her ivy league education, a plum job at a corporate law firm and to the White House. The book like the tour dispenses advice and inspirational self-help. Michelle’s stop at the Boys and Girls Club of Dorchester was to inspire a future generation of young leaders often not thought as such.

“We were reading your book as if you wrote these stories about us,” a woman told her. Michelle stated that we’ll have many lives and chapters in our lifetime because we’re always discovering, evolving, and journeying into “becoming.”

For example, Michelle shared with the audience that in her late teens and 20s she had mapped out a straight and perceived unerring path for her life—college, law school, job— to achieve happiness and success. She disclosed, however, to the audience she abhorred being a lawyer albeit it was one of the many checkboxes on her achievement list, all the while quite miserable.

Her candor with the topic has inspired others.

“Being that Mrs. Obama’s path was not straight, it’s just been inspiring to know that my path may not be straight either but I will be successful,” Alana Underwood, a senior at Berklee College of Music told the Boston Globe. Underwood was one of the twenty young sisters chosen as part of the Black Girls Rock program to visit with the First Lady.

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“We were reading your book as if you wrote these stories about us,” a woman told her. Also, the book, as well as the tour, reintroduces Michelle.

Several biographies have been written about Michelle Obama, all by white men and women authors, except for “American Grown: The Story of the White House Kitchen Garden and Gardens Across America” and “Becoming.” Their depictions of Michelle, while not intended to be damaging, are, nonetheless, stereotypes.

Deceased Caribbean American feminist lesbian once stated: “If I didn’t define myself for myself, I would be crunched into other people’s fantasies for me and eaten alive.”

During the beginning years of Michelle’s tenure in the White House as well she time on the campaign trail she was typecast as an “angry black woman,” a racial trope for any sister who speaks truth to power.

For example, during the campaign trail Michelle, candid and excited about the enthusiasm sweeping the country about Barack’s run for the presidency, was assailed by Republicans as unpatriotic and angry. In what once seemed inconceivable—a black president the United States-Michelle told a crowd before the Wisconsin primary that “For the first time in my adult lifetime I’m really proud of my country.”

In reflecting on how her image was misconstrued, at best, or, intentionally maligned, at worse, Michelle told the Post, “I was female, Black and strong, which to certain people... translated only to ‘angry.’ It was another damaging cliché, one that’s been forever used to sweep minority women to the perimeter of every room.”

The book, as well as the tour, reintroduces Michelle to us as a private citizen. She wrote the book to start a conversation with America about empowerment and healing.

While Michelle’s tour will not reach everyone she hopes the message in her book will, resonating with some unlikely people. For example, Michael Cohen, Trump’s former personal attorney who stated his boss repeatedly used racist and divisive language, said he hopes Michelle’s book will help unify the country.

“I think it has the potential to do so.”

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Celebration
Continued from page 1

Convention Center.

On November 20, 2018, amid the glamorous backdrop of the sumptuously decorated ballroom at the Hynes Convention Center, members of the Greater Boston HIV/AIDS community gathered with friends and loved ones to continue a tradition dating back 30 years, the annual Celebration of Life Thanksgiving Dinner; nearly 600 guests in all. Originally a humble gathering of friends with the as-yet-unknown disease back in 1988, the dinner serves as both a reminder of those lost to the epidemic and an opportunity for those who continue to survive, and strive to thrive, despite serious illness. This year’s event featured entertainment by DJ Ollie, Wiza Moya, and World Premier Band, a resource fair with more than 30 presenting organizations and community groups, a traditional sit-down Thanksgiving meal with all the fixings including delectable pies donated by Community Servings, and guest gifts containing winter gear donated by Bank of America, Building Impact, Temple Beth Avodah, and United Way. Each year, tables at the event are set with lavish, one-of-a-kind centerpieces donated by generous and talented individuals, businesses, and community groups and when the doors open, guests are greeted by dedicated volunteers ready to help them to their tables and see to their needs during the meal.

The event also serves as the largest fundraiser of the year for Victory Programs’ Boston Living Center, New England’s largest community and resource center for people living with HIV/AIDS which offers members hot meals five days a week in addition to other vital services like peer support, wellness resources, workshops, and more. Although the event is free to anyone living with HIV/AIDS, and up to two guests, corporate partners, individual donors, volunteer fundraisers, and community partners give generously of their time, money, and resources. This year’s Presenting Sponsor, Walgreens, also offered gift cards for guests during the resource fair and sent a team of volunteers to help serve dinner. The event has already raised more than $135,000 for the Boston Living Center, with additional donations expected in the coming weeks.

The Celebration of Life includes the presentation of two awards, the Peter Daniel Clark Award named for the founder of the Celebration of Life, who passed away due to AIDS-related complications in 1992 and presented by his sisters, Debbie Fellman and Roseanne Clark; and the Brenda Bellizeare “BIG” Better it Gets Award presented to a member of the Boston Living Center selected by the membership at the Center. 2018 Peter Daniel Clark Award: Award: Dawn Fuku- kuda, Director of the Office of HIV/AIDS at the Bureau of Infectious Disease and Laboratory Science at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Dawn has made working to end the spread of HIV/AIDS her life’s work. Prior to working at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health, Dawn worked for AIDS Action Committee and Boston Hospital. She has a long history of advocacy work and of promoting prevention services. Dawn maintains strong relationships with members of the community, providers, and advocates working to shed light on the current state of HIV/AIDS in the Commonwealth.

2018 Brenda Bellizeare “BIG” Better it Gets Award: Award: Wilson Valencia, Boston Living Center Member. The recipient of the Brenda Bellizeare “BIG” Better it Gets Award is selected by members of the Boston Living Center from their peers to honor someone who’s personal journey has been an inspiration to others and who has shown a commitment to continuing that journey. Wilson was selected by his fellow members for his helpful nature, positive outlook, and welcoming personality.

The Celebration of Life relies on more than 200 volunteers, including special “TIPS” Servers who also engage in peer-to-peer fundraising with a minimum goal of $300 each leading up to the event and notable “VIP” Servers including elected officials, community leaders, and long-time agency friends. This year’s notable volunteers included, but are not limited to: Monica Valdes Lupi – Executive Director of Boston Public Health Commission, volunteering Ray Maglione – Former host of popular NPR show “Car Talk,” longtime volunteer at the Celebration of Life.

Eliot Tanbush – Jordan’s Furniture, longtime volunteer at the Celebration of Life.

Deborah Becker – Senior Correspondent and Host, WBUR, volunteering

Tiffani Faison – Chef and Restaurateur, volunteering

Margaret Tracey – Director, Boston Ballet School, volunteering

Massachusetts State Representatives Russell E. Holmes, Adrian Madaro, Aaron Miechlewits, and David M. Rogers

Theater
Continued from page 1

Critics Association Award, both for new play) which he called “a poeticized version of Griffith’s life.”

Actually, Clapp explained, the play’s Albert is a composite of Howie and Gil. “I know that Michael has taken certain liberties,” he admitted. Still, Clapp called the part “a great supporting role.” Quite simply, he offered, “He (Albert) ended up taking care of him (Emile).” In the play, Albert stresses the need for Griffith to be strong and healthy. “Griffith was in denial about Griffith’s sexuality. He (Albert) was in denial about Griffith’s sexuality,” Clapp said, referring to one of his lead characters. “He (Albert’s) taking care of him but he has to sort of cool in the way he does that.”

That coldness involves Albert’s pragmatic take on Griffith’s sexual orientation. Speaking of the “dark side of their relationship,” Clapp said, “Albert was in denial about Griffith’s sexuality. He said that part of his (Griffith)’s life could not be part of his boxing life. For Howie, in this world, a man is a man. He’s not intending to be cruel but it’s a survivor thing.”

Under the guidance of Broadway director Michael Greif (“Rent,” “Dear Evan Hansen”) gifted actor John Douglas Thompson (Louis Armstrong in “Satchmo” and several title roles—Othello, for example—in Shakespearean tragedies) plays Emile, and Kyle Vincent Terry Young Emile. Victor Almanzar is Emile’s partner and caregiver Luis. Starla Benford plays Emile’s caring mother Emeda and Krystal Joy Brown his wife Sadie. Sean Boyce John has the role of rival boxer Paret. In scene, Paret taunts Griffith with the epithet ‘maricon’ (Spanish slang for ‘faggot’). That gay bashing probably contributed to an ultimately lethal 12th round Griffith pounding from which Paret died 10 days later. Albert stuck with volatile Griffith, who of course never intended to throw killer punches. Regarding the co-manager’s approach to the boxer’s career, Clapp reflected, “He (Albert)’s taking care of him but he has to sort of cool in the way he does that.”

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Minimum Income Limits apply

*Includes one unit built out for mobility impairments

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Households may request an application by sent to email or mail on:

Wednesday, December 5, 2018 – Friday, December 14, 2018 through the following methods:

To complete the application online, please visit: www.LibertyTreeLoftsLottery.com

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For same-sex couples, a new path to legal parenthood

By ALANNA DURKIN RICHER
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Trump administration asked the Supreme Court to issue an unusually quick ruling on the Pentagon’s policy of restricting military service by transgender people. It’s the fourth time in a year, and that’s incredibly powerful and we need to keep moving in that direction,” Crozier said.

Since the 2015 gay marriage ruling, same-sex couples have won some big legal victories in the arena of parental rights, like when the high court ordered Arkansas to list both same-sex spouses on their children’s birth certificates last year.

But things are beginning to change. A simple hospital form that has long been off limits to same-sex couples because it only had room for the “mother” and “father” are now gender-neutral in some states. That means same-sex partners in Massachusetts, Vermont and Nevada—and soon in California and Washington state—can quickly and easily secure their parental rights with the form rather than having to spend thousands of dollars in court to get an adoption.

“Kids need to be secured their parents and we’re not getting the job done right now,” said Patience Crozier, an attorney with GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders. “Some states are that’s incredibly powerful and we need to keep moving in that direction,” Crozier said.

Since the 2015 gay marriage ruling, same-sex couples have won some big legal victories in the arena of parental rights, like when the high court ordered Arkansas to list both same-sex spouses on their children’s birth certificates last year.

But differing state laws still mean same-sex partners who didn’t give birth can be a legal parent at home but a legal stranger to their child if they move or go on a trip, lawyers say. And the situation is even more complicated for unmarried LGBTQ couples who have children.

To guarantee their parental rights are protected across the country, many advocates encourage same-sex partners to go through with second-parent adoptions, even if they’re married and both their names are on the birth certificate. Without an adoption, the partner who didn’t give birth to the child can find themselves in a lengthy and costly custody dispute if the couple breaks up or something happens to the biological mother, lawyers say.

Adoptions, however, can cost thousands of dollars and take months. And many couples choose not to because they view it as invasive and offensive that they would have to adopt their own child, said Cathy Sakimura, deputy director and family law director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

See PARENTHOOD, page 5

Government seeks quick ruling on transgender troops case

By JESSICA GRESKO
and MARK SHERMAN
Associated Press

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See PARENTHOOD, page 5

Government seeks quick ruling on transgender troops case
Parenthood
Continued from page 4

Center for Lesbian Rights.

“For a lot of couples that are less well-off, they just don’t bother to do it and if there is a break up or a dispute or whatever, the non-biological partner can wind up completely out of luck,” said Washington state Sen. Jamie Pedersen, a Democrat who pushed the bill to overhaul the state’s parenting laws.

Now advocates hope that will be a thing of the past for many same-sex couples, thanks to the hospital form that has long been used by unmarried heterosexual couples to establish who the legal father is. When an unmarried woman gives birth, the man signs a “voluntary acknowledgement of paternity” form at the hospital and files it with the state to get on the child’s birth certificate and obtain the equivalent of a court order declaring him the dad.

In Rhode Island, which hasn’t updated its laws, Watson and her partner, Anna Ford, were told they couldn’t sign the form when Ford gave birth in 2016 because Watson wasn’t a man.

So until Watson’s adoption of Eli was finalized eight months later, she had no legal link to him, creating logistical complications and fear, they said. Watson couldn’t add him to her life insurance policy and needed written permission from Ford just to pick him up from day care, she said.

“It can’t be emphasized how degrading this process has been,” Ford said. “In Psych 101, they teach you how important it is for your kid to feel safe and secure and we were walking around feeling the opposite of that and yet trying to emanate this sense of security for our son,” she said.

In the immigration case, the administration told the high court that it should step in and decide the fate of DACA ahead of an appeals court ruling because the policy otherwise could be in place until the middle of 2020 before the justices might otherwise rule. The appeals court has since ruled, but the administration’s request that the court hear the case stands.

In the military case, the administration argued that the Supreme Court should step in before an appeals court rules because the case “involves an issue of imperative public importance: the authority of the U.S. military to determine who may serve in the Nation’s armed forces.”

In a statement, Peter Renn, an attorney for Lambda Legal, which brought one of the challenges to the transgender military policy, called the Trump administration’s action Friday a “highly unusual step” that is “wildly premature and inappropriate.”

The Pentagon initially lifted its ban on transgender troops serving openly in the military in 2016, under President Barack Obama’s administration. But the Trump administration revisited that policy, with Trump ultimately issuing an order banning most transgender troops from serving in the military except under limited circumstances. Several lawsuits were filed over the administration’s policy change, with lower courts all ruling against the Trump administration.

Still ongoing in lower courts are the census and climate change cases. The Supreme Court for now has refused to block the climate change trial. In the census question case, the court has agreed to decide what kind of evidence a trial judge can consider and indefinitely put off questioning of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross. But it rejected an administration request to delay the trial and allowed other depositions to take place.

The court will hear arguments in the census question case in February. It’s unclear when it will act on the administration’s other requests.
Gossip doesn’t take a holiday even on Thanksgiving. While your beloved Billy was nibbling on assorted legs and thighs, the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade featured two women kissing. And! I mean, it’s 2018... there must have been more to it than just that. Nope, apparently that was it. People online were going berserk after a same-sex smooch between two female cast members from the Broadway musical “The Prom”, a show about a group of actors saving the school prom after the PTA threatens to cancel the event if a lesbian couple attends (I haven’t seen it yet, but I hear it’s great). When the ladies locked lips on live TV, life imitated art and a few vocal people expressed their outrage. One Tweet tickled me. “Millions of small children just watched two girls kiss and had their innocence broken this morning.” Two things: 1) I’d be shocked if the Macy’s Thanksgiving Day Parade had one million total viewers, let alone millions of children, and b) Are kids really shocked by two girls kissing?

It’s been 15 years since Clay Aiken was pitted against Ruben Studdard on “American Idol”. Since then, they’ve both gone onto... well, let’s charitably call it “other projects”. They are reuniting for what is ambitiously called “Ruben & Clay’s First Annual Christmas Carol Family Fun Pageant Spectacular Reunion Show”. Let me remind you of last year’s Broadway disaster “Home for the Holidays”, which featured alumni from a number of TV talent shows. That extravaganza had the dubious distinction of featuring more people onstage than in the audience most nights! If nothing else, Ruben and Clay can only be a step up. Their show opens on December 11th for a limited three-week run at Broadway’s Imperial Theatre. If you’d like to make your holidays a bit gayer, grab a ticket at RubenAndClay.com. And do note who gets top billing.

Alan Ball, creator of HBO’s “True Blood”, has shared some news. “They’re workingshopping a ‘True Blood’ musical. I’ve heard all the music and it’s actually pretty good. It tells the story of vampires coming out of the closet and this love story, and then ultimately it diverges from the book series and they end up going back into the closet.” Or perhaps the crypt.

Tyler Perry couldn’t believe that Disney passed on Whoopi Goldberg helming a third installment of “Sister Act”. While he was working with Whoopi and Tiffany Haddish, he had a great idea wouldn’t they make a perfect pair for a sequel? Tyler is attempting to wrestle the rights away from Disney to make the film himself. Stay tuned.

In a story which will put the tingle back in your loins, my pal John Wesley Shipp has winched his considerable assets back into tights to once again play “The Flash”. “Billy,” I can almost hear you crying, “Doesn’t he play the father of ‘The Flash’?” Oh, how soon they forget. Back when James Van Der Beek barely had his first pubes, Shipp was the eponymous “Flash” for CBS. Yes, now he plays the father. But in the ’90s, our superheroines were much hunkier. For the fifth annual “Elseworlds” crossover, “Elseworld” will feature characters from “The Flash”, “Arrow” and ‘Supergirl’ in a CW spectacular. The event takes place over three nights, December 9-11, introduces Batwoman and Lois Lane, and features Shipp in tights for the first time since 1990. Well, there was that night I spent with him in Toledo back in 2011... but that’s another story.

Someone else used to tight clothing is Jeff Rohrer, who was a Dallas Cowboy from 1982-1989. The former linebacker not only came out as gay, but married his partner of two years, Joshua Ross (facialist on “The Real Housewives of Beverly Hills”), Jeff is the first member of the NFL to be in a “known same-sex marriage”. He told “The New York Times”, “If I had told the Dallas Cowboys in the 1980s that I was gay, I would have been cut immediately. It was a different world back then, people didn’t want to hear that.”

Adam Rippon has retired from competitive skating. But don’t expect him to disappear anytime soon. “I’m always going to stay involved in skating. It’s always going to be a part of me. It’s a part of who I am for the past 20 years. It’s impossible to leave that.” Rippon continues to cultivate media gigs and other ways to stay in the limelight.

At 80 years old, Ian McKellen shows no signs of stopping and I bet he’s brought more than some corn for popping. The legend is commemorating this landmark birthday by touring 80 theatres in the UK with “Ian McKellen on Stage”, a mélange of some of his favorite characters, monologues and anecdotes. “I’m celebrating my 80th birthday by touring a new solo show to theatres I know well and a few that I don’t. The show starts with Gandalf and will probably end with an invitation to act with me on stage. In between there will be anecdotes and acting.” Wait, did he say he’s inviting people onstage to act with him? I’m booking my ticket now!

Speaking of feisty oldsters, you’ll recall that 102-year-old Olivia de Havilland is fuming at Ryan Murphy and FX Networks over how she was portrayed in “Feud”. Despite lower courts ruling with the network, Livvy wants to take the case to the Supreme Court. FX is trying to block her, saying that her case is unworthy of the highest court in the land. Her lawyers think otherwise. “Like the Colorado baker whose First Amendment rights allowed him to refuse to design a cake that expressed a message he did not believe, Miss de Havilland has a right to prevent false words being put into her mouth in a docudrama, just as with any other form of publications.” I hate anyone comparing Olivia to a homophobic baker, but if it gets her in front of Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, I’ll allow it.

Remember Danny Roberts from “The Real World: New Orleans”? Way back in 2000, he was dating someone in the military whose face was blurred back then you could be drummed out of the service for being gay. We hadn’t heard much about Danny in recent years except for an erect nude photo of dubious veracity which you can still find on our website. Roberts recently slipped back into the spotlight via an interview with “Entertainment Weekly”, where he revealed three things:
School blocks Chick-fil-A as dining option, cites values

LAWRENCE TOWNSHIP, N.J. (AP)—Students at a private university in New Jersey can eat more chicken as long as it’s not Chick-fil-A.

Rider University removed the restaurant from a survey of dining options "based on the company’s record widely perceived to be in opposition to the LGBTQ community." The fast-food chain was included in previous surveys.

Chick-fil-A says it has supported Christian values. Its corporate purpose is "To glorify God by being a faithful steward of all that is entrusted to us."

Rider says it understands some may view the decision as a "form of exclusion." But the school says it wanted to be "faithful to our values of inclusion."

The university plans to hold a campus forum so all voices can be heard.

Chick-fil-A has not returned a message seeking comment.

Top California Democrat on leave amid sex misconduct inquiry

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—The chair of the California Democratic Party took a leave of absence Monday amid an investigation into sexual misconduct allegations against him.

Eric Bauman’s leave will last until an outside investigation ends, party spokesman Mike Roth said.

"Chair Bauman believes this decision is the best way to ensure the independence and integrity of the process," Roth said in a statement. "The Party is confident that the procedures in place will allow for all parties to come forward freely and provide for a thorough and complete review."

A party vice chair accused Bauman last week of sexually harassing and assaulting several unnamed people at party functions and called for Bauman’s resignation. Others including California U.S. Rep. Ro Khanna and the Orange County Young Democrats called for Bauman to step aside.

Durka Larimore-Hall, the vice chair, spoke to two accusers and a witness, the Sacramento Bee newspaper reported.

Bauman announced an outside investigation on Saturday.

"I take seriously any allegation brought forward by anyone who believes they have been caused pain," Bauman said in a statement. "I look forward to putting these allegations behind us and moving forward as unified Democrats."

The party’s executive board could vote to remove Bauman from office. But Larimore-Hall’s call for Bauman’s removal is still several steps from such a vote.

In a letter to the party last week, Larimore-Hall said stories from Bauman’s accusers illustrate a "clear and escalating pattern" of inappropriate behavior.

Larimore-Hall did not respond to a request for comment Monday from The Associated Press.

Bauman’s leave comes just weeks after California Democrats made major gains in the midterm elections, winning key congressional seats in territories long held by Republicans.

A series of sexual misconduct allegations against lawmakers, lobbyists and others in politics rocked California’s political world late last year, at the height of the (hash)MeToo movement. Three Democratic men resigned as state lawmakers after investigators hired by the Legislature found they likely engaged in inappropriate behavior.

Bauman narrowly won the party chairmanship last year against Kimberly Ellis after a contentious battle between establishment Democrats and progressive activists.

During that fight, Bauman said he was falsely targeted by rumors he engaged in inappropriate behavior with teenage boys. Bauman is the party’s first openly gay chairman.

Bauman called the rumors "despicable lies," and Ellis denounced them.

First Vice Chair Alex Rooker will take over Bauman’s duties while the investigation proceeds.

Utah group seeks ban on gay conversion therapy for minors

SALT LAKE CITY (AP)—Utah’s most powerful LGBTQ support organization wants legislation that would ban gay conversion therapy for minors.

Equality Utah has drafted a measure aiming for Utah to join more than a dozen states and the District of Columbia in outlawing efforts to change a minor’s sexual orientation to heterosexual, The Salt Lake Tribune reported.

“We have a piece of legislation on this that we’ve drafted, and it includes concerns about suicide of gay youths,” said Troy Williams, executive director of Equality Utah.

Williams said he believes it’s the right time for the measure. It does not have a legislative sponsor yet, but he said he’s optimistic about its chances of passing.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has disavowed past therapies aimed at changing sexual orientation and has launched efforts to prevent suicide.

The independent Mormon Mental Health Association opposes therapies “which have been developed to change, alter or reduce sexual orientation.”

Clinical studies have linked these types of therapies with “increased rates of clinical depression, suicide, anxiety, low self-esteem, difficulty sustaining relationships and sexual dysfunction,” the association said.

A new study says the rates of attempted suicide were more than double among LGBTQ young adults whose parents had pushed them to change, compared with those reporting no conversion experiences.

The attempted suicide rate tripled among those who reported both efforts by parents and intervention efforts by therapists and religious leaders, according to the study by researcher Caitlin Ryan, director of the Family Acceptance Project at San Francisco State University.

Such adults “may be motivated by attempts to ‘protect’ their children,” Ryan said, but “these rejecting behaviors instead undermine an LGBT child’s sense of self-worth, contribute to self-destructive behaviors that significantly increase risk and inhibit self-care, which includes constraining their ability to make a living.”
LGBTQ Children’s Book Gift Guide
by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

It’s time for my annual roundup of some of this year’s best LGBTQ-inclusive children’s and middle-grade books! This is one of the first years when (happily!) there were more books published than I can include here, so please visit mombian.com for a longer compilation.

Elementary

When We Love Someone We Sing to Them/Cuando Amamos Cantamos, by Ernesto Javier Martínez, is a lyrical bilingual book celebrating both the love between two boys and the supportive relationship between the boy and his father. Pura Belpré Honor Award winner Maya Christina Gonzalez deserves equal credit for her vibrant illustrations.

Prince & Knight, by Daniel Haack and illustrated by Stevie Lewis, isn’t the first queer prince fairy tale for this age, but it might be the best, and stems from a partnership between LGBTQ advocacy organization GLAAD and Bonnier Publishing USA.

In the second book from the partnership, Jack (Not Jackie), by Erica Silverman and illustrated by Holly Hatam, a young girl comes to understand and accept that her sibling, whom she thought was a girl, is really a transgender boy. Their parents are supportive of Jack’s identity throughout.

When the protagonist of Jesse Sims’s Harriet Gets Carried Away dresses up like a penguin and goes to find party hats for her birthday, she falls into an adventure with a group of actual penguins. Can she find the way back to her two dads in time for the party? A joyful book celebrating the power of imagination.

The True Adventures of Esther the Wonder Pig, by Steve Jenkins, Derek Walter, and Caprice Crane, illustrated by Cori Doerrfeld, is based on the true story of a two-man couple who adopt what they think is a mini-pig—but who grows to 600 pounds and whom they love despite some mishaps.

The gorgeously illustrated Julián Is a Mermaid, by Jessica Love, tells of a gender creative, Latinx boy imagining life as a mermaid. One day, his supportive abuela takes them to a festival of grown people dressed as mermaids (modeled after the actual Coney Island Mermaid Parade).

Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag, written by Rob Sanders and illustrated by Steven Salerno, is an inspiring biography of Milk that stresses his friendship with Gilbert Baker, who designed the rainbow flag as a symbol of inspiration.

Middle Grade

The Ture Adventures of Esther the Wonder Pig

The Magic Misfits: The Second Story, continues the series about a diverse group of “misfit” friends with skills in the magical arts, including Leila, who has two dads. When a famous psychic and a couple claiming to be Leila’s birth parents arrive in town, the friends must uncover the truth while learning to rely on each other. Puzzles and how-to magic tricks are sprinkled throughout.

In You Don’t Know Everything, Jilly P., by Stonewall Award-winning author Alex Gino, Jilly, a White and hearing 12-year-old, struggles to support both her new baby sister who is Deaf, and her online friend, a Deaf, Black boy her own age. An aunt who is Black and raising two children with her wife is among those offering guidance. Gino digs into the impact of systemic racism, including the shooting of a Black teen by police, and how White people must work towards dismantling it.

Hurricane Child, by Kheryn Callender, is the lyrical story of 12-year-old Caroline Murphy, born during a hurricane in the U.S. Virgin Islands. Her mother has left her and her father, her classmates bully her, and she has visions of a mystical land.

On November 26, a panel discussion was scheduled at the Heritage Foundation in Washington titled, “Identity Politics Is a Threat to Society. Is There Anything We Can Do About It At This Point?” The online description of the all-white, mostly male panel begins as follows:

“Identity politics directly threatens the achievements of the Enlightenment, the Founding and the Civil Rights Movement, from freedom of speech to freedom of association and conscience. By partitioning America into ethnic, racial and sexual groups with antagonistic demands and grievances, Identity Politics returns us to the Plessy decision legalizing separate but supposedly equal treatment and it recalls the Dred Scott era of some Americans being less than citizens.”

I am writing this before the event, but do not plan to attend because I consider its premise prejudicial and its non-diverse composition paternalistic. Such criticisms would doubtless be met by the organizers with rolled eyes and the observation that ensuring broader representation would be capitulating to the very identity politics they explicitly oppose. That’s convenient.

Heritage proposed the ideas that became the basis for RomneyCare and ObamaCare. They have subsequently disavowed their paternity, essentially conceding that anything Democrats could accept is not radical enough. But let a hundred think tanks blossom. I am more concerned about the threat to our society from Trump’s appeal to white nationalism, not from the historically oppressed groups usually associated with the term “identity politics.”

As I wrote to one of the panelists, Andrew Sullivan, there would be less call for identity politics were it not for racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, etc. People organize around these categories in response to discrimination. Why does Heritage not organize a panel declaring re-surgent bigotry a threat to society? The answer, it does not require deep sleuthing to discover, is old-fashioned privilege blindness.

Any serious examination of identity politics ought to begin with the worst offender: Trump. Aside from acting like a slacker jerking off in the back of the class (his Thanksgiving remarks were mainly about thanking himself!), his entire presi-
European court: Russia’s ban on LGBT rallies violates rights

PARIS (AP)—The European Court of Human Rights has ruled that a ban on LGBT rallies in Russia violates the human rights of those wishing to march.

The court based in Strasbourg, France, called Tuesday on Russia to introduce “systemic measures” to remedy the violations of the European Convention of Human Rights, to which Russia is a signatory.

Russian authorities have been putting obstacles on LGBT rallies for years, turning down LGBT permit requests. The court said Russia’s refusal to hold public LGBT events couldn’t be justified by public disorder concerns and breached the rights to freedom of assembly and “not to be discriminated against.”

In a perceived bid to legalize a permanent ban on gay rights gatherings, in 2011 Russia adopted legislation on “gay propaganda” that outlaws LGBT gatherings near children.

First gene-edited babies claimed in China

By MARYLYNN MARCHIONE
AP Chief Medical Writer

HONG KONG (AP)—A Chinese researcher claims that he helped make the world’s first genetically edited babies—twin girls whose DNA he said he altered to try to help them resist possible future infection with the AIDS virus.

There is no independent confirmation of the claim by researcher He Jiankui (HEH JEE-ahn-qway) of Shenzhen. He revealed it Monday in Hong Kong to one of the organizers of an international conference on gene editing that begins Tuesday, and earlier in exclusive interviews with The Associated Press.

If true, it would be a profound leap of science and ethics. This kind of work is banned in the United States because the DNA changes can pass to future generations and it risks harming other genes.

Some mainstream scientists denounced the Chinese report as human experimentation.

Dolce&Gabbana fiasco shows importance, risks of China market

By KEN MORITSGU and COLLEEN BARRY
Associated Press

BEIJING (AP)—Don’t mess with China and its growing cadre of powerful luxury consumers.

Dolce&Gabbana learned that lesson the hard way when it faced a boycott after Chinese expressed outrage over what were seen as culturally insensitive videos promoting a major runway show in Shanghai and subsequent posts of insulting comments in a private Instagram chat.

The company blamed hackers for the anti-Chinese insults, but the explanation felt flat to many and the damage was done. The Milan designers canceled the Shanghai runway show, meant as a tribute to China, as their guest list of Asian celebrities quickly joined the protests.

Then, as retailers pulled their merchandise from shelves and powerful e-commerce sites deleted their wares, co-founders Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana went on camera—dwarfed against the backdrop of an ornate red wall-covering—to apologize to the Chinese people.

“We will never forget this experience, and it will definitely never happen again,” a solemn-looking Gabbana said in a video statement posted Friday on social media.

Dolce found himself on the defensive several years ago after Elton John lashed out for comments that suggested he did not support gay couples using surrogate mothers to have children. At the time, more than 67,000 tweets urged #boycottdolcegabbana, while Courtney Love vowed to burn her Dolce&Gabbana garb and Martina Navratilova pledged to trash her D&G shirts.

Celebrities took to social media Wednesday to blast Dolce&Gabbana and said they would boycott the show, which was canceled. By Thursday, the company’s goods had disappeared from major e-commerce websites. The prevailing sentiment was captured by an airport duty-free shop that posted a photo of its shelves emptied of D&G products: “We have to show our stance. We are proud to be Chinese.”

The rapid escalation into a public relations disaster was fueled by social media. Individuals posted videos of themselves cutting up or burning their Dolce&Gabbana clothes, or picking them up with chopsticks and putting them in the trash. A parody of the offending Dolce&Gabbana videos, which featured a Chinese woman using chopsticks to eat pizza and an oversized cannoli, shows a white man trying to eat Chinese food with a fork and knife. At least three rap bands took up the cause with new songs.

Italian commentators mused whether the Dolce&Gabbana protests were truly spontaneous or if there was some level of government control behind them. The government has publicly said the spat had no diplomatic element and would not comment.

Barry reported from Milan. AP journalists Joe McDonald and Dake Kang and researchers Henry Hou and Jiawei Chen contributed to this report.

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dency consists of saying, “Look at those terrible people (Mexicans, blacks, low-IQ women) over there.” It is awfully brazen amid his ceaseless bile to criticize his targets for defending themselves.

Trump has asked the Supreme Court to let him implement his ban on transgender military service. The only basis for it is prejudice. He is simply driving a political wedge. He does the same thing when he deemnes a judge’s Mexican heritage, tear-gasses refuge families fleeing violence and poverty, or encourages police to rough-up arrestees.

It takes gall for white conservatives to criticize minorities considering the president’s sewer pipe of pathologies and the proliferation of white people calling the police on black people for going about their lives.

Nancy Pelosi’s consolidation of support in her highly diverse caucus after the Democrats’ midterm victory reveals Heritage Foundation’s diremunity. It takes gall for white conservatives to criticize minorities considering the president’s sewer pipe of pathologies and the proliferation of white people calling the police on black people for going about their lives.

Nine centrist Democrats, members of the billionaire-backed Problem Solvers Caucus, are withholding support from Pelosi unless she accepts what Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) dismisses as “their GOP-friendly rules that will hamstring healthcare efforts from the get-go.” The smart money is on Pelosi.

Embodied narratives in our cultural environment can be nurturing or stifling, empowering or embittering. Trump pushes an ugly narrative that betrays our founding ideals, undermines our institutions, and pits us against one another. In contrast, voices that reflect the actual diversity of our population can allow us to see through the eyes of others and help us reconect.

Our demagogic president stokes white fears by inflating and often fabricating darker people’s transgressions. The proper response is not to fe-timize those fears in a privileged circle of wank-ery, but to do as House Democrats are preparing to do: subject the demagogue to proper oversight while pursuing a legislative agenda that will serve the entire population instead of just the wealthiest one percent. If Trump is truly concerned about “American carnage,” he can stop denying climate change.

Richard J. Rosendall is a writer and activist who can be reached at rosen dall@ymail.com. Copyright © 2018 by Richard J. Rosendall. All rights reserved.
1) he’s living in NYC, 2) he’s adopted a two-year-old girl, 3) he’s HIV-positive. Apparently he found out his HIV status in 2011 after passing out and waking up in a pool of blood. While he doesn’t go into detail about the passing out or pool of blood, he says this about his status: “The last thing I ever want is pity. I just want people to know and be aware. I knew so little myself so I get it.”

“We interrupt this column to bring you some late-breaking news Taron Egerton is not gay. I repeat Taron Egerton is NOT gay. Yes, he did post a photo of a friend on Instagram with the caption, “Look at this cutie”. But, apparently, that didn’t mean a thing. “I’m not gay but two of my mates came out when I was 15 and it was a joy to support them because, as a group, we are all secure in who we are.” Taron is apparently secure enough to hold his own against Kevin Spacey. Well, that doesn’t sound right. I’m not exactly sure what he held, but I’m fairly confident whatever it was wasn’t against any part of Spacey’s anatomy. The two worked together on the disastrous “Billionaire Boys Club”, which came out right after Spacey-Gate (yes, it’s officially a “Gate”). Egerton says, “He was never inappropriate with me. There’s a fine line, though, isn’t there, between someone being an audacious flirt and being predatory? I thought he was the former.” Not only does this prove that Spacey has good taste, he’s apparently now going after older men!

“Brace yourselves. It’s time for “Billy’s Holiday Gift Giving Suggestions”. Each week between now and Christmas, I’m going to share items that I think would make great gifts for people on your list both naughty and nice. To kick things off, we turn to Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. Each year, this organization releases a special Broadway Legends ornament. In the past, these have all been legendary ladies. This year, BC/EAFA kinda breaks with tradition by featuring Harvey Fierstein. Of course, he’s in his “Hairspray” regalia, so he still fits in. Not only is it gorgeous, but it helps raise money for this great charity. You can pick up one (or a dozen) at BroadwayCares.org. Perhaps you’d prefer something you can sink your teeth into. Then, I’d recommend the Golden Girls Breakfast Cereal. Is there anyone reading this column doesn’t have a few people who you’d like to thank for being a friend? And what better way to thank them than to sit down to breakfast with Rose, Blanche, Sophia and Dorothy? The cereal is a multigrain flavor, blue-hued (like Sophia’s hair), and available at Target and Target.com.

Speaking of things in a bowl, we hear that Chaka Khan will be the Grand Marshal for the Rose Bowl Parade. She’s even going to be on the float! Of course, I suspect it’ll be hard to tell where the dress ends and the float begins.

When everything’s coming up Chaka, it’s time to end another column. Before we hit New Year’s, we’ve got scads of celebrating to do at www.BillyMasters.com the site that can stuff more than just your stocking. Send your questions to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before de Havilland says, “Let them eat cake!” Until next time, remember, one man’s filth is another man’s bible.

Ousted gay Texas council member sues over recall defeat

By RYAN TARINELLI
The Associated Press

DALLAS (AP)—An openly gay former councilman in a small Southeast Texas town is suing after he was defeated in a recall election, an effort that surfaced when nude photos of him were anonymously sent to city hall.

Cross Coburn was ousted as a council member in Groves, Texas, which is 92 miles (148 kilometers) east of Houston, during a recall election earlier this month. The lawsuit filed Nov. 14 in a state court asks the court to declare the election invalid due to “deficiencies, fraud and forgery” in the recall petition. The petition came after Coburn’s nude photos, which were sent in private communication on a gay dating app, were mailed to city hall by an anonymous source.

Coburn says the recall effort targeted him because of his sexuality. “They thought this was a very surefire way to get me out of office,” he said in an interview Tuesday.

Despite the loss, Coburn, who grew up in Groves and turned 20 years old on Tuesday, said he’s confident he will get justice through the litigation.

The City of Groves and its city clerk, Kimbra Lowery, are listed as defendants. Coburn’s lawyer, Jill Swearingen Pierce, accused Mayor Brad Bailey and his allies on the city council of leaking the nude photos to media to stir up attention for the recall petition.

The mayor did not return a message seeking comment on Tuesday.

In September, Bailey said he was glad about the recall election going forward and said “I think you should be held to a higher position up here and his track record speaks for itself,” according to a Texas Monthly article. Pierce says three people have reported their petition signatures were forgeries and a forensic handwriting expert has questioned the authenticity of dozens of petition signatures. She said they are in the process of collecting signatures used in past public records to compare with the questionable signatures.

One of the three people said she did sign the recall petition for her and her husband, but reported that the signatures on a specific page of the petition were not signed by her.

The litigation argues there are other issues with the recall petition. Several residents have two signatures on the petition, according to the suit, and there are instances where one spouse signed for themselves and their significant other.

Masters

Continued from page 6

of blood, he says this about his status: “The last thing I ever want is pity. I just want people to know and be aware. I knew so little myself so I get it.”

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