With Kevin Hart's downfall, hosting the Oscars got harder

By LINDSEY BAHR
AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The "most thankless job in town" just got even more difficult.

The Oscars have a longstanding host problem, but Kevin Hart's swift downfall over old anti-gay tweets has led to bigger questions about the gig and the liability of social media histories.

"It shows that they either didn't vet this host properly, or they did vet him and didn't think this would be an issue. And both are a little troubling," Belloni said. "He seems to fit the bill for what the academy was looking for. He checks all the boxes for a show like the Oscars," Belloni said. "He's a legitimate movie star. He's a funny guy and can handle the stand-up element of the show. And he has a gigantic social following. And to the academy, he's a focal point for the shortcomings of the entertainment industry as a whole. "I think it's embarrassing," Matthew Belloni, the editorial director of The Hollywood Reporter, said about the academy's decision to pick Hart.

"It's just the latest controversy for the organization that puts on the Academy Awards, which is trying to combat declining ratings for its marquee event while weathering the pressure of being a focal point for the shortcomings of the entertainment industry as a whole."

The three Democrats contend that federal officials are responsible for publishing an initial report within 30 days when someone dies while in custody and that a final report is due within two months.

"It has been over 180 days since Ms. Hernandez was pronounced dead and no such report has been publicly released," their letter states. "ICE's failure to release this report diminishes the liability of social media histories.

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"Ari, do you want to go cheerlead?" his teammate teased as the two walked across the sideline from the halftime huddle.

Ari Grimes lifted up his football helmet as if it were a pom pom, pre-}

No clear signal

Arguments begin over Trump’s trans military ban

by Chris Johnson

A three-judge panel on the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals gave no clear signal during oral arguments Monday on whether they’d keep in place one of four injunctions against President Trump’s transgender military ban, raising the real possibility the panel would reverse the order against the policy.

After one hour of arguments in which a dominant theme was hair-splitting over the difference between being transgender and having gender dysphoria, the questioning left no clear indication of the eventual ruling. One judge seemed poised to reverse the injunction, another seemed inclined to keep it and the other gave mixed signals.

At issue is whether U.S. District Judge Colleen Kollar-Kotelly should have lifted her preliminary injunction against Trump’s transgender military ban in the aftermath of the report of Defense Secretary James Mattis in March justifying Trump’s plan to exclude transgender people. Although

"It would not have been possible without the help of the President, who not only gave us the impetus for this reboot but provided us with fresh fields to plow daily that Diane English and our superb writing staff have cultivated fearlessly and with unique wit."

— Candice Bergen gracingly accepts her latest Golden Globe nomination for playing "Murphy Brown."

find Billy Masters on page 6!
MAKE YOUR MOMENT WHERE THE MOVEMENT WAS MADE

STONEWALL 50
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JUNE 2019
NYCPRIDE.ORG/2019
Teacher fired for refusing to use trans student’s pronouns

WEST POINT, Va. (AP)—A Virginia high school teacher who refused to use a transgender student’s new pronouns has been fired.

News outlets report that the West Point School Board voted unanimously Thursday to dismiss Peter Vlaming after a four-hour hearing that drew an overflow crowd. The school system said in a statement that Vlaming was fired for insubordination.

Over the summer, the ninth-grade student’s family informed the school system of the student’s gender transition to male. The student wasn’t involved in Thursday’s hearing.

It’s not suggested that the 47-year-old West Point High School French teacher deliberately referred to the student using female pronouns in accordance with the student’s wishes.

Vlaming told superiors that his Christian faith prevented him from using male pronouns for the student. Vlaming said he had the student in class the year before when the students identified as female.

Vlaming’s attorney, Shawn Voyles, says his client offered to use the student’s name and to avoid feminine pronouns, but Voyles says the school was unwilling to accept the compromise.

“Though discrimination then leads to creating a hostile learning environment. And the student had expressed that. The parent had expressed that,” said West Point schools Superintendent Laura Abel. “They felt disregarded.”

Non-discrimination policies were updated a year ago to include protections for gender identity, but didn’t include guidance on gender pronoun use, according to Vlaming’s lawyer, Voyles, who notes Vlaming has constitutional rights.

“One of those rights that is not curtailed is to be free from being compelled to speak something that violates your conscience,” Voyles said.

Vlaming said he loves and respects all his students but when a solution he tried to reach based on “mutual tolerance” was rejected, he was at risk of losing his job for having views held by “most of the world for most of human history.”

“That is not tolerance,” Vlaming said. “That is coercion.”

Vlaming is considering a legal appeal, but said he wants to consult with his attorney before announcing further steps.

“I have to research how we would do that, what that would entail,” Vlaming said. “I do think it’s a serious question of First Amendment rights.”

Equality Virginia, an LGBTQ rights group, said the situation reveals the need for “statewide guidance” that will protect all students from discrimination at school.

Information from: Richmond Times-Dispatch, http://www.richmond.com

The party selling out democracy indicts itself

by Richard J. Rosendall

The party selling out democracy.

There is an old Baghdad fable of a man who sees Death in the marketplace and flees to Samarra, where Death is expecting him. America feels like a death watch nowadays.

Last week, New York Times columnist Ross Douthat wrote “Why We Miss the WASPs,” describing nostalgia for what he couldn’t quite bring himself to call white supremacy. Michael Harriot at The Root had the perfect riposte: “I must admit, this utopian Whitekanda sounds alluring in its dreamlike vanilla-ness.

But as Harriot knows too well, this is deadly serious. Times commentator Charles M. Blow discusses post-election power grab by Republicans after they lost statewide races in Michigan and Wisconsin. He writes, “Republicans across this country are doing everything they can to impede, alter and override the power of the personal vote.”

A new election may have to be called in North Carolina’s ninth congressional district due to Republican election theft. Aggressive voter roll purges, gerrymandering, and voter ID laws give the lie to Chief Justice John Roberts, who claimed in 2013 when voting to overturn Section 4(b) of the Voting Rights Act, “America has changed.” In 2014, Mother Jones listed actions by GOP lawmakers in several states “running back with new voting restrictions.”

The threat to democracy goes all the way to the top. We learned on December 7, in sentencing memos from Special Counsel Robert Mueller and federal prosecutors in the Southern District of New York, that Individual-1 (that’s our president) directed felony violations of campaign finance laws. Trump tweeted in response, “Totally clears the President. Thank you!” He is mistaken, but the denial of reality runs deep in his party.

People have speculated that Trump will refuse to leave office when the time comes. Recent GOP efforts show this is not an idle concern. But Democrats will take control of the House in the 116th Congress, and will be there to bring out the truth if he fires Mueller. Trump can whittle past the graveyard all he likes. A cold, remorseless hand will soon be at his throat, drawn ever closer by his own actions.

The GOP’s appointment in Samarra

Our problems didn’t begin with Trump and will not end with him. The oligarchs, dirty tricksters, false narratives, and double standards defending power and privilege will still work their mischief. A recent example was CNN’s rapid firing of Marc Lamont Hill for defending Palestinian rights at the UN on November 28 to mark the seventieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the nakba, the displacement of Palestinians by Israel.

I disagree with HIll’s support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement because it holds Israel to a different standard than others. But Hill apologized for using the phrase “from the river to the sea,” historically used to reject compromise with Israel. His full remarks in context make clear that he was calling for a consistent recognition of rights. He rejects anti-Semitism.

Hill states, “I believe in a single secular democratic state for everyone. This is the only way that

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SC county judges toss same-sex domestic violence cases

YORK, S.C.—Prosecutors in a South Carolina county say they may bypass magistrates who dismiss domestic violence charges involving same-sex couples.

The Herald reports that at least six domestic violence cases involving same-sex defendants living together have been dismissed recently by York County magistrates for lack of probable cause, citing a South Carolina law that defines a couple in such cases as a “man and a woman.”

The state Supreme Court ruled that law unconstitutional in 2017, in a ruling upheld by the attorney general.

But in a hearing on Tuesday, public defender Jeff Zuscheck argued that the Supreme Court ruling applies only to Family Court protection orders, not criminal cases.

Prosecutor Jenny Desch says they may avoid magistrates in these cases and seek grand jury indictments instead.


Hate crime charge added to student suspected of vandalism

BELLINGHAM, Wash. (AP)—The Western Washington University student arrested in connection with on-campus racist and homophobic vandalism has been charged with a hate crime.

The Bellingham Herald reports that court records show 20-year-old Shayne Robert Merwin of Gold Bar is now facing one count of malicious harassment, Washington state’s felony hate crime statute, in addition to the second-degree burglary charge, also a felony.

Merwin’s arraignment is scheduled for 9 a.m. on Friday.

On Nov. 18, students at WWU reported racist graffiti at Nash Residence Hall. Authorities say a University police officer spoke with a man who said he overhead Merwin talking about finding an electronic key and using a marker to deface property with racial slurs and threats of sexual violence. Attempts to locate an attorney for Merwin weren’t immediately successful.

The following day, a racial epithet was found on the Wright’s Triangle sculpture near the Ross Engineering Building and a poster in front of Amsden Hall was defaced with racist language. An additional racist word was found on a pillar at Fairhaven College.

All of the vandalism targeted the African-American, Latino, Japanese and LGBTQ communitities, and has since been removed.

On Monday afternoon, around 200 students held a six-hour sit-in at WWU President Sabah Randhawa’s office to protest how the university handled Merwin’s arrest.

After his arrest, Merwin was no longer allowed at any university housing or dining halls, but was still allowed to attend classes. Cocke said Tuesday that Merwin has decided not to be on campus for the remainder of fall quarter. Whether Merwin returns will be determined through the student conduct process, Cocke said.

Concerns about bullying lead district to suspend principal

AMES, Iowa (AP)—Concerns about student-to-student bullying have led the Ames school district to suspend its middle school principal.

District spokesman Eric Smidt says the decision to move our principal Dan Fox wasn’t based off just one incident but rather was an effort to improve Ames Middle School.

The district said in an email to parents and staff last week that district administrators "will be working on various measures to ensure there is a safe and orderly environment for teaching and learning."

Concerns were raised by parents and students, and an online petition appeared that sought improved safety for LGBTQ students at the school.

Associated Press efforts to reach Fox were unsuccessful Wednesday. Officials say Fox still works for district and is being paid while on suspension.

Change-of-venue granted in slaying of transgender teen

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP)—A judge has granted a change of venue for a suspect in the slaying of a transgender teen whose eyes were gouged out and her body set on fire in southwest Missouri.

Court records show that the first-degree murder case against Andrew Viba was transferred Monday to Greene County.

Viba is charged with killing 17-year-old Ally Steinfeld in neighboring Dallas County. The case previously was moved to Crawford County.

Viba had been missing for weeks when her burned remains were found in September 2017 in the town of Cabool, a rural area about 70 miles (115 kilometers) east of Springfield. Two others have been sentenced in the case, and a fourth person is awaiting trial.

Authorities say the crime wasn’t motivated by Steinfeld’s gender identity.

NYPD: Woman attacked on subway by man spewing anti-gay slur

NEW YORK (AP)—Police say a man violently attacked a woman on a New York City subway train after he spewed an anti-gay slur at her, causing her to strike her head on the floor and fracture her spine.

The NYPD’s Hate Crime Task Force on Saturday released a photo and video of the suspect in the Nov. 30 incident. They say he fled the Manhattan-bound E train at the Forest Hills station in Queens.

Investigators say the suspect, a black man in his 50s, attacked the 20-year-old woman as she tried to get away from him, punching her in the back of the head and showing her to the floor.

Police say the suspect is 5 feet, 11 inches tall and weighs about 220 pounds.
Breath and Imagination, Lyric Stage Company of Boston and The Front Porch Collective, through December 23. 617-585-9678 or lyricstage.com

Twelfth Night, Moonbox Productions, Plaza Theatre, Boston Center for the Arts, through December 30. 617-933-8600 or bostontheatrescene.com

By Jules Becker

The Front Porch Arts Collective has found the perfect inaugural work—namely “Breath and Imagination.” FPAC, committed to supporting local talent of color, is making a very welcome debut with Arts Emerson artist in residence Daniel Beaty’s inspiring musical tribute to black lyric tenor-composer Roland Hayes (1887-1977).

What makes the moving Lyric Stage Company of Boston presentation especially auspicious is the opportunity it provides musically gifted Boston African-American performer Davron Monroe to do full justice to the art and life of his great predecessor.

Hayes’ majestic chronicle is a tale of many cities. While he hailed from Georgia and moved (at the age of 11) with his mother Angel Mo’ to Tennessee after the death of his father, he also lived in Brookline, performed in Boston and gave concerts before kings and queens.

That majesty had as much to do with his refusal to be artistically denied in the face of racism (including) as with his undeniably large talent. Beaty’s dense 90-minute effort makes generous use of Hayes’ classical and black spiritual repertoire in demonstrating both the range of music and his indomitable spirit.

Set during 1887-1942 at Angel Mo’s farm in “the flatwoods of a Negro settlement in Georgia,” this informative work goes all the way back to the tenor’s enchantment as a youth with a (scratchy) Caruso recording and his memories of singing scales and musical exercises. Look for Schuman concert lieder and African-American spirituals, all sung with vibrant tone by Monroe.

On the plaintive Donizetti aria “Una furtiva lagrima,” he displays the kind of sharp phrasing and beautiful high register that Hayes himself would admire. Monroe also shares rich harmony and strong exchanges—both heated and tender—with Angel Mo’, played with tenacity and warmth by Yewande Odetoyinbo. Premier local actor Maurice Emmanuel Parent (two Norton and three IRNE awards), in a terrific professional directing debut, sharply captures all of Hayes’ moments of frustration and anger as well as his gratifying musical and personal successes. Asher Denburg’s musical direction is equally stunning.

At one point, Hayes is justly called an “extraordinary artist.” Monroe and “Breath and Imagination” deserve the same high praise.

Moonbox Productions has brought very fresh approaches to such musicals as “The Wild Party” and “Cabaret” (the latter a hauntingly powerful revival). Now they are trying to do the same with Shakespeare’s seminal comedy “Twelfth Night” at Boston Center for the Arts’ Plaza Theatre. To that end, Evan Tarasini actually sings the beginning of Duke Orsino’s famous “If music be the food of love” initial speech, and sheets of metal achieve the sound of the pivotal opening storm. Thanks to a tour de force performance by gifted Matthew Zahnzinger (“Amadeus” and “The Thirty-Nine Steps among others), Malvolio’s adoration of Olivia and his dupery by her cousin Toby Belch and his entourage achieve both pathos and humor.

If director Allison Olivia Choat does not fully push the proverbial envelope in other ways, her generally satisfying cast does make savory fare of.
At last week drew to a close, Kevin Hart said he was hired as host of the upcoming Academy Awards. Then the guys protested him as host of the Academy Awards (I’m not going to recap why—look it up for yourself). Then he resigned as host of the Academy Awards. Am I the only one who thinks it a bit, dare I say, queer that all this news has come from Mr. Hart himself and not The Academy? Maybe I should announce that The Academy asked me to host, but I’ve pulled out (as it). Here’s another thing I’m wondering about—is there a height restriction for hosts? I say if you’re not tall enough to ride Space Mountain, you can’t host the Oscars. But you can ride me. That’s all.

I typically wouldn’t have a Fayewatch item this early in the column. But trust me, this is no normal Fayewatch. Then again, there is no such thing as a “normal” Fayewatch. For the past few years, Miss Faye Dunaway’s professional output has been limited to a curious extended commercial for Gucci and shuffling onstage at two consecutive Academy Awards—thus ensuring her spot when it’s time for the inevitable “In Memoriam” segment. That was all a warm-up for her grand return to Broadway. Ah, the Great White Way. Faye hasn’t appeared there since 1982—I believe she was 82 at the time. And she’s finally found a vehicle to harness her unique talents, such as they are. She will star in “Tea at Five”, a one-woman show about...brace yourself, Katharine Hepburn! Well, when you think of people suitable to play dead grand dames, who else? The press release indicates that the run will take place sometime next summer and will be a “strictly limited engagement” (I will refrain from the obvious joke). Here’s something the press release doesn’t say—the first choice for the role of Miss Katherine Hepburn was the divine Charles Busch! And I should know: I was there. Back in 2011, Busch starred in a one-night-only performance of Matthew Lombardo’s revised play, which was a benefit for the Ali Forney Center. Needless to say, he was magical. Charles was courted for a full run, but Busch marches to the beat of his own drum and declined. So, essentially Faye is replacing a fella in a frock. How curious—usually it’s the other way around.

Those of you hoping to catch Michael Urie and Mercedes Ruehl in “Torch Song” on Broadway better hurry. Harvey Fierstein’s seminal work has posted closing notices. It will make it through the holiday season, but just. Urie shared the sad news with a positive spin. “Silver linings: If you don’t make it to Burning! Well, when you think of people suitable to play dead grand dames, who else? The press release indicates that the run will take place sometime next summer and will be a “strictly limited engagement” (I will refrain from the obvious joke). Here’s something the press release doesn’t say—the first choice for the role of Miss Katherine Hepburn was the divine Charles Busch! And I should know: I was there. Back in 2011, Busch starred in a one-night-only performance of Matthew Lombardo’s revised play, which was a benefit for the Ali Forney Center. Needless to say, he was magical. Charles was courted for a full run, but Busch marches to the beat of his own drum and declined. So, essentially Faye is replacing a fella in a frock. How curious—usually it’s the other way around.

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With so much hullaballoo about “The Cher Show” opening on Broadway last week (I will not utter that West word), didya know Cher once played Maria? And Tony. And Anita. And everyone else in “West Side Story”? The super-star considers one of her greatest accomplishments a video she made in 1978 for “Cher...Special”. And, clocking in at 12 minutes and 43 seconds, it is quite a feat—which you can see on BillyMasters.com.

When Julie Chen Moonves left “The Talk”, she suggested that her perfect replacement might be frequent fill-in co-host Carrie Ann Inaba from “Dancing with the Stars”. “In my opinion, you look awfully good sitting there, my Asian sister. I’m just saying,” said the Chenbot. Apparently she hasn’t lost her clout. Days after CBS announced Jules would be back hosting “Big Brother”, they hired Carrie Ann to join “The Talk” full-time starting in January.

CNN is gonna take another stab at making magic work between Anderson Cooper and Andy Cohen on New Year’s Eve. I’ll be DVRing (and scanning) because faithful fans know I always ring in the New Year with loved ones watching not one, but two Lindsay Wagner movies. This year we have two new films—the Hallmark Channel’s “Mingle All The Way” (which has virtually the same plot as every other Hallmark Channel flick) and “Samson”, where Lindsay plays the Biblical hero’s mother. That Bionic Woman’s got range!

Ross Matthews recently announced the collapse of his 10-year relationship to Salvador Camarena. “This split is amicable and filled with kindness, compassion and a genuine love.
Of Food, Festivals, and Family
by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

My family of origin always has our biggest gathering on Thanksgiving. My spouse Helen, our son, and I pretty much party from then until Helen’s birthday in early January, marking Hanukkah, Christmas, and New Year’s along the way. It’s both exhilarating and exhausting.

Some of my favorite parts of the whole season are the foods I cook for my family. As those who know me can attest, I am far from a domestic goddess, having long ago rejected that traditional gender role, but cooking is the one exception. For me, it’s a creative outlet.

My brother and his wife usually host our family Thanksgiving meal, but I’m in charge of making the cranberry sauce. I do a traditional version of whole-berry sauce, but also always make a fiery “cranbanero”—in which I steep several habanero peppers. Sweet, sour, and sometimes incendiary—a blending of flavors like the holiday itself, which despite being about gratitude, also has a darker side. Its origins in colonialism still haunt our country and Native peoples today—something I try to remember as we tuck in to our turkey and stuffing.

Hanukkah is next, and at some point during the eight days I’ll whip up a batch of latkes, a pancake made of shredded potatoes and fried in oil—essentially giant tater tots. The connection with Hanukkah, we are told, is in the oil. When the second-century Jews reclaimed the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem from the Greeks, the Talmud says, they only had enough oil to light the lamp in the Temple for one day, but it miraculously lasted for eight.

The fact is, though, that latkes as we know them are not as traditional as they seem. Potatoes are a New World vegetable. Lutskis were probably first made near the Mediterranean from cheese, then from buckwheat or rye in Northern Europe, as Voni Applebaum explained in a piece at the Atlantic two years ago. Even once the potato was adopted, chicken fat remained the frying medium of choice until the early 20th century, when Jews in America started to use newly invented Crisco vegetable shortening. The use of oil and the connection to Hanukkah happened after that.

All this seems to reflect the challenges of a people trying both to retain its traditions and to adapt to new surroundings. That’s particularly appropriate in relation to Hanukkah, since the original events also involved a split in the Jewish people, with some urging assimilation with the Greeks and others seeking independence. The tension of assimilation versus separation comes up, of course, not only for Jews, but for any people within a majority population not their own. How do we continue honoring and remembering our unique culture while also learning to respect and work with the practices of the wider society? The rise of Hanukkah, which is really a minor Jewish holiday, to be viewed by many as co-equal to Christmas in significance, is a prime example of these forces at work. Such transformations make me hope that LGBTQ people, in these days of marriage equality and queer parents in the PTA, can still keep the rainbow flags flying on our picket fences.

My spouse and I work to keep both my Hanukkah and her Christmas traditions alive. We celebrate each in its turn, but also sometimes blend them. At least once during the holiday season, we’ll have a family day of baking gingerbread cookies with our eclectic collection of cookie cutters. Five-pointed Christmas tree stars sit next to six-pointed Stars of David; reindeer prance next to menorahs; many of our gingerbread people are gender creative. Our son always decorates his cookies with as many M&Ms and other candy pieces as they’ll hold, taking advantage of our holiday exception to junk food limits.

For Christmas, we keep things simple, foodwise. Helen’s parents live across the country, so we don’t usually get together for the holiday. For many years, though, I’ve taken to starting a batch of cinnamon sticky buns on Christmas Eve so that I can pop them in the oven Christmas morning for us to eat while we open ours presents. Sure, we might get sugary smears all over the gifts, but that’s a risk we’re willing to take. I use a recipe from one of my favorite cookbooks (The King Arthur Flour Baker’s Companion), boosted with raisins and orange zest. Any recipe worth making is worth making one’s own—a lesson that just might apply to a lot of life.

New Year’s Eve brings champagne for Helen and me; sparkling apple juice for our son. Then for Helen’s birthday, to wrap up the season, I’ll bake a cake from scratch, usually my go-to chocolate cake with one of several frosting possibilities (fudge, coffee, cream cheese, peanut butter, or peppermint, among others)—something tried and true topped with a little variety to keep it interesting. Maybe that’s the secret to our 25-year relationship as well.

As we eat throughout the season, we savor how we’ve created our unique expression of traditions. Like our family, we’re making it up as we go along, taking the models we were given and adapting them so they feel right for us. All we know is that there’s a lot of love here as we gather together in the season of light.

Happy holidays to you and your families, no matter how you celebrate.

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The fact is, though, that latkes as we know them are not as traditional as they seem. Potatoes are a New World vegetable. Lutskis were probably first made near the Mediterranean from cheese, then from buckwheat or rye in Northern Europe, as Voni Applebaum explained in a piece at the Atlantic two years ago. Even once the potato was adopted, chicken fat remained the frying medium of choice until the early 20th century, when Jews in America started to use newly invented Crisco vegetable shortening. The use of oil and the connection to Hanukkah happened after that.

All this seems to reflect the challenges of a people trying both to retain its traditions and to adapt to new surroundings. That’s particularly appropriate in relation to Hanukkah, since the original events also involved a split in the Jewish people, with some urging assimilation with the Greeks and others seeking independence. The tension of assimilation versus separation comes up, of course, not only for Jews, but for any people within a majority population not their own. How do we continue honoring and remembering our unique culture while also learning to respect and work with the practices of the wider society? The rise of Hanukkah, which is really a minor Jewish holiday, to be viewed by many as co-equal to Christmas in significance, is a prime example of these forces at work. Such transformations make me hope that LGBTQ people, in these days of marriage equality and queer parents in the PTA, can still keep the rainbow flags flying on our picket fences.

My spouse and I work to keep both my Hanukkah and her Christmas traditions alive. We celebrate each in its turn, but also sometimes blend them. At least once during the holiday season, we’ll have a family day of baking gingerbread cookies with our eclectic collection of cookie cutters. Five-pointed Christmas tree stars sit next to six-pointed Stars of David; reindeer prance next to menorahs; many of our gingerbread people are gender creative. Our son always decorates his cookies with as many M&Ms and other candy pieces as they’ll hold, taking advantage of our holiday exception to junk food limits.

For Christmas, we keep things simple, foodwise. Helen’s parents live across the country, so we don’t usually get together for the holiday. For many years, though, I’ve taken to starting a batch of cinnamon sticky buns on Christmas Eve so that I can pop them in the oven Christmas morning for us to eat while we open ours presents. Sure, we might get sugary smears all over the gifts, but that’s a risk we’re willing to take. I use a recipe from one of my favorite cookbooks (The King Arthur Flour Baker’s Companion), boosted with raisins and orange zest. Any recipe worth making is worth making one’s own—a lesson that just might apply to a lot of life.

New Year’s Eve brings champagne for Helen and me; sparkling apple juice for our son. Then for Helen’s birthday, to wrap up the season, I’ll bake a cake from scratch, usually my go-to chocolate cake with one of several frosting possibilities (fudge, coffee, cream cheese, peanut butter, or peppermint, among others)—something tried and true topped with a little variety to keep it interesting. Maybe that’s the secret to our 25-year relationship as well.

As we eat throughout the season, we savor how we’ve created our unique expression of traditions. Like our family, we’re making it up as we go along, taking the models we were given and adapting them so they feel right for us. All we know is that there’s a lot of love here as we gather together in the season of light.

Happy holidays to you and your families, no matter how you celebrate.

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Rosalind Smith
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Football

Tending to join the cheerleaders. “Cowboys in the house! Yell RMS!”

Football has historically been a male-dominat-
ed sport, but that hasn’t dissuaded an increas-
ing number of nontraditional players across the coun-
try from joining the huddles.

Clarksville is no exception. In the military city where Sundays are filled with church and football, there were at least three middle school football players, born female, who just completed their season.

Two of the teens no longer identify with femi-
nine pronouns, and the other has been bullied because of her gender.

Ari, 14, uses male pronouns at Richview Mid-
dle School and in public. As the starting corner-
back, Ari felt more masculine, and the opportu-
nity allowed him to express his gender identity.

“I don’t know anyone that’s like me to play football. All I’ve known is that there are some girls that do play football,” Ari said. “Me personally, I haven’t known anyone that was originally a dif-
ferent gender, playing as the opposite sex.”

Madisen Bryant, 13, was the starting nose
guard for the Clarksville Academy-affiliated team in the Jr. Pro league and requested to be referred to with gender-neutral pronouns, such as “they,” in this article.

Elizabeth Cundiff, 13, was a female player on the Clarksville Academy team. She played a num-
ber of positions on the field and says she has been targeted for being a girl.

Under the fluorescent lights of the Clarksville Academy practice field, a male teammate told Elizabeth he doesn’t want to hit a girl. The coach responded by making the player run laps, but Elizabeth didn’t miss a beat, promptly caught the pitch and was tackled by the next kid in line.

Only a few yards away, Madisen was complet-
ing tackling drills with the other linemen, fac-
ing any player who came their way. Standing at 5-foot, they hit low and knocked opponents off
balance.

This was Madisen’s first year playing football after being recruited by Elizabeth in her personal quest for more nontraditional players on the CA

team.

The three don’t see themselves as having done anything too special. They just played a sport they love—with uncomfortable helmets. Ari’s was too
big. Elizabeth’s dug into the back of her head. Madisen’s was too tight.

In the Clarksville Jr. Pro Football league, some-
times one girl, maybe more, plays each year in the middle school level, according to New Providence and Kenwood Area Coordinator Scott Patterson. However, in younger levels there are more girls playing.

“It gives every kid the opportunity to play foot-
ball,” Parker said. There are no requirements for
players joining the team other than proof of age and the desire to play.

The presence of nontraditional players is likely to increase, some say.

“I think any sport venue that has been gen-
der-neutral will see an increase,” Tennessee Equality Project Executive Director Chris Sanders said. “I think it’s an area where you’re going to see transgender, nonconforming kids of different sexual orienta-
tions step forward in ways that they haven’t be-
fore, because they have abilities, too.”

This was Elizabeth’s third year playing football. She has played a variety of positions and was a starter on her last team, where she made tackles that no one else could. Playing for the Clarks-
ville Academy team, however, she was often only
put in the game when they were up by some 40
points.

“I still act like a girl,” Elizabeth said. “They don’t want to be the team that gets the girl hurt, and kind of proving yourself is kind of hard when you’re already put into that stereotype, where you can’t do it just because of your gender.”

Elizabeth felt she wasn’t put in the positions she’s good at and wants to play. People have told her the only way she will play in high school is as a kicker.

Playing in the middle school league as eighth graders, all three of the players are comparable in size to their teammates. They blend in with the seventh and eighth grade players as they run across the field.

Safety worried many football parents of all lev-
els, including Ari’s, Elizabeth’s and Madisen’s as their children took the field every Thursday night.

“I don’t really look at it as it because she’s a fe-
male, she’s going to get hurt. Or if she was a male, she wouldn’t get hurt,” Elizabeth’s mother, De-
idre Freeman, said. “You’re a parent. You’re wor-
rried about your kids as soon as they play.”

Elizabeth’s older brother also plays football.

Freeman said she worries just as much for her son’s safety.

Even with safety precautions and helmets, Madisen still took a bad hit that knocked them down and caused a mild concussion on eighth grade night.

Ari’s mother, Gail Grimes, sometimes wished her child was a kicker so he wouldn’t get hurt—
but Ari enjoyed new bruises and scars from the games.

In spite of the injuries and concerns by their parents, for Madisen, Ari and Elizabeth, tackling is the best part of the sport.

In practice, the other players often went harder on Ari because he didn’t back down.

“She’s out here manhandling you,” Ari’s head coach, Terrell Jackson, told a player after a tackle. “I can tell some of the guys, ‘It’s not a male, fe-
male thing. Don’t be embarrassed, You’re all foot-
ball players right now.’”

At the beginning of the season, Madisen and Elizabeth were often paired together during tack-
ling drills as the “girls.” This changed as the sea-
son progressed.

“After two or three practices, we kind of all just forgot about it,” said Madisen and Elizabeth’s
head coach Evans Peay. “It’s a football team. Not a football team with girls on it.”

When the players lined up on the sideline or in a huddle, it was nearly impossible to pick out one from the other. The only way to tell them apart was their body language and numbers, outlined by white on their jerseys.

And on Thursdays as they walked from class to class in Clarksville Academy, Madisen and Eliz-
abeth wore their uniforms alongside their team.

“I feel like I’m rocking that jersey,” Madisen said. “I like showing up to school, we got a game today. I’m probably going to either put the con-
centric circle sticker on my butt or I’m going to do something.”

Even though the two sit together in class, Eliz-
abeth has a different experience from the other players. Classmates sometimes thought a male player who she was dating gave her the jersey.

“I know I’m different because of my gender,” Elizabeth said. “I know I won’t be treated the same, but it still feels nice when you are treated simi-
lar.”

When a teammate said something to Elizabeth or she took a hard hit on the field, she felt she couldn’t cry because she would be perceived as weak.

But, after one particularly difficult practice where she again was not able to practice for her position, she got into her mom’s car with tears running down her face.

“She was crying so much she kept taking her jersey and wiping her face,” Freeman said.

Elizabeth fought to be treated equally during
practices and games. In her three years play-
ning football she has faced bullying and targeting on the field. In some cases, opposing players have ganged up on her and have thrown her to the ground and kicked her after the whistle was blown, according to her mother.

Madisen and Elizabeth supported each other and were often seen separated from the team or talking to their friend, the water girl. The two had good relationships with some players and stayed after practice to play and toss the ball around.

Ari’s coach, Terrell Jackson, learned a lot hav-
ing on the team.

“You still think of it as a masculine game. You gotta be big strong and don’t wash your tail. You know, football players are stinky,” he said. “It was a 180-degree turn from what I thought it was going to be. So, I just really learned you can’t judge a book by its cover.”

Ari found a sense of camaraderie and support with the Cowboys. Team members used proper pronouns, danced together during warm-ups and slapped each other’s helmets after a good play.

It’s a lesson adults can learn from the kids, ac-
cording to Sanders.

“The way they (the adults) look at gender is probably restricting great students from excelling in something they could be good at,” he said.

With more openness in the younger genera-
tion, kids feel safer today coming out or taking steps outside of the box.

“I feel like I’m everybody else on the team, ev-
er other lineman,” Madisen said.

Younger people often see breaking gender ste-
reotypes as easier, while parents have made com-
ments and have asked Freeman personal ques-
tions about her daughters.

Does she identify as a boy? Is she gay?

Did you let Elizabeth play with dolls? Does she

FOOTBALL, page 9
Football
Continued from page 8

wears dresses?
Why does she have long hair when she likes football?
Did you make your daughter play football?

Coach Peay said he hoped Elizabeth and Madison learned the
ability to pick themselves up and overcome adversities from their
experiences on the team.

Despite the struggles, the kids still love it.
“I don’t think I’ve really cared about any other sport as much as I
do for this one,” Ari said. “It’s like when you run you feel free, then
you hit. It’s like your anger is leaving your body.”

In October, the three met on one field as the Carlisle Academy
Cougars took on the Richview Cowboys.
Ari, Elizabeth and Madison played a long game where the Cou-
gars took home the victory. However, the three players faced off and
met that night.

Football

Continued from page 5

this play’s always intriguing combination of sibling reunion and
ambiguous relationships—with Orsino attracted to Caesario (Viola
of course in disguise) and Antonio’s very bromantic feeling for Vio-
la’s twin brother Sebastian. Evan Turassini and Charlotte Kinder—
properly vulnerable though quick witted as Viola/Caesario—have
good chemistry. Sarah Gazdowicz as Olivia has the right subdued
demeanor as a widow attracted to Caesario and convincing author-
ship in the cold watching them talk like old friends.

Still wound up with energy from the game, they joked, com-
pleted the drills their coaches had them do at practice, and then
raced to see who was faster.

“We still shouldn’t be put into the stereotype of whatever gender
you are, whatever you go as should be a big deal, because it
shouldn’t be an insult that, ‘Hey, you throw like a girl,’” Elizabeth
said.

“It should be something that people are proud about and like,
‘Hey, I’m a girl. Watch me do this.’”

com

Theater
Continued from page 5

The game reunited Ari and Madison, who took dance classes to-
together when they were younger, but hadn’t spoken since.

As the lights turned one by one, they talked about their expe-
riences on the teams—water bottle mishaps, future plans, coaches
and the game itself.

Their parents stood in the cold watching them talk like old
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friends.
the Mattis policy generally bars transgender people from service, it exempts those who’ve already come out during the period of open service that started under Defense Secretary Ashton Carter during the Obama years. The Mattis policy also allows transgender troops who enlist in the future or who have yet to come out to continue to serve as long as they don’t transition.

U.S. Circuit Judge Stephen Williams, a Reagan appointee, raised questions that were overtly in favor of allowing the ban to proceed. U.S. Circuit Judge Thomas Griffith, a George W. Bush appointee, had mixed questioning for both sides. U.S. Circuit Judge Robert Wilkins, an Obama appointee, seemed inclined to keep the injunction in place, asking questions about whether the Mattis policy has changed anything.

Even if the D.C. Circuit were to reverse Colleen Kollar-Kotelly’s injunction against the Trump policy, three other nationwide injunctions in place was Jennifer Levi, who said the Mattis policy — as well as the part allowing the estimated 957 transgender troops who came out in the Obama years to stay in the military — demonstrates the Trump administration has changed its approach and lifting the injunction is warranted.

Their entire argument is we haven’t changed,” Lucas said. “We believe that we have.”

In his closing remarks, Lucas called it “truly extraordinary” four separate courts have placed injunctions against the transgender military ban and said the U.S. government is calling for a “simple amount of deference,” much like the U.S. Supreme Court ultimately awarded the Trump administration on the travel ban to Muslim countries.

Arguing on behalf of the National Center for Lesbian Rights and GLBTQ Advocates & Defenders in favor of keeping the court injunction in place was Jennifer Levi, who said the Mattis policy “bans only transgender people and all transgender people and gender dysphoria is a ‘defining characteristic’ of being transgender. Williams — who told Levi “the record in the case is against you” — repeatedly referenced the portion of the Mattis recommendations allowing transgender people to serve in their biological sex and “do not require a change of gender and remain deployable within applicable retention standards.”

The Trump administration before the court was Justice Department trial attorney Britton Lucas, who argued that provision in the policy — as well as the part allowing the estimated 957 transgender troops who came out in the Obama years to stay in the military — demonstrates the Trump administration has changed its approach and lifting the injunction is warranted.

“Gender dysphoria here is being used as a proxy to exclude transgender individuals,” Levi said. When Williams suggested the transgender ban could be justified because of the high suicide rates in the transgender population, Levi said the military doesn’t apply the standards, for example, to white people compared to black people, drawing on findings white people suffer a higher suicide rate than black individuals. A couple of times issues became contentious between Williams and Levi. When the judge asked the attorney to comment on the transgender experience in terms of the “world” as opposed to proposed policy, Levi commented on the “Carter world” of open service, Williams scoffed and said that wasn’t sufficient.

“The government is playing word games by arguing that transgender people can serve in their birth sex. That is a contradiction in terms,” Levi said in a statement after the arguments. “This is not a game. What’s at stake here is the lives of dedicated service members, who are willing and able to serve — and are prepared to make the ultimate sacrifice for our country.”

In contrast to Williams, Griffith repeatedly asked whether heightened scrutiny for laws against sex discrimination should apply to the transgender military ban, indicating he may be inclined to uphold the order against the policy.

Additionally, Griffith asked whether allowing transgender service members to stay in the military as long as they remain in their biological sex creates a “null set” that essentially bars all transgender service members.

“You can be a transgender individual as long as you don’t act like one, as long as you suppress your gender identity.” Griffith said.

When Griffith asked Lucas whether there are transgender people who can serve in their biological sex, Lucas replied, “Yes,” referencing those who don’t wish to transition because, for example, they identify as non-binary. But when Griffith asked the attorney to comment on the transgender policy generally bars transgender people to serve as long as they serve in their biological sex and “do not require a change of gender and remain deployable within applicable retention standards.”

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for one another. As we go forward, each of us feels as if he has a cheerleader in our corner—a family member for life." Yeah, yeah—that’s kinda like when they fire someone from “The View” but say they’re welcomed back any time. What we wanna know is what went down and who’s zoomin’ who. Rumor has it that one of them wanted to settle down and have kids, while the other didn’t.

Time for another installment of “Bil- ly’s Holiday Gift Giving Suggestions”. This week, we’re delivering the perfect 2019 calendar. My first choice is usually the Orthodox Calendar, but they have let me down. When that calendar started, it featured risqué photos of allegedly Or-thodox priests and monks. Now they’re admitting the photos are of models, but still “inspired by” Orthodox priests and monks. Thanks, but no thanks.

Instead, I am happy to once again spotlight the work of the Warwick Row- ers. This group of hot athletes has been raising funds through their calendar since 2009. Obviously the men change, but still “inspired by” Orthodox priests and monks. Thanks, but no thanks.

However, I am happy to once again spotlight the work of the Warwick Row- ers. This group of hot athletes has been raising funds through their calendar since 2009. Obviously the men change, but the standards remain high. The gay and straight rowers have twice been named UK Charity Calendar of the Year by whomever votes on these things—presumably a bunch of Brits. This year’s cal- endar features a special guest—two-time Olympic rower Robbie Manson from New Zealand. And let’s just say his openly gay oar is prominently featured. While we will share some of the more sizzling shots on BillyMasters.com, I’d suggest you grab the calendar quickly at War-wickRowers.org. And HURRY—I was gonna promote the Ben Cohen calendar, but it’s already sold out.

Queer athletes bring us to our “Ask Billy” question from Stephen in Ana- heim: “Remember all that talk about a sex tape of Tom Daley being dropped around? Whatever happened to that?”

That’s a good question. Sure, we got quite a fascinating shot of his ass in the air waiting for...well, whomever turned up. And there was that brief clip of him alleg- edly fondling his nether regions through underwear. But then, nothing. So I did a little digging and found quite a few still shots from a video that allegedly stars Mr. Daley and a rather hot bald bloke. Now, I cannot say that this is definitely Tom. For all I know, it could be one of those many Tom Daley look-a-likes with a strikingly similar body, similar hair, and similar ass which is enjoyed with great gusto by a hot bald guy. I mean, anything’s possible. Check it out at BillyMasters.com and de- cide for yourself.

When bald men are welcomed daley, it’s time to end another column. If you’re having trouble finding the perfect gift for that special someone, why not snag having trouble finding the perfect gift for that special someone, why not snag

Military

Continued from page 10

posed the same question to Levi, she compared the situation to allowing gays to serve in the mili- tary while requiring them “to act heterosexually.”

Griffith also asked Lucas whether the grand- father clause in the Mattis policy allowing trans- gender people who came out during the Obama years undercuts the rationale for the policy. In response, Lucas said the military has different standards for accession than it does for retention, noting the military keeps service members with PTSD, high blood pressure and sleep apnea, but doesn’t have the same policy for their enlistment.

Despite those questions, Griffith also voiced concerns over judicial precedent requiring the judiciary to give deference to the military over combat readiness, pointing out the proposed ban used to be the policy of the military until the final year of the Obama administration.

“You are asking the court to make decisions we are not equipped to make: Who is combat ready and who is not?” Griffith said.

Levi responded the courts must still apply the “same level of scrutiny” they would otherwise apply to discriminatory policy.

“Under any level of scrutiny the Mattis plan falls because it’s rooted in discrimination,” Levi said.

Wilkins was the hardest judge to read on the panel, but seemed inclined to allow the injunc- tion against the ban to remain in place. Wilkins asked for a distinction between the transgender policies as they evolved during the Obama and Trump era, asking whether anything has really changed with the new policy Mattis proposed.

Arguments took place before the D.C. Circuit shortly after the Justice Department filed peti- tions with the U.S. Supreme Court calling for re- view before appellate courts made their decisions on the policy. It would be highly unusual for the Supreme Court to take up the case at this stage in the litigation process. On Friday, Kollar-Kotelly denied a request from the Justice Department to lift her injunction against the ban as the Supreme Court considers whether to take up the petitions.

Migrant

Continued from page 1

Federal officials have said previously they were awaiting the results of the state autopsy. The senators also requested documentation on the training that officers, agents and contractors undergo related to the processing, care and safety of transgender detainees.

The request comes after an attorney represent- ing Hernandez’s family threatened to sue over claims she did not receive adequate medical care and was physically abused.

Immigration authorities have maintained that Hernandez wasn’t abused while in their custody.

After arriving in the United States, Hernandez was transferred to Albergue Hosp- ital, where she died several days later.

Federal officials announced Hernandez’s death on May 25, saying she was the sixth detainee to die in custody since Oct. 1, 2017.

According to immigration authorities, Her- nandez twice illegally entered the United States between 2005 and 2009. She was allowed to return to Mexico each time because she claimed Mexican nationality when encountered by immi- gration officials.

In 2006 and 2009, she was convicted of theft, prostitution and other charges in two separate cases in Texas.

In 2014, Hernandez illegally re-entered the U.S. a third time, was arrested and removed.

Rosendall

Continued from page 3

cultivated Jared Kushner for two years. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is a Kush- ner family friend, and the Kushners are backers of Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The Israelis and Saudis have a mutual enemy in Iran. Israel authorized the sale to the Saudis of spyware im- plicated in the murder of Jamal Khashoggi. The Saudis’ mass starvation of Yemenis and blockade of Qatar mean little to Jared, who is ignorant of the region’s history. Given all this, and the instant wrath against anyone who criticizes Israel, it is sadly unsurprising that some are demanding that Temple University fire Prof. Hill. Academic free- dom, anyone?

As long as America betrays its own values, we should resist from lecturing others. We sow ter- rible seeds when we overlook depredations by our allies and ignore the cries for justice of those they oppress. All human beings matter. Dissident voices like Prof. Hill’s, try as some might to silence them, keep the flame of freedom lit.

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