Hart’s heartless apology
by Rev. Irene Monroe
contributing writer

While I will continue to argue that the African American community doesn’t have a patent on homophobia, it does, however, have a problem with it.

And, comedian Kevin Hart is another glaring example of the malady.

Just days after taking the coveted post to host the 91st Academy Awards, Hart stepped down rather than offer an apology for his 2011 homophobic attacks.

“I chose to pass, I passed on the apology,” Hart said in a home video he tweets.

A Fresh Night

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

By Jules Becker

Moonbox Productions has brought very fresh approaches to such musicals as “The Wild Party” and “Cabaret” (the latter a hauntingly powerful revivial), 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 Turansini actually sings the beginning of Duke Orsino’s famous “If music be the food of love” initial speech.

At the same time, sheets of metal achieve the sound of the pivotal opening storm that ends up separating twin siblings Viola and Sebastian. The best area of fresh interpretation by Moonbox in central Madrid.

A study published last year by the European transgender group TGEU found that 77.5 percent of 885 transgender adults found that 77.5 percent of 885 transgender adults

Angela Ponce, who won Spain’s Miss Universe competition in June, speaks during an interview with The Associated Press in Madrid, Spain, on July 10, 2018. Paul White / AP

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Boston Pride Names Two New Board Members

Deborah Drew and Steven Cullipher join the board

Submitted by Boston Pride

Boston Pride announced that it has named two new members to its board of directors: Deborah Drew of Worcester, MA and Steven Cullipher of Wareham, MA. Both bring years of advocating for the LGBTQ community.

“With the addition of Debbie and Steven, the Boston Pride board is now stronger than ever,” said Linda DeMarco, Vice President of Boston Pride. “They have spent countless hours advocating for the LGBTQ community both through Boston Pride and their everyday lives.”

Steven has been a member of the Boston Pride Committee since 2010. During his tenure, he served as the festival chair and merchandise manager. He works at Massachusetts Maritime Academy (MMA) as a chemistry professor and has worked with students, faculty, and staff at MMA to create Safe Harbor, an on-campus program for promoting visibility and support of LGBTQ campus life and producing educational programming for the campus community. He has been president of Massachusetts for 10 years and currently resides in Wareham.

“Becoming a board member at Boston Pride is the right decision for me as I have been volunteering for several years,” said Cullipher. “Boston Pride has allowed me to build relationships and serve in leadership roles during events.”

Deborah (Debbie) Drew is the President and CEO of GovMojo Inc, a management consulting and employee development company that focuses on diversity and inclusion. GovMojo is a Veterans Administration-verified Service Disabled Veteran

Filling Time

by Judah Leblang | www.JudahLeblang.com

contributing writer

For many, the holidays are a time of fun, family, and festivity—a chance to exchange gifts, attend parties, and cuddle around the fire with a husband, lover or friend. Or not. As a single gay man who doesn’t celebrate Christmas, I view the period from Thanksgiving through New Year’s like I view Valentine’s Day—skeptically—from the outside looking in. Most of my friends and acquaintances are caught up in their family celebrations while I watch from a distance; it’s like viewing Boston’s July 4th celebration from Rhode Island. My annual strategy is to stay active, focus on my own life, and wake up when the whole season is over.

So I panicked a few weeks ago, when I looked at my daily planner and discovered a wee gap, (more like a chasm) starting in early December and lasting to mid-January. In normal times I teach memoir-writing at Grub Street, a non-profit in downtown Boston. But my classes go on hiatus during the holiday break, and so I found myself with too much unstructured time.

That’s when I came up with a strategy to keep busy, and to start the new year off right: I booked my medical appointments. Over the past decade, I’ve accumulated an impressive array of conditions, each of which requires a specialist. While none of these conditions are life-threatening, it seems that middle age requires an increasing amount of preventative maintenance and repairs, like those on my 2008 Nissan Versa, which has been beaten up and banged around, much like my own body.

I seem to specialize in the manageable-but-not-curable, (otherwise known as chronic) conditions: dry eyes, sleep apnea, low energy, receding gums. These conditions have led me to a series of specialists, doctors and dentists, some of whom have been helpful and others who have not. (For example, one of the dry eye specialist’s gems was to suggest I tape my eyelids closed at night, a technique I found both annoying and useless.)

Still, my holiday void has provided me with the time to follow up on all those appointments I had put off because I was busy teaching, writing and performing. (In other words, I had a life.) Now, without the convenient excuse of busyness, I slotted in visits to the endocrinologist for my fatigue, the sleep lab for an overnight study of my apnea, the orthopedist for my dry eyes, and the periodontist for my dental cleaning. Despite the hassle of hanging out in countless waiting rooms, staring at the industrial carpeting and perusing old copies of People Magazine, I realize I am fortunate to live in Boston, a great medical center, and to have insurance that covers most, if not all of my doctor visits—thanks Obama!

I carry myself from one appointment to another, and my planner fills as additional tests are ordered: bloodwork, a CAT scan here, a minor day surgery there. It can get a bit overwhelming, but as long as the results are basically good, i.e. I am not dying, I comfort myself with the thought that I will be starting 2019 with a cleaner slate. Yippee! I am not dying, I comfort myself with the thought that I will be starting 2019 with a cleaner(er) slate.

Judah Leblang is a writer, teacher, and storyteller in Boston. Find out more at judahleblang.com.

Theater

Continued from page 1

box involves a tour de force performance by gifted Matthew Zahnzinger (“Amadeus” and “The Thirty-Nine Steps among others) as Countess Olivia’s ambitious steward Malvolio.

Zahnzinger pulls out all the stops as he captures Malvolio’s alternately humorous and affecting adoration of Olivia. He is equally compelling being shaped by her uncle Toby Belch and his entourage.

If director Allison Olivia Choat does not fully push the proverbial envelope in other ways, her generally satisfying cast does make savory fare of this play’s always intriguing combination of sibling rivalry and ambiguous relationships—with Orsino attracted to Caesario (actually Viola of course in disguise) and Antonio’s very bromatic feeling verging on man crush for Sebastian.

Evan Turansini and Charlotte Kinder—properly vulnerable though quick witted as Viola/Caesario—have good chemistry. Kinder captures Viola’s resourcefulness and courage as she attempts to balance her growing attraction to the Duke and develops a kind of sisterly concern for Olivia.

Sarah Gazdowicz as Olivia has the right subdued demeanor as a widow attracted to Caesario and convincing authority with her household. Zahnzinger is a scene stealing hoot as Malvolio sports yellow stockings and arrives cross-gartered thinking he will please Olivia. Arthur Gomez displays appealing comic ease and sings with panache as Feste the Jester.

Alex Boyle brings the right directness to the tricky part of Sebastian. Kevin G Irene as Antonio has the kind of self-sacrificing caring for Sebastian—especially while helping him with money and later endangering himself—that adds weight to this significant if relatively short role. Robert D. Murphy sometimes overplays Sir Toby’s outrageousness, but Andrew Winson is effectively nerdy and insecure as Sir Andrew Aguecheek, his companion and suitor of Olivia.

Moonbox’s “Twelfth Night” could do with more risk-taking, but a spirited cast keeps it safely off the rocks.
ties and expressions, like it does MLK Day and people murdered because of their gender identity. An international event memorializing transgender people murdered because of their gender identity is Transgender Day of Remembrance, which happens every year in October. In 2018, at least 26 trans people were murdered, ranging in ages 18-54.

While many in our black and Latinx communities, and their lives are in as much danger in America, the community goes dark when a trans woman is killed. Since 2018 at least 26 have been shot or killed, ranging in ages 18-54.

The community's expression of its intolerance comes to homo/transphobic statements blurted out by public figures and artists versus racists. These homophobic rants are about a toxic hyper-masculinity of black manhood. I ask, in my daughters doll house I'm going to break it over his head & say n my voice 'stop that's gay.' These homophobic rants are about a toxic hyper-masculinity of black manhood. I ask, in my daughters doll house I'm going to break it over his head & say 'n my voice 'stop that's gay.'

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Hart feels he has evolved on the issue of LGBTQ sensitivities to the point no apology is needed. And, consequently, a forced and heartless one was offered.

Universe
Continued from page 1

gender people over 16 years old killed in Georgia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden had considered taking their own lives and that 24.5 percent of respondents had made at least one attempt.

Ponce said she had suffered discrimination before as a model, being rejected for fashion events or shoots once designers or organizers discovered she had undergone a sex reassignment procedure.

But in those moments, she said her life motto — "To be the best is not an option, it's a must" — gave her strength.

She said her experience growing up in a "loving and supporting family" but without any role models in a small town in southern Spain, near Seville, can be a useful story for others.

"My parents never had to go to school to demand any changes in attitudes, I did it myself," Ponce said, highlighting how she would meet with every new teacher and tell them: "Whatever name appears in the roll call, you should call me Angela."

The 5' foot, 11 inch model's career took off after she won a provincial beauty award in 2015, reaching new heights last month with the Miss Universe pageant.

"I closed my eyes," she said recalling the victory. "All I wanted was to feel how they put on the crown because I was aware that it was a historical moment."

In 2012, 23-year-old Jenna Talackova was banned from Canada's Miss Universe pageant for not being a "naturally born" female. The organization — run at the time by now U.S. President Donald Trump — changed the regulations after she threatened legal action. Talackova made it to the shortlist in Canada, but didn't win entry to the international contest.

Six years later, Ponce says that transphobia remains a global problem, even in Spain, a country she sees as a pioneer in the protection of LGBT rights.

After Ponce's victory in the Spanish beauty title, she received hundreds of messages of support on social media, but also some criticism — even from some feminist, gay or transgender users who decried beauty pageants in general as objectification.

"We can't be hypocritical," said Ponce, rejecting the charges and describing her victories as success for all transgender people. "Beauty is used to sell everything around us, and beauty can also help us spread a message of equality."

The theme of this year's pageant was "Empowered Women" and was judged by seven women, including former pageant winners, businesswomen and a fashion designer.

Associated Press writer Jim Gomez in Manila, Philippines, contributed to this report.

Monroe
Continued from page 1

ship organization for LGBTQ rights, 29 recorded deaths of transgender people over 16 years-old polled in Georgia, Poland, Serbia, Spain and Sweden had considered taking their own lives and that 24.5 percent of respondents had made at least one attempt.

The community goes dark when a trans woman is killed. Since 2018 at least 26 have been shot or killed, ranging in ages 18-54.

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BU’s New LGBTQIA Task Force for Staff and Faculty

Cochairs talk about BU’s progress, their long-term goals, challenges to overcome

By Doug Most,
Courtney BU Today,
Boston University’s news website
Published on Nov. 26, 2018.

In an effort to make Boston University more LGBTQIA-inclusive for faculty and staff, a new task force has begun studying and collecting ideas about what other universities are doing, with the aim of drafting a plan for BU to improve programming, recruitment, retention, professional development, and network-building for the University community.

“This University has a complicated legacy and history around diversity issues,” says Judi Burgess, BU’s director of labor relations and cochair of the task force along with Karen Warkentin, a College of Arts & Sciences professor of biology and of women’s, gender, and sexuality studies.

“When I was hired, there was a point, maybe in my second year as a junior faculty, when the Gay Straight Alliance at BU Academy was banned,” Warkentin says. “Those situations sent a message that LGBTQ faculty and staff are not valued and not welcomed. It was like, ‘We want your work, but don’t want to know about your personal life and we consider it personal.’

It wasn’t acceptable to be a ‘whole person at work,’ Burgess adds.

Now, both women say, times have changed—dramatically.

“Our understanding of community at work, and the value of workforce diversity, has really shifted over a decade,” Warkentin says. “Different people with different life experiences and different perspectives bring value to the workplace and the environment, more creative solutions. And enabling people to be their whole selves at work increases their productivity. We want to send a message that all kinds of people are welcome here and valued here.”

A new website has been created to communicate with LGBTQIA faculty and staff and give them a way to communicate back to the task force. (Find details on the website about LGBTQIA@ Work, a series of community meetings, on November 27 and 28 on the Charles River Campus, and November 29 on the Medical Campus.)

“Among our highest priorities is the nurturing of an institutional culture that is welcoming and inclusive for all backgrounds, genders, and identities,” Jean Morrison, BU provost and chief academic officer, said. “There is always work that we can be doing in this regard, and it is incumbent on us to be introspective, to listen, and to collaborate within our community to produce the best working environment possible. I am confident and hopeful in this Task Force and its leadership to help answer a number of critical, often difficult questions and provide the guidance we need to fulfill our objective.”

Robert A. Brown, BU president, also addressed the issue in a pre-Thanksgiving letter to the BU community: “I believe that, given today’s political climate, we have a particular obligation to affirm our core values to members of the LGBTQIA community at Boston University. These members of our community are understandably concerned about potential discrimination resulting from reinterpretation of federal statutes.”

Burgess and Warkentin spoke about the significance and timing of the new task force and its goals in a conversation with BU Today. (For those unfamiliar with the final two letters of the acronym LGBTQIA, the “I” stands for “intersex” and the “A” stands for “asexual” or “allied.”)

Warkentin: Part of this mission of welcoming diversity was creating the position of associate provost for diversity and inclusion [Crystal Williams], who started last December. And one of the things she did last year was to have lunches. More than 100 people attended, and all of these people came together and looked at each other and stood around talking, and nobody touched the food. Some people were there as allies. And this was the first time I felt the University cared about who I was. That was an incredibly powerful thing. The second luncheon recently happened. It was very moving. This gave someone there a chance to come out. To see a gentleman say he is out, and is feeling joy, is a really powerful story.

Burgess: My experience has been different. As an openly gay woman of color with a wife and three children, it was incredibly important to have the support of the entire University, to feel welcome and accepted. We are so excited to make sure all employees at every level, top to bottom, across races and genders, are supported. It’s a great statement.

Warkentin: Our deliverable will be a report, with a set of recommendations, from within the University, as well as best practices from outside the University.

Burgess: We know there is strength in diversity. Our work is our students, but this will help create better research, better performance. It’s also great for the students to see that, hey, if I want to be a professor or an administrator at BU, I can be because BU welcomes me.

Warkentin: Most people understand LGBTQ. The “T” is trans, and we often think of sex as exclusively 100 percent male or female, but as a biology professor who is not how developmental biology works. There is a spectrum of human variation where people cannot be classified in either the male or female category. Intersex people have been pretty badly treated by society and the medical profession. “A” is asexual. We, like most societies, consider sexuality with other people to be a defining part of life, but that is not true for a lot of people. Allies need to feel welcome. A heterosexual person, or a cisgender person, whose identity matches their gender, and who doesn’t feel a sexual attraction with other people, they identify as asexual.

NH community rallies behind bullied student-athlete

By PAUL HAYES
Caledonian-Record

WHITEFIELD, N.H. (AP) — A week after a White Mountain girls basketball player was subjected to gender-based taunts, the community turned out to support her.

During the Spartans home opener Friday night, some teammates wore rainbow patches and some fans chucked rainbow flags in a show of solidarity with sophomore Lily Kenison, who is gay.

“There was a lot of support on the court, with my teammates and everybody in the crowd, it just felt great,” she said, noting she was apprehensive about being singled out for recognition. “I didn’t want to make it about me. I wanted to make it about everybody that goes through the same stuff as me.”

A week earlier, during White Mountains’ game at Newfound on Dec. 5, Kenison was heckled by a group of Newfound fans throughout the contest. They singled her out for her boyish appearance. That group, a mix of parents and students, started in the first quarter and never let up.

Kenison had heard the insults before, saying, “It’s not every game, but when I hear it I’m not surprised.” She ignored it. Backed by her coaches and teammates, she focused on the task at hand, and White Mountains won, 48-37.

Her mother, Heather, and brother, Kyler, were in attendance. Sitting out of earshot, they learned of the
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Book reflects on Rock Hudson’s stardom, closeted love life

By DOUGLASS K. DANIEL
Associated Press

"All That Heaven Allows: A Biography of Rock Hudson" (Harper), by Mark Griffin

Had Rock Hudson not died of AIDS in 1985, he might be best remembered as the most successful of the postwar male stars who got into the movies solely on their looks. He remained on the screen for decades because of a likability that can’t be learned or manufactured.

Instead, Hudson became the first celebrity to acknowledge that he suffered from the mysterious disease that seemed to target gay men. The potentially career-ending sexual secret he had protected was all but confirmed in the last months of his life.

Mark Griffin’s perceptive and sympathetic biography "All That Heaven Allows" gives Hudson, both the movie star and the man, the kind of reassessment only time can allow. He improved as an actor yet never lost the fear that moviegoers would discover that their ideal leading man was only playing a role.

While he needed time and experience to hone his craft, pretending for the cameras came easy to handsome, Illinois-born Roy Fitzgerald. Escaping reality at the Winnetka movie theater was a must for the boy with an overprotective and domineering mother, a father who walked out on the family, and a stepfather who beat him. Child-

hood friends remembered Roy for many of the same qualities that made him a favorite with fellow actors and film crews: diligence, generosity, easygoing charm and fun-loving spirit.

Living a closeted life and trying to make it as an actor only added to his insecurities. With his new name, Hudson appeared in more than two dozen films under contract to Universal between 1948 and 1954. Eager to learn, he blossomed under the direction of Douglas Sirk, whose romantic tearjerkers "Magnificent Obsession" (1954) and "All That Heaven Allows" (1955) turned Hudson into a heartthrob at 30.

With the hugely successful epic "Giant" (1956), Hudson was an Oscar-nominated actor and soon Hollywood’s most popular star. Rou-

mances—the paranoia classic "Seconds" (1966) being one example—came with roles in which he could identify with a character’s internal turmoil.

Wise, the writer explores Hudson’s films and TV shows without trying to make them more than what they were—generally average entertainments punctuated by occasional hits and many, many misses. (TV’s "McMillan & Wife" resuscitated his flagging career in the 1970s.) Like most other aging stars, Hudson struggled to find good roles as the wrinkles appeared. Alcohol and cigarettes took a toll on his health long before the AIDS diagnosis.

Given his generation’s intense homophobia and the 1950s communist witch hunt that ruined so many careers, it’s understandable that Hudson didn’t want to risk everything as a gay-rights pioneer. But he was indiscreet enough that his secret was widely known or assumed in Hol-

lywood and elsewhere (FBI and police files suggest as much). He occasionally heard gay epithets tossed his way, even when he attended the Los Angeles premiere of "Ice Station Zebra" (1968).

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ers show how protective they were of their warm, loyal friend. Had he lived into the next century, he might be best remembered as the most suc-

cessful of the postwar male stars who got into the movies solely on their looks. Imagine what might have been had Universal followed through on its original plan to cast Hudson as lawyer Atticus Finch in "To Kill a Mockingbird."

All the while Hudson lived and loved on the down-low. A sham marriage around the time of "Giant" quelled the gossip for a time. Publicly, he played along with the fan magazine image of the happy if lonely bachelor trying to find the right woman when he was actually trying to find the right man. Promiscuity as well as meaningful relationships marked his private life. Had Hudson been a straight star, he may have been married several times and envied as a ladies’ man.

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Indiana governor says passing hate crime law 'long overdue'

By BRIAN SLODYSKO and TOM DAVIES
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—The spray-painting of a swastika outside a suburban Indianapolis synagogue this summer was the final straw for Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb, who quickly called for Indiana to join the 45 states that have hate crime laws.

"It's not only the right thing to do, it's long overdue," Holcomb said Friday during an interview with The Associated Press. "I'm convinced the overwhelming majority of Hoosiers feel the same way."

As the annual legislative session draws near, though, some warn that such a proposal could spark a bitter cultural debate that would bring unwanted attention to the deeply conservative state, much like the 2015 religious objections law that critics widely panned as a sanctioning of discrimination against the LGBT community and that drew a stiff rebuke from big business.

"If this is a big, knock-down, drag-out, RFRA-esque discussion, it is not going to help anyone," said House Speaker Brian Bosma, using an acronym for 2015's Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which was signed into law by Vice President Mike Pence when he was Indiana governor. "We need to do it in such a way that's not a sanctioning of discrimination against the LGBT community and that drew a stiff rebuke from big business."

Another common refrain among lawmakers who oppose the idea is that it would target "thought crime." All crimes are bad, they say, regardless of what motivates them.

Holcomb says "nothing could be further from the truth." "You want to have a moronic thought ... that's your right," he said. "But when it becomes a criminal action, you've crossed the line."

For those who have received intimidating threats driven by hatred or bias, the issue is far less abstract than many critics portray.

Across the U.S., the number of reported hate crimes increased by about 17 percent in 2017, according to the FBI. In Indiana, the number has fluctuated in recent decades, ranging from about 200 words.

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Man sentenced in gay rights advocate’s fatal stabbing

RICHMOND, Va. (AP)—A man has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for the fatal stabbing of a man described as a pioneering gay rights advocate in Virginia.

The Richmond Times-Dispatch reports 56-year-old M. Wheeler told the judge Friday that he didn’t intend to kill 67-year-old Bruce M. Garnett in March 2017. Wheeler

--Continued from page 4

40 to over 100 crimes per year that would fit the description.

But those figures depend on how law enforcement agencies categorize crime, which can be subjective, and how many of them report their statistics to the FBI, which can fluctuate.

Indiana has a complicated history when it comes to prejudice and bigotry. The state was a stop along the Underground Railroad, but in the 1920s, local politics was dominated by the Ku Klux Klan, with some estimates indicating that one-quarter of the native-born white men were members.

In the 1960s, Indiana-born author and diplomat John Bartlow Martin described the state in a memo to Robert Kennedy as “suspicious of foreign entanglements, conservative in fiscal matters, and with a strong overlay of Southern segregationist sentiment,” according to Indiana historian Ray Boomhower.

Aside from the synagogue vandalism that prompted Holcomb to publicly call for a hate crime law, activists say graffiti swastikas have been appearing in more public places. Last year, a man pleaded guilty to battery after authorities say he attacked a woman in Bloomington while shouting racial slurs and trying to remove her headscarf.

And Matthew Heimbach, of Paoli, has become a prominent figure in the white nationalist movement, once spearheading a group that described itself as “fighting to secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.”

David Sklar, assistant director of the Indianapolis Jewish Community Relations Council, said the only reason anyone should worry about a hate crime is “is if you are a criminal.”

“Will passing a hate crime statute ultimately stop a hate crime from happening? Chances are probably not,” Sklar said. “But it is equally important to make sure that a person receives the right amount of jail time and for the state to say, ‘We will not tolerate these things and we will make our laws reflect that.’”

In turn, some in the community interpreted this as the school district denying gay pride patches. The social media response on Thursday night was strong and swift. A few players added the patches on their own, posting photos online.

Ultimately school administrators sat down with the team on Friday to revisit the patch proposal. Players promised the issue would not divide them, no matter who did and did not add the patches to their warm ups. The administration relented.

Speaking in a parents meeting before Friday’s game, WMR Principal Mike Berry said, “The girls looked us in the face today and said ‘It will not come between us.’ And we weren’t leaving that gym until I was convinced.”

Kenison’s mother said she was satisfied with the administration’s handling of the matter.

“I’ve had nothing but support from this high school (and) the administration and how they’ve dealt with Lily and how they take her under their wing,” said her mother. “They’ve been super supportive.”

Meanwhile, in the midst of the school’s internal discussions, Clare Brooks, owner of the Little Village Toy and Book Shop in Littleton, donated 150 rainbow flags which she and other volunteers

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billy masters

I've got way too much to share with you this week, so I'm gonna dive right in. I must make a confession—I've loved Arnetta Walker since I saw her get it doggie-style by Ray Sharkey in "Scenes from the Class Struggle in Beverly Hills". I know—that's a lot to take in (that's what she said!). So when the prolific Stan Zimmerman told me she was exhibiting and Christian McLaughlin's play "Yes, Virginia" at The Com-plexes in Hollywood, I had to go. Problem was, I had no free time. I couldn't go to a preview—

I had to bake lemon bars for a holiday party. I couldn't go to the opening night because I had my Well-Strung boys in their Christmas Show at the LA Gay & Lesbian Center (it was great, it was fabulous, we'll come back to them in the "Gift Giving" section).

The only possible time I could go was the Sun-day matinee. But it was gonna be tight since I was escorting Jenifer Lewis to "Divas Simply Singing" at 3PM. The play was at 3PM, and it was 90 minutes long. So I'd have time to meet and greet and do whatever else one does when meet-ing someone who you've seen getting it doggie-style (in addition to the sexual act, what makes that moment particularly memorable is Arnetta's comedic timing; as you'll see on BillyMasters.com). I loved the play, and Arnetta was a dream.

In fact, she holds the distinction of having played virtually every part in "Dreamgirls"—possibly including James "Thunder" Early! She is a versatile powerhouse who honed her skills in the theatre and took them to the big and small screen. She stars alongside Mindy Sterling, who I also love but I never saw get fucked in any position (why do I keep harping on this?). It was a privilege to see them both in this terrific play and in an in-terminate theatre. It runs through December 30th.

I then zipped over to "Divas" where, child, it was just pandemonium. Those people want their Jenifer Lewis, and they want her now. But, if they wanted a photo, they had to buy the book (the purple paperback of "The Mother of Black Hollywood" makes a GREAT Christmas gift). Jenifer sang. She carried on. She did some high notes for an essay that is only 15 pages long! It's a collection of pop songs fused with well-known classical pieces. Definitely check them out at Well-Strung.com.

If you want holiday music, my Broadway bud-dies Julia Murney and Max von Essen (who I told you will be headlining the upcoming national-tour of "Falsettos") recorded "O Holy Night" last year as a benefit for Covenant House. It's re-ally gorgeous, and I believe the money still goes to the organization. So grab it on Amazon for $0.99.

And since I mentioned Darlene Love earlier, here's something I didn't know—in addition to the legendary "The Phil Spector Christmas Album", she also recorded "It's Christmas, Of Course" a few years back. This isn't your typi-cal holiday CD—you won't find a classic carol here. These are all rock songs from people like James Brown, Stevie Wonder, and Tom Petty. A rockin' Christmas collection, definitely worth picking up.

When I'm dreaming of divas and dicks, it's definitely time to end yet another column. With the holidays fast upon us, you could find yourself needing a last-minute gift. Might I suggest a membership to www.BillyMasters.com—the site that'll keep you yanking all year long. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before San-ta stuffs your stocking—daggie-style. So, until next time, remember, one man's fifth is another man's bible.
pleaded guilty to second-degree murder.

Prosecutor Melissa Hoy said Wheeler and Gar- nett had known each other for 20 years, and had a relationship. She said Wheeler told investigators he was defending himself from Garnett during a dispute that turned physical.

Defense attorney Wayne Morgan said his cli- ent was remorseful, and commended Chesterfield Police for their investigation.

Garnett helped form Richmond’s Gay Rights Association and was credited as the first openly gay man to lobby the General Assembly.

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

Judge orders Idaho to give transgender inmate gender surgery

By REBECCA BOONE
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP)—A federal judge says Idaho must provide gender confirmation surgery to a transgender inmate who has been living as a woman for years but who has continuously been housed in a men’s prison.

Barring any appeals, under the ruling Adree Edmo will become the first Idaho inmate to receive gender confirmation surgery while in Idaho Department of Correction custody.

The ruling in Idaho’s U.S. District Court was handed down by Judge B. Lynn Winmill on Thursday. Winmill said the Idaho Department of Correction and Corizon’s refusal to provide Edmo with the surgery puts her at risk of irrepara-
able harm.

"For more than forty years, the Supreme Court has consistently held that consciously ignoring an prisoner’s serious medical needs amounts to cruel and unusual punishment in violation of the Eighth Amendment," Judge B. Lynn Winmill wrote in his ruling issued Thursday.

Edmo showed she had a serious medical need and that failure to treat her medical condition could result in significant further injury or the unnecessary and wanton infliction of pain, Winmill found. She also showed that prison officials were aware of and failed to respond to her pain and medical needs, causing her to suffer harm.

The state has six months to provide Edmo with the surgery, which will restructure her physi-
cal characteristics to match her gender identity. Idaho Department of Correction spokesman Jeff Ray said IDOC will be addressing some of the is-
sues raised by the ruling—including whether the state will appeal, and where Edmo will be housed after her surgery—in the days to come. There are currently 30 inmates with gender dysphoria in state custody, according to the ruling.

“I hope that this makes clear to IDOC and also to prison systems around the country that they can’t deny medically necessary care to transgen-
der prisoners—that is a requirement under our constitution,” said Amy Whelan, an attorney with the National Center for Lesbian Rights, which represented Edmo in the lawsuit. "They need to start evaluating people appropriately, and providing care to them."

Not all transgender people have gender dys-
phoria, Winmill noted in the ruling, and not all transgender people desire or need surgery to make their physical body match their gender identity. But for some, gender dysphoria—which occurs when the incongruity between a person’s assigned gender and their gender identity is so severe that it impairs their ability to function—can only be fully addressed through surgery.

Edmo had already undergone some treatment for her gender dysphoria, including long-term hormone therapy. She has also tried to present herself as feminine while incarcerated, modifying her undergarments, styling her hair and wearing makeup. Prison officials gave her disciplinary re-
ports for those actions, however, and as a result she was denied parole, according to the lawsuit.

Edmo testified that she feels depressed, embar-
rassed and disgusted by her male genitalia. Her gender dysmorphia was so severe that in 2015 she tried to remove her testicles using a disposable razor blade. She was unsuccessful at that time, though she continued to be troubled by thoughts of self-castration. In December 2016 she made another attempt, studying anatomy, boiling her razor blade in an attempt to make it sterile and managing to remove one of her testicles before she began to lose too much blood and called for help.

That’s when prison officials had her trans-
ported to a nearby hospital, where the testicle was repaired.

“I think the thing that makes this case so im-
portant is that this is a procedure that is necessary for some transgender inmates, and in fact is life-
saving care, but it’s almost universally denied and banned by prisons across the country,” Whelan said. “There is no state that I’m aware of that has ever provided the surgery without being ordered by a court to do so.”

Winmill also noted that Corizon, the Brent-
wood, Tennessee-based private company that handles medical care for inmates in Idaho and 21 other states, has never provided gender confirmation surgery at any of its facilities in the United States.