2018 in Review
New England

January
Ex-Senate President Stan Rosenberg separates from husband
By STEVE LeBLANC Associated Press

BOSTON (AP)—Former Senate President Stan Rosenberg announced that he has separated from his husband Byron Hefner amid an ongoing investigation into whether Rosenberg or his staff violated Senate rules in connection with allegations of sexual misconduct against Hefner. Rosenberg told reporters Thursday that Hefner is getting treatment for alcohol dependency. He declined to offer details. "That's personal and he is getting treatment for alcohol that he needs and that's about all that can be said about that," Rosenberg said. The Amherst Democrat last month stepped aside as Senate president—at least temporarily—from the Legislature, told The Boston Globe they had been sexually abused by Hefner.

Officials say transgender woman should stay at men’s prison

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — House lawmakers voted in March to expand New Hampshire’s anti-discrimination law to include transgender people after supporters appealed to both their sense of fairness and fiscal responsibility. The bill would ban discrimination in housing, employment and public accommodations based on gender identity in addition to the protections that already exist based on race, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability and sexual orientation. It passed 195-129 and now goes to the Senate. Lawmakers tabled a virtually identical bill last year, leaving New Hampshire the only New England state without such protections.

Nantucket police officer honored for suicide prevention efforts

By Jeff Coakley

On Tuesday, March 12, in the Great Hall of the Massachusetts State House, Nantucket police sergeant Kevin Marshall was among five individuals honored for suicide prevention efforts.

March
NH House approves prohibiting trans discrimination
By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

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Amelia Gapin works out while preparing to run the Boston Marathon during an early morning jog in Jersey City, New Jersey, who is registered for this year’s race.

Hefner pleads not guilty to assault, harassment charges

Associated Press

BOSTON — The estranged husband of former Massachusetts Senate President Stan Rosenberg looks forward to defending himself in court after pleading not guilty Tuesday to charges that he sexually assaulted or harassed several men, according to his lawyer. Bryon Hefner, 30, was released on personal recognizance after making his first court appearance since being indicted by a grand jury last month. He was ordered to stay away from the alleged victims and from the Statehouse, where Rosenberg has been a lawmaker for more than 30 years and served as the Senate leader for almost three years before stepping aside in December amid the allegations against Hefner. Hefner answered not guilty to 10 counts of sexual assault, distributing nude photos without consent and criminal lewdness. His lawyer, Tracy Miner, distributed a brief statement saying Hefner would defend himself in court, "where accusers cannot

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BGMC participates in the annual Youth Day march. Photo by TC Collins

May

Stan Rosenberg to quit Senate after scathing ethics report

By Bob Salsberg
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Former Massachusetts Senate President Stan Rosenberg announced Thursday he would end his long political career after a scathing ethics report concluded he failed to protect the Senate from his husband, who has been charged with sexual misconduct.

The decision to resign came amid mounting calls, including several from his Democratic colleagues, for the Amherst Democrat to resign. He stepped down from the presidency in December when allegations first surfaced against his husband, Bryon Hefner. The couple has since separated.

In a statement, Rosenberg said he was leaving the Senate because he no longer had the authority to fully represent the interests of his constituents. He noted the report, released Wednesday, found no evidence that he violated any Senate rules, no evidence he was aware of any alleged sexual assaults by Hefner, nor that Hefner asserted any influence over his actions while Senate leader.

June

Boston Gay Men’s Chorus marched with South African President

Submitted by BGMC

The Boston Gay Men’s Chorus (BGMC) accepted an invitation and marched with South
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The holiday season with its social obligations and reminders of absent friends brings its special tensions. After a hectic day, self-care guides me home. A warm robe, herbal tea, and quiet reflection are restorative. Before heading out earlier I sent an inquiry to the outpost of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in Nairobi on behalf of a suffering gay Ugandan. He wrote to me thanks from the hospital where he was treated for injuries from a police assault during a peaceful protest days before.

On Dec. 11, DC Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton wrote to UN High Commissioner Filippo Grandi in Geneva urging him to investigate the mistreatment of Ugandan LGBT refugees in Kenya. I stopped by her office on Capitol Hill the next day to thank her. In 1964, she went to Mississippi for Freedom Summer to register African-American voters, an effort from which some volunteers never returned. She knows the price of freedom as only veterans of the struggle can. As a standard courtesy, her letter to Grandi was copied to Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, despite the unlikelihood of a sympathetic reception, as illustrated by Pompeo’s insulting visit to Brussels the previous week.

“Cast your bread upon the waters,” wrote Ecclesiastes, “for you will find it after many days.... In the morning sow your seed, and at evening withhold not your hand, for you do not know which will prosper, this or that....”

A British colleague who also advocates for the displaced Africans writes to me about a teenage couple, one of them transgender, who need help. There is anti-gay and anti-trans bias among some of the Kenyans working for UNHCR. An American regime that seeks to erase trans people at home will not speak up for a 14-year-old trans girl waiting with her boyfriend outside UNHCR’s office in Nairobi. So my colleague and I do.

You have to steel yourself for this kind of work. There are many more in need than you can help. If you be- grudge yourself every moment of relaxation, you can damage your own well-being and end up no good to any- one. The world is great and you are small. Make a few ripples where you are, and see where they travel.

There will be plenty of opportunities in 2019. The Trump regime has damaged everything from diplomacy to environmental protection to the rule of law to American values. Rapacity has replaced stewardship, fear has replaced inspiration, and spit has replaced cooperation. Migrant children are still dying at our southern border. The GOP still threatens the healthcare of 17 million people. Right-wing ideologues are still packing federal courts.

Mark Harris, a homophobic and transphobic minister and Republican candidate for Congress in North Carolina’s ninth district, hired a convicted felon to help him win. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker on Dec. 14 signed legislation stripping powers from Tony Evers, the Democrat he beat. Republicans are branding themselves as cheaters and sore losers.

Tyrants consider their assertions the only evidence that matters. Journalist Jamal Khabsoggi was murdered for daring that, and Trump’s embrace of his murderer despite damning intelligence makes us complicit.

A Greek proverb says that a society grows great when old men plant trees in whose shade they will never sit. Trump’s unconcern for a projected national debt spike because “I won’t be here” confirms his vaunted national greatness as empty sloganeering. We who deplore Trumpism have not only reality on our side, but a more compelling narrative.

The importance of narrative was illustrated in 2018 by gifted young filmmaker Ryan Coogler. His epic movie Black Panther conjures the mythical African nation of Wakanda, untouched by colonialism, with advanced technology and children who grow up with an expectation of success. Beautifully designed and cast from across the African diaspora, it soars.

Confidence is invigorating. After American voters elected women in record numbers, once-and-future House Speaker Nancy Pelosi’s deft Oval Office sparring with Trump gave a bracing preview of the battles ahead.

Americans have faced challenges before. If we can only connect with our diverse citizenry we can defeat the ni- hilist in the White House, on whom Robert Mueller is slowly closing in.

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

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LGBTQ Parenting Year in Review

Part 1

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com

Contributing Writer

LGBTQ parents and our children faced significant challenges to equality and inclusion in 2018—but there was still some progress. Here are the highlights of the year, both good and bad.

The continued spread of religious exemption laws: Kansas, Oklahoma, and South Carolina this year joined Alabama, Michigan, Mississippi, North Dakota, South Dakota, Texas, and Virginia in allowing adoption and foster care agencies to cite religious beliefs or moral convictions as reasons to reject otherwise qualified parents, including those who are LGBTQ. Most also allow discrimination against LGBTQ children in care, which could mean placing them with a family that does not support their LGBTQ identity.

On the federal level, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) in January announced a rule that allows health care workers to cite religious or moral beliefs as reasons to refuse medical services. A new division within its Office for Civil Rights will enforce it. The rule targets medical procedures, including abortion, sterilization, and assisted suicide, but Julie Kruse, federal policy advocate at Family Equality Council, said in an inter- view that HHS’ language and actions seem to indicate they intend the division to oversee all of HHS’ activities, including human services such as adoption and foster care.

In one promising sign, however, Kansas Governor-elect Laura Kelly said she would have her staff review the Kansas law to see if there is any way to block its enforce- ment. Additionally, in July, a U.S. district court ruled that Philadelphia can require religiously affiliated foster care agencies with city contracts to follow its LGBTQ-inclusive non-discrimination policies. And the U.S. House in September rejected an amendment to an appropriations bill that would have permitted religiously-based discrimi- nation in child services nationwide.

“Vulgarly acknowledged of parentage” (VAP) forms: Five states—California, Massachusetts, Nevada, Vermont, and Washington—took action this year to al- low a birth parent and the other parent of any gender to complete a simple, free form at the hospital, making them both legal parents with the full force of a court order (un- like a birth certificate). VAPs are “a real game-changer for LGBTQ parents,” GLAD Senior Staff Attorney Patience Crozier told me. In theory, they will eliminate the need for often expensive and intrusive second-parent adop- tions, but both Crozier and Cathy Sakimura, deputy di- rector and family law director at the National Center for Lesbian Rights, still advise same-sex parents in all states to get second parent adoptions, too, until more states have recognized VAPs. (Note also that Washington’s VAP for same-sex couples will start in early 2019 and California’s in 2020; and unlike the other states, Massachusetts cur- rently only allows them for unmarried couples.)

State Supreme Court Rulings: Lacking the clarity that a VAP would have provided, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruled in September against a woman who sought partial custody of a child her former same-sex partner gave birth to when the women were still together. They never married or did a second-parent adoption. The Court found that the plaintiff did not “assume a parental status or discharge parental duties” and the presumption that both members of a married couple are parents to a child birthed by one of them did not apply.

On the other side, the Hawaii Supreme Court in Oc- tober upheld a lower court ruling that said a nonbiological mother is a parent to the child she and her former spouse had through assisted reproduction. And the Mississippi Supreme Court in May ruled that a formerly married nonbiological mother was a full le- gal parent, reversing a lower court decision that said she could not be one because the couple’s anonymous sperm donor constituted “an absent father.”

Election and public office firsts: Over three dozen LG- BTQ parents (and one of our children) ran for office this year at all levels of government and at least 20 won. They include Jared Polis, the first openly gay man—and gay dad—to win a governorship (Colorado); Angie Craig, the first lesbian mom to win election to Congress (Min- nesota), and Zach Wahls, the first person with LGBTQ parents to win state office (Iowa State Senate). Christine Hallquist was the first transgender person and trans per- son to win a gubernatorial primary for a major party, but ultimately lost her race (Vermont).

Mary Rowland, the only openly LGBTQ person among Trump’s more than 150 judicial nominees, be- came a judge in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois. She has two grown children.

Look for Part 2 next week.

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

**SALE BEGINS DECEMBER 27TH • SALE ENDS DECEMBER 31ST**

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Yeah, obviously it’s our year in review. And while I typically wouldn’t go to the death topic so early, I’m still mourning the loss of Bob Smith. For those who don’t know, Bob was the first openly gay comedian to appear on “The Tonight Show”. As a writer, his work will live on. While his body betrayed him as he fought ALS, his mind was as sharp as ever. We still exchanged emails till the end, and I was a faithful reader of this column and one of my champions. Thank you, Bob, for opening the door for so many of us. You are missed and remembered.

Of course, it’s entirely possible Aretha’s funeral is still going on. But more gossip-worthy is that Whitney is still making headlines six years after her death. In the documentary “Whitney”, it was alleged that Houstoun was sexually molested by her cousin, Dee Dee Warwick – Dionne Warwick’s sister. Houstoun supposedly told people about the molestation – including her assistant. Corroborating it, Whitney’s brother Gary says he, too, was sexually molested by Dee Dee. But, Dionne is having none of it. She told Larry King, “First of all, it’s totally hogwash. My sister would never, ever have done anything to do any harm to any child, especially within our family. And for those lies to be perpetuated in this so-called documentary film, I think it’s evil. I will never, and I mean this, ever forgive those who perpetuated this insanity.” So I guess that’s why I haven’t gotten a Christmas card this year.

Not all scandals happen between dead people. Take Kim Cattrall and Sarah Jessica Parker… please. One must give Cattrall credit – unlike most celebs who smile and say everything is fine, she told Piers Morgan that the two were never friends and Parker could have been “nicer”. Parker, from the Barbara Walters school of celebrity, said the comments left her “heartbroken”. When Cattrall’s brother died, Parker posted this on Instagram: “Dearest Kim, my love and condolences to you and yours and Godspeed to your beloved brother. Xx”. Cattrall fired back: “I don’t need your love or support at this tragic time @sarahjessicaparker”. To make sure there was no confusion, Kim then wrote: “My mom asked me today ‘When will that @sarahjessicaparker, that hypocrite, leave you alone?’ Your continuous reaching out is a painful reminder of how cruel you really were then and now. Let me make this VERY clear. (If I haven’t already) You are not my family. You are not my friend. So I’m writing to tell you one last time to stop exploiting our tragedy in order to restore your ‘nice girl’ persona.” So, no “Sex and the City 5”?

Was anyone surprised when Garrett Clayton came out? Hands, No one. Then Jaden Smith said that Tyler, The Creator is not only his best friend, but his boyfriend. Correction, his “motherfucking boyfriend”. Tyler denies it.

A bit of history was made this year when a trans woman was crowned Miss Spain. This made Angela Ponce the first trans woman in the Miss Universe Pageant. And speaking of firsts, Daniel Hall and Vincent Franchino became the first same-sex active-duty soldiers to get married at West Point. Congratulations to all.

For a while, it looked like Russell Tovey would be heading down the aisle. He announced his engagement to rugby player Steve Brock. “Completely unexpected but very very happy and looking forward to having a proper party to celebrate when back in London”. Then we learned that Brockman had done gay porn under the name Ryan Stack – which I’d put in the “pro” column… in more ways than one. A few months later, someone Tweeted Russell asking if he was still with Brockman. “No darling,” was the terse response.

Tovey wasn’t the only one unlucky in love. The year saw the breakup of Anderson Cooper and Benjamin Maisani. “We are still family to each other, and love each other very much. We remain the best of friends, and will continue to share much of our lives together.” This announcement came days after Cooper was seen squiring around a 33-year-old radiologist from Dallas named Victor Lopez. As luck would have it, Cooper’s best buddy Andy Cohen announced that he too was suddenly single, having broken up with Harvard grad student Clifton Dassancan.

I would need a full column to really go over all the details of the Colton Haynes and Jeff Leatham marriage. In fact, I’m exhausted before I even start recounting it. So, let’s just encapsulate. Boy meets boy. Boy proposes to boy. Boy marries boy. Boy records a song called “Man It Sucks”. Boy files for divorce from other boy. Boy flies to Vancouver to surprise boy on boy’s birthday. Boy and boy are back together. Did you follow that? Good.

When I started this column over two decades ago, no one talked of gays having children – unless one was referencing the age gap. Now, Neil Patrick Harris and David Burtka are going on family vacations with Elton John and David Furnish. Lance Bass and Michael Turchin are talking about having kids, but I think that’s just to get an invite from Elton. When asked if he was going to have another kid with Jeremiah Brent, Nate Berkus said, “I’ve been trying and I just can’t get pregnant.” Thus ends another spirited round of “Who’s the bottom?”

Tom Daley and Dustin Lance Black just had a kid – so I guess that ties in the old and new definition of gays and children. In fact, we’re about to tie in the topic of bottoms. There is a photo which is purportedly Tom Daley nude and on all fours (and I’d bet what’s left of my reputation that it’s real). Then stills from a sex tape circulated which allegedly show Daley bottoming for a buff bald bloke (side note – it was pointed out to me that alliteration is an early sign of dementia). Tom Daley and Dustin Lance Black just had a kid – so I guess that ties in the old and new definition of gays and children. In fact, we’re about to tie in the topic of bottoms. There is a photo which is purportedly Tom Daley nude and on all fours (and I’d bet what’s left of my reputation that it’s real). Then stills from a sex tape circulated which allegedly show Daley bottoming for a buff bald bloke (side note – it was pointed out to me that alliteration is an early sign of dementia). Tom Daley and Dustin Lance Black just had a kid – so I guess that ties in the old and new definition of gays and children. In fact, we’re about to tie in the topic of bottoms. There is a photo which is purportedly Tom Daley nude and on all fours (and I’d bet what’s left of my reputation that it’s real). Then stills from a sex tape circulated which allegedly show Daley bottoming for a buff bald bloke (side note – it was pointed out to me that alliteration is an early sign of dementia).
Masters

Continued from page 6

at Sydney Mardi Gras, the musical about her life opened in Chicago, she appeared in "Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again", she released a CD of ABBA covers, "The Cher Show" opened on Broadway, and she got the Kennedy Center Honor. That's a lot of work for someone who's barely awake a couple of hours a day! And it sounds like 2019 is gonna be just as busy. She's allegedly working on a second compilation of ABBA songs and has signed a deal to write her autobiography. And if that's not enough, try this on for size—it's the musical about her wins a Tony Award (and that's a big “it”), she would join the hallowed halls of EGOT winners.

Other things to look forward to in 2019—there's a 20th anniversary sequel to the film "Trick" in pre-production. Rosie O'Donnell swears that she will star as Mrs. Brice in a Broadway revival of "Funny Girl" starring Lady Gaga. And Faye Dunaway will appear as Katharine Hepburn in a limited run of the play "Tea at Five" on the Great White Way. I think only one of these has a snowball's chance in hell of happening—but time will tell.

Of course, I'm known for nudes. The "you couldn't even put your hand on somebody's shoulder," he said. "Everyone just sat tight with their hands in front of them hoping not to get kicked out."

Brazier—who was also known to be straight—defended her clientele, offering them protection from the hate and abuse outside her hole-in-the-wall.

"She had a way about her," Peek says. "You just felt at home right away. She helped a lot of people who were thrown in jail, picked up by the police at one of the bars.

"She would bail them out and never expect to be repaid. She was an amazing women. A powerhouse."

Jett sold The Jungle in 1960 after his brother, Jeff's next breakup (as we go to press, I promise to get back to you before Colton and Jeff's next breakup (as we go to press, we hear the next installment is "boy serves younger boy with divorce papers"). So, until next year, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

This Week's National Briefs

Nashville's first gay bars remembered with historical marker

By JESSICA BLISS
The Tennessean

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP)—On a wild stretch of Commerce Street, next door to Ira’s Barber Shop and just blocks from Ryman Auditorium, stood a pair of unique bars surrounded by a slew of beer dives.

Dimly lit and filled with cigarette smoke, The Jungle was a one-room club with a grill where cocktails were mixed and a piano often inspired a round of singalongs.

The restaurant had a straight clientele during the day for lunch—but in the evening, it morphed into a gay bar.

Next door, Juanita’s, a skinny, shotgun-style joint with only a handful of tables, served as The Jungle’s sister establishment.

It was the first bar Jerry Peek ever went into. It’s also where he met his partner, Joe, 47 years ago. In the 1960s, at a time when same-sex relationships were considered unlawful, it was a welcoming place where gay men in Nashville could hang out together.

"They both gave our circle a place to go where you felt safe," Peek says. "It was a rough time, but it was also a wonderful time for people like myself who were coming out."

Recently, the Metro Historical Commission unveiled a plaque recognizing The Jungle and Juanita’s as the city’s first gay bars.

Though the bars have long since been demolished, the place where they stood on the corner of Commerce and Seventh will now be permanently marked for passers-by, remembering an era when police raids and arrests sometimes ended in violence against the LGBTQ community.

"Gay people coming up today, they don’t know what it was like back then," says Peek, who is 76. "And this will give them a little bit of history."

John Bridges’ first boyfriend took him to The Jungle in the 1970s. It was a spot they stopped at before heading to The Warehouse on Franklin Road to dance the night away.

"Of course, you couldn’t be out in public," Bridges says. "There was just no way."

Gay men caught holding hands out in the open would be handcuffed and hustled downtown and possibly jailed if they didn’t make ball. But once inside The Jungle, with the doors shut behind them to the outside world, men found friendship and love.

"People went there so they could be themselves," Bridges says.

It was Bridges, a Nashville writer and author, who led the research effort to get a historical marker downtown. "The story behind these two bars is fascinating," he says.

It starts with Warren Jett—a straight man—who had been running bars all over downtown for years. He opened The Jungle in 1952, and a few years later, he hired Juanita Brazier to run the little sliver of a space next door, then called The Leopard.

Miss Juanita, as she was known to her customers, had been waiting tables around town. In 1955, she got her own beer license, and renamed the place after herself, opening it the next year. It’s hard to say when the two bars became a gay hangout, but by the 1960s, they were a favorite spot for white men—and a target for law enforcement.

Peck remembers being there when police came into the bar.

At the time, men weren’t allowed to touch—"you couldn’t even put your hand on somebody’s shoulder," he said. "Everyone just sat tight with their hands in front of them hoping not to get kicked out."

Brazier—who was also known to be straight—defended her clientele, offering them protection from the hate and abuse outside her hole-in-the-wall.

"She had a way about her," Peek says. "You just felt at home right away. She helped a lot of people who were thrown in jail, picked up by the police at one of the bars.

"She would bail them out and never expect to be repaid. She was an amazing women. A powerhouse."

Jett sold The Jungle in 1960 after his brother, Leslie E. Jett, was elected sheriff.

The sheriff led his men on multiple bar raids downtown, as did the police force.

In 1963, 27 men were arrested at Juanita’s for "disorderly conduct," a term police used at the time for same-sex activity. A patrolman testified there was much "lewd and boisterous" conversation, according to an article in "The Tennessean" in April of that year.

Gay men continued to gather at both bars un-
Continued from page 7

til 1983, when the block was leveled to widen the street and make room for the Renaissance Hotel.

The historical marker, which was funded by the H. Franklin Brooks Fund of the Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee, will be only the second in the city that mentions Nashville's LG-BTQ community.

The first was installed a year ago recognizing the work of gay rights and mental health advocate Penny Campbell, daughter of civil rights activist Will Campbell. She was the lead plaintiff in Campbell v. Sundquist (1996), which overturned a law criminalizing private, consensual, sexual acts between same-sex adults.

“It’s history that we haven’t commemorated in any way,” Tim Walker, executive director of the Metro Historical Commission, said of the LG-BTQ-focused historical markers. “This is part of the commission’s work to make sure all aspects of our history are being recognized.”

Today, gay bars are less clandestine. Pride parades march jubilantly down city streets, with rainbows splashed across flags, balloons and painted faces. Same-sex marriage is legal.

“We live in a society that is just the same for me as it is for my next-door neighbor. I don’t feel persecuted or like the police are going to bother me.”

But, he says, reminders of what came before remain significant for all people. “I just think they should know that we’re here.”

Bridges agrees.

“The world has changed,” he says, “but it hasn’t changed for everybody. It’s still not all fixed.”


Proposed Denver conversion therapy ban for minors advances

DENVER (AP)—Denver’s City Council will soon consider a ban on psychotherapy that seeks to change the sexual orientation of minors.

Denver’s Safety, Housing, Education and Homeless Committee voted Wednesday to send the proposal to the full council.

Psychology’s governing bodies have denounced conversion therapy, which treats being gay or transgender as a mental illness. Research shows it can increase the risk of suicide, drug abuse and depression among teens.

Committee members say they would need to create a reporting and enforcement system for a ban. State-licensed practitioners found in violation would face fines.

KUSA-TV has reported that Mayor Michael Hancock’s office is unaware of anyone practicing conversion therapy in the city or county of Denver.

ACL sues Louisiana library over Drag Queen Story Hour ban

By JANET McCONNAUGHEY

Associated Press

The ACLU of Louisiana filed suit Friday against a public library to end its ban on any program in which men in drag read to children.

Reserving a meeting room requires people to sign a form saying they won’t use the library for such purposes, Amber “Aimee” Robinson of Lafayette and Matthew Humphrey of Youngsville, who want to organize such an event at the Lafayette Public Library, say in the lawsuit.

“Lafayette library officials have imposed a gag order on their patrons,” said Katie Schwartzmann, legal director for ACLU of Louisiana.

The suit was filed in federal district court in Lafayette, about 120 miles (190 kilometers) west of New Orleans.

“Kids who are different have to know it’s okay, and kids who aren’t different have to know it’s okay for other kids to be different. That’s what Drag Queen Story Time is all about,” Humphrey said in an ACLU news release.

He and Robinson are both members of a group called Acadiana Supporters of Drag Queen Story Time, which is not part of Drag Queen Story Hour and wants to use a library meeting room to plan its own event, Schwartzmann said.

She said the library began using the form after it was sued to stop plans for the story hour by people claiming “transgenderism” is a religion.

The library had agreed not to plan a Drag Queen Story Hour while the suit was in court, but what it’s doing goes beyond that agreement, according to the ACLU lawsuit.

The earlier 58-page suit identifies Aaron Guidry and five other plaintiffs as members of groups called Warriors for Christ and Special Forces of Liberty, an “ardent tax lobbyist.” Two plaintiffs, Grace Harley and Whitney Kohl, are described as “a former transgender activist” and “a former self-identified lesbian activist” who now consider themselves polygamists.

The lawsuit states, “The Plaintiffs object to self-identified transgenders exploiting the state’s endorsement of their religious ideology in an government endorsed effort to brainwash and indoctrinate minors to a religious worldview on sex, faith, truth, gender, morality, and marriage in a manner that excessively entangles the government with the religion of postmodern-western-individualistic-moral relativism—referred to mainly by the Plaintiffs and the United States Supreme Court as ‘Secular Humanism.’ By endorsing transgenderism in the manner complained of the city of Lafayette is relegating Christians to second class citizens.”

The claim that letting men in drag read storybooks amounts to endorsing religion is “totally nonsensical factual and legal theory,” Schwartzmann said in a telephone interview Friday.

That lawsuit should be dismissed as frivolous, said attorney Susan Ferguson, who filed the case.

“The charges stemmed from an incident last summer in which Sovenski was filmed in a McDonald’s parking lot screaming obscenities and slurs at teenagers in a church youth group.

“Deputy prosecutor Arthur Verharen said Sovenski yelled racist and homophobic remarks at the teenagers and their adult supervisors.

“Defense attorney Michael Palmer said Sovenski was dealing with family issues including his wife’s health—he had just completed her ninth shoulder surgery—as well as on-the-job stress when he stopped for beers before heading to McDonald’s.

“District Judge Scott Wayman called for a sentencing hearing within 30 days of Thursday’s verdict.


Man found not guilty of committing hate crime

COEUR D’ALENE, Idaho (AP)—An Idaho man accused of a felony hate crime has been acquitted.

The Coeur d’Alene Press reports a jury on Thursday found 52-year-old Richard Sovenski, of Hayden, not guilty of malicious harassment, but guilty of a misdemeanor charge of battery.

The charges stemmed from an incident last summer in which Sovenski was filmed in a McDonald’s parking lot screaming obscenities and slurs at teenagers in a church youth group.

Deputy prosecutor Arthur Verharen said Sovenski yelled racist and homophobic remarks at the teenagers and their adult supervisors.

Defense attorney Michael Palmer said Sovenski was dealing with family issues including his wife’s health—he had just completed her ninth shoul- der surgery—as well as on-the-job stress when he stopped for beers before heading to McDonald’s.

District Judge Scott Wayman called for a sentencing hearing within 30 days of Thursday’s verdict.

February

Bermuda trades same-sex marriage for domestic partnerships

HAMILTON, Bermuda (AP)—Legislation replacing same-sex marriage with domestic partnerships in Bermuda was signed into law by the governor Wednesday as critics called it an unprecedented rollback of civil rights in the British island territory. Minister of Home Affairs Walton Brown said the legislation signed by Gov. John Rankin seeks to balance opposition to same-sex marriage on the socially conservative island while complying with European court rulings that ensure recognition and protection for same-sex couples in the territory. Bermuda’s Senate and House of Assembly passed the legislation by wide margins in December and a majority of voters opposed same-sex marriage in a referendum.

September

India’s Supreme Court strikes down law that punished gay sex

By ASHOK SHARMA
Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP)—India’s Supreme Court on Thursday struck down a colonial-era law that made gay sex punishable by up to 10 years in prison, a landmark victory for gay rights that one judge said would “pave the way for a better future.” The 1861 law, a relic of Victorian England that hung on long after the end of British colonialism, was a weapon used to discriminate against India’s gay community, the judges ruled in a unanimous decision.
2018 in Review
Continued from page 2

African President Cyril Ramaphosa and Gauteng Province Premier David Makhura during the country’s annual ceremonies marking Youth Day. Youth Day is a South African public holiday commemorating the June 16, 1976 Soweto uprising by students and others that sparked the political movement that eventually led to the end of Apartheid. Details of BGMC’s participation in Youth Day were finalized amid controversy sparked after Mayor Melvin Naik of George, located in the Western Cape Province of South Africa, declared during a radio interview June 12 that the concert planned by BGMC did not carry his approval as mayor. The Chorus had been invited months ago by civic and community leaders to perform in George and to also participate in the town’s first Pride parade, which Mayor Naik has acknowledged will go forward.

July

MA House approves “gay conversion therapy” ban
By STEVE LEBLANC
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP)—The Massachusetts House has overwhelmingly approved a bill that would ban so-called “gay conversion therapy” for minors. The bill passed on a 137-14 vote in July. Supporters of the ban say the therapy, which aims to alter a person’s sexual orientation, is widely discredited by medical and mental health associations. They say the therapy is premised on the belief that being LGBTQ is an illness that needs to be cured. Supporters say the therapy can lead to depression and suicide in young people.

Maine Gov. LePage vetoes ‘conversion therapy’ bill

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP)—Maine Republican Gov. Paul LePage has vetoed a bill that would ban so-called “ conversion therapy” for minors. The bill passed on a 3-17-14 vote in July. Supporters of the ban say the therapy, which aims to alter a person’s sexual orientation, is widely discredited by medical and mental health associations. They say the therapy is premised on the belief that being LGBTQ is an illness that needs to be cured. Supporters say the therapy can lead to depression and suicide in young people.

MaineGov. LePagevetoes ‘conversion therapy’ bill

August

Hefner’s Accusers Will Remain Anonymous, Rules Judge

BOSTON (AP)—The identities of those who cooperated with a state Senate investigation into assault allegations against Bryan Hefner, husband of former Senate President Stan Rosenberg, will remain anonymous, a Massachusetts judge ruled Monday.

Superior Court Judge William Sullivan said in his decision that the witnesses did not come forward willingly in the Senate investigation and that Rosenberg “knew or was aware” his husband posed a risk to Senate staffers.

November

MA voters uphold trans rights law
By BOB SALSBERG
Associated Press

BOSTON (AP)—Massachusetts voters supported a state law that protects transgender people from discrimination in public accommodations, including bathrooms and locker rooms, rejecting efforts by opponents to repeal the 2-year-old law in the first statewide referendum in the U.S. on transgender rights. Supporters of the law had feared a vote to repeal would prompt a wave of similar efforts to roll back protections in other states. Massachusetts was the first to legalize gay marriage and is viewed as one of the most LGBT-friendly states.

Pappas Wins, Is NH’s First Gay Congressman
By MICHAEL CASEY
Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — New Hampshire will have its first openly gay member of Congress, after Democrat Chris Pappas narrowly defeated Republican Eddie Edwards. President Donald Trump loomed large in the 1st Congressional race, with Donald Trump Jr. calling on voters to support Edwards days ahead of the election and Trump surrogate Rudy Giuliani campaigning with him Monday. Pappas, for his part, worked to present himself as a bipartisan voice for New Hampshire and said he would serve as a check on Trump and the Republicans in Washington. He also said he would work to fight against Trump policies that discriminate against the LGBT community, including making transgender service members feel unwelcome.

CONCORD, Mass. (AP)—The estranged husband of former Massachusetts Senate President Stan Rosenberg has pleaded guilty to placing harassing phone calls to a treatment facility where he was a patient.

The aide alleged he had been sexually assaulted by Hefner and that Rosenberg “knew or was aware” his husband posed a risk to Senate staffers.

By Bryan Bishop. Credit: Michael Dwyer, Associated Press

Activist to star as TV’s first trans superhero

BURBANK, Calif. (AP)—A transgender activist who won a discrimination lawsuit after her school refused to let her use the girls’ bathroom will be TV’s first transgender superhero. Nicole Maines will star in The CW/ Warner Bros.’ “Supergirl” as Nia Nal, aka Dreamer. Producers describe her character as a “soulful young transgender woman with a fierce drive to protect others.” Maines gained national attention for her battle against her Orono, Maine school district over her right to use the girls’ bathroom. Maine’s highest court ruled in 2014 that school officials violated state antidiscrimination law when they required her to use a staff restroom. It was the first time a state high court concluded that a transgender person should use the bathroom of the gender with which they identify.

By Nicole Maines. Photo by Associated Press

MARYR

By Bryan Bishop. Credit: Michael Dwyer, Associated Press

Constitutionally Based Case

BOSTON (AP)—A former state Senate aide has dropped his lawsuit against the former president of the Massachusetts Senate and his husband.

Mitchell Garabedian, a lawyer for the man known in court papers as John Doe, said Thursday he formally notified Suffolk Superior Court that his client was voluntarily withdrawing the suit against former Sen. Stan Rosenberg and By-
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