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8 Back-to-School Resources for LGBTQ Parents

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

Sending our kids off to school always brings a certain amount of trepidation. Will they learn? Make friends? Grow emotionally? For LGBTQ parents, our concerns are also often tied up with how welcoming our schools and communities are to LGBTQ families and individuals. You're not alone, though, and the number of school-related resources to support our families keeps growing. Here are a few that everyone should know, either to educate themselves or to share with teachers, administrators, and others.

Welcoming Schools (welcomingschools.org): This project of the HRC Foundation uses an intersectional, anti-racist lens to provide LGBTQ and gender-inclusive professional development training, lesson plans, book lists, anti-bullying resources, and more. The program has its roots in volunteer work done by Greater Boston PFLAG and GLSEN Boston back in 2004, and remains the best first place for LGBTQ parents to educate themselves and to refer their children's teachers, particularly (but not exclusively) in the elementary grades.

GLSEN (glsen.org): Founded by a group of teachers in 1990, GLSEN offers original research and resources for teachers and students (much of which can also be helpful to parents), and engages in advocacy on their be-

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 4*

It's Kamala or chaos

Fascism doesn't sit well in US

by Richard J. Rosendall | rrosendall@starpower.net
contributing writer

One good reason to vote in this year's election is to prevent Trump's MAGA nonsense from metastasizing into government policy.

For all their talk of freedom, Trump partisans are eager to weaponize government against everyone who doesn't look and think like them. They claim the Department of Justice has been weaponized against Trump by the Biden administration, despite Biden having bent over backwards not to interfere with DOJ—either to harm Trump or to protect his own son.

Freedom of speech, freedom of the press, and the right of peaceable assembly are enshrined in the First Amendment. Trump threatens all of them. He takes it for granted that the only person whose rights matter is himself—and by extension, those loyal to him. He treats the independent press as enemies of the people. He wants to use federal troops to suppress protesters he doesn't like.

When he was president, Trump claimed that Article 2 of the Constitution "lets me do whatever I want." Now the Supreme Court, with a far-right majority engineered by Sen. Mitch McConnell, has granted him immunity from prosecution for presidential acts. Trump claims this is necessary to prevent routine prosecution of former presidents, despite his being

see **ROSENDALL,** *page 4*

It's official, the census says: Gay male couples like San Francisco. Lesbians like the Berkshires

Heidi Buehler, right, and partner Jennifer Chesney listen to speakers, May 19, 2014, in Portland, Ore. Photo by Stephanie Yao Long/The Oregonian via AP.

Jon Batayola, left, and Daniel Biginton embrace under an umbrella as they await the beginning of Chicago's annual Pride Parade, June 25, 2023, in Chicago. AP Photo by Erin Hooley.

By Mike Schneider
Associated Press

Gay male couples tend to gravitate toward big cities on the U.S. coasts, while lesbian couples tend to prefer smaller, more pastoral cities or towns, according to 2020 census figures that reinforce some preconceived notions about LGBTQ+ communities in the U.S.

Counties with the highest concentrations of male same-sex couple households were those that include San Francisco, Manhattan, Boston and Washington, D.C., according to a U.S. Census Bureau report released last week.

Some of the highest concentrations of female same-sex couple households were in Hampshire and Franklin counties in the Berkshires, a rural re-

see **CENSUS,** *page 7*

NH Supreme Court Upholds Manchester School District Policy Supporting Transgender Students

Submitted by GLAD

On Friday, August 30, the New Hampshire Supreme Court today affirmed a lower court ruling upholding a Manchester school district policy in support of transgender students, which includes referring to students by their requested names and pronouns and maintaining student privacy when appropriate. The Court concluded that "[T]he plaintiff has failed to demonstrate that the Policy infringes a fundamental parenting right."

"Schools must provide a welcoming and supportive environment for all students.Today's decision upholds that core value and allows schools to

see **NH,** *page 5*

Nursing home oversight would be tightened under a bill passed in Massachusetts

BOSTON (AP) — Massachusetts' oversight of nursing homes would be strengthened, LGBTQ+ nursing home residents would be protected against discrimination, and better controls would be in place to protect against the spread of infectious disease outbreaks, under a new bill lawmakers passed this week.

Approved on Thursday, the bill would require long-term care facilities to provide staff training on the rights of LGBTQ+ older adults and those living with HIV, and bar staff from discriminating based on a person's sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, intersex status or HIV status.

The proposal also would streamline

see **NURSING HOME,** *page 5*

"My heart is broken that I've lost my mother this past weekend. Sadly, in a tragic turn of events, my sister lost her life on the same day."

—Mariah Carey notes the passing of her mother, singer Patricia. While it may be a tragic turn, Mimi does not say that the death of her estranged sister Alison—who has been HIV-positive since 1990—was particularly sad for her.

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

Photo by Filipe Vicente, via Wikimedia Commons.

Trump questions acceptance of transgender people as he courts his base at Moms for Liberty gathering

By Ali Swenson, Moriah Balingit and Will Weissert
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump lamented the growing acceptance of transgender Americans Friday in an appearance at the annual gathering of Moms for Liberty, a national nonprofit that has spearheaded efforts to get mentions of LGBTQ+ identity and structural racism out of K-12 classrooms.

Trump said transgender women should not be allowed to play in women's sports and said access to gender-affirming health care should be restricted. He also lashed out at critics who have accused him of using Arlington National Cemetery for a campaign photo op.

But he largely stuck to his favorite topics during an hourlong "fireside chat" in Washington, where he lashed out at President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris, deplored illegal immigration and reminisced about his parents' marriage, his path to being the reality television star of "The Apprentice" and the debate that ended Biden's reelection campaign.

"Our country is being poisoned. And your schools and your children are suffering greatly because they're going into the classrooms and taking disease, and they don't even speak English," Trump said of immigrants crossing the border illegally. "It's crazy."

Trump said school boards have become "like dictatorships" hostile to the desires of parents, echoing conservative frustration that bubbled over in public meetings during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I'm for parental rights all the way. I don't even understand the concept of not being," Trump said.

Trump did not address the U.S. Army's allegation that an Arlington National Cemetery official was " abruptly pushed aside " in an altercation with Trump aides this week while he visited the graves of servicemembers killed in a terrorist attack during the chaotic withdrawal from Afghanistan. But he said he's gotten to know the families and they asked to take a photo with him.

Photos of the cemetery visit showed Trump standing by the graves and flashing a thumbs-up sign next to relatives of Staff Sgt. Darin Taylor Hoover and Sgt. Nicole Gee.

"These people are devastated," Trump said Friday. "These people can never ever be the same. And it was all because of Biden."

Trump entered a hotel ballroom in Washington as he does at his signature rallies, standing and soaking up applause for the entirety of Lee Greenwood's "God Bless the USA," followed by chants of "Trump, Trump, Trump." Seated onstage with the co-founder of Moms for Liberty, Tiffany Justice, he shared some of his favorite stories that are mainstays at his rallies, bouncing from topic to topic in a style that has become familiar to his supporters.

The former president sought to shore up support and enthusiasm among a major part of his base. The bulk of Moms for Liberty's 130,000-plus members are conservatives who agree with him that parents should have more say in public education and that racial equity programs and transgender accommodations don't belong in schools.

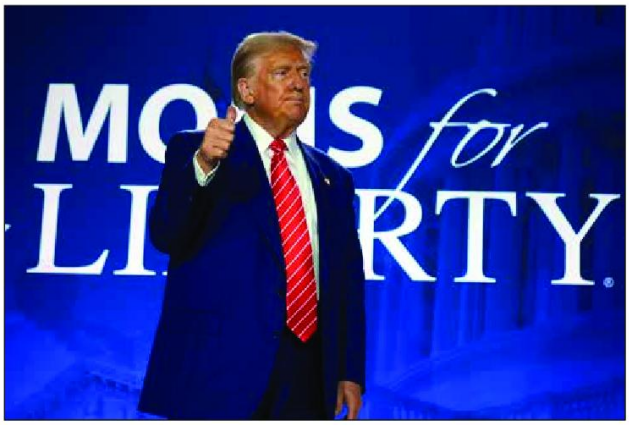
Yet Trump also runs the risk of alienating some moderate voters, many of whom see Moms for Liberty's activism as too extreme to be legitimized by a presidential nominee.

A year ago, Moms for Liberty was viewed by many as a rising power player in conservative politics that could be pivotal in supporting the Republican ticket. The group's membership skyrocketed after its launch in 2021, fueled by parents protesting mandatory masking for students and remote learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

But in the last several months, a series of embarrassing scandals and underwhelming performances during local elections have called Moms for Liberty's influence into question.

The group also has voiced support for Project 2025, a detailed and controversial playbook for the next conservative presidency from which Trump has repeatedly tried to distance himself.

Moms for Liberty serves on the advisory board for Project 2025, and the author of the document's education chapter taught a "strategy session" at the group's Friday gathering.



Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump gestures after speaking with Moms for Liberty co-founder Tiffany Justice during an event at the group's annual convention in Washington, Friday, Aug. 30, 2024. AP Photo by Mark Schiefelbein.

The negative perceptions about Moms for Liberty around the country could increase the potential liability for Trump as he sits down with co-founder Justice, said University of Central Florida political science professor Aubrey Jewett.

"It certainly helps him rally his base," Jewett said. "But will that be enough to outdo the backlash?"

In an interview before the event, Justice disputed the idea that her group's influence is waning, pointing to the 60% of Moms for Liberty-backed candidates who won their recent races in the Florida primaries.

That's "a really big deal," she said, especially considering that many of the school board hopefuls the group endorses are first-time candidates running against incumbents. She also noted three Moms for Liberty members who won Florida House primaries, showing the group's reach into other political offices.

Trump spent several minutes of the fireside chat discussing transgender issues in adult sports, including the recent Olympics, where vitriol erupted over a female boxer who was widely misidentified as transgender.

Trump falsely claimed Algerian boxer Imane Khelif "transitioned" and said he wouldn't want to fight her. Khelif was assigned female at birth.

Trump's education proposals include promoting school choice, giving parents more say in education and awarding funding preference to states and school districts that abolish teacher tenure, financially reward good teachers and allow parents to directly elect school principals.

He also has called for terminating the Department of Education, barring transgender athletes from playing in girls' sports, and cutting funding from any schools pushing "inappropriate racial, sexual or political content" and from schools with vaccine mandates. He offered no new education proposals Friday.

The event took on a party-like atmosphere as the group awaited Trump's arrival to a hotel ballroom in Washington. Donning shirts with messages like "Moms for Trump" and "We don't co-parent with the government," attendees at the group's annual gathering ate buffet desserts, drank beer and cheered to a cover band playing country hits.

Vice President Kamala Harris has criticized her Republican opponent for his threats to dismantle the Department of Education. She also has spoken out against efforts to restrict classroom content related to race.

Democrats have lauded her running mate, Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz, for an executive order he signed protecting the rights of LGBTQ people to receive gender-affirming health care in his state. Republicans, including Trump, have lambasted him for it.

During a campaign stop earlier Friday in Johnstown in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, Trump offered extensive criticism of the media for what he called unfavorable coverage and singled out CNN for its interview with Harris and Walz on Thursday.

Moments later, a man rushed the media area and made it over a bike rack barrier and close to a riser where television reporters were watching the rally. Private security pushed him back, and the man was eventually subdued by law enforcement using a Taser.

Trump at first said of the man, "he's on our side," but it's not clear what his intent was. As police led the man away, the former president declared, "Is there anywhere that's more fun to be than a Trump rally?"

Associated Press writer Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix contributed.

The Associated Press receives support from several private foundations to enhance its explanatory coverage of elections and democracy. See more about AP's democracy initiative here. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Police remove a man, center with sunglasses, who had climbed onto the media riser, as Republican presidential nominee former President Donald Trump speaks at a campaign event, Friday, Aug. 30, 2024, in Johnstown, Pa. AP Photo by Alex Brandon.

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Mombian

Continued from page 1

half at the national level and through a network of 43 chapters in 30 states. Resources include the "Ready, Set, Respect! Elementary Toolkit" with lesson plans on name-calling, bullying and bias, family diversity, gender roles, and more. And its "Changing the Game" resources can help ensure physical education classes and sports are LGBTQ affirming. Notable GLSEN research includes its 2023 report on "Experiences of Students with LGBTQ+ Families in K-12 Schools," and its biannual "National School Climate Survey" of LGBTQIA+ youth. The organization also runs leadership programs for LGBTQIA+ youth and supports a variety of student-led movements.

Family Equality (familyequality.org/resources): The resources from Family Equality, the national organization for LGBTQ families, include toolkits and fact-sheets on topics like creating LGBTQ-friendly classrooms, how LGBTQ parents can support their youth in school, taking action against anti-LGBTQ state actions such as book bans and "Don't Say Gay/LGBTQ" laws, and more. They even have an e-mail template to get you started on advocating with your child's school. Visit their Resources page and filter by "Schools."

Teach All Families (teachallfamilies.com): This project from Clark University Professor Abbie Goldberg, a leading scholar of LGBTQ families, draws on her extensive research to provide evidence-driven tips for teachers, school administrators, and LGBTQ parents. Topics covered include finding an LGBTQ-friendly daycare or preschool, advocating for your family, creating LGBTQ inclusive school environments and curricula and ones that welcome adopted students and those in foster care, responding to anti-LGBTQ comments in the classroom, and more.

COLAGE (colage.org/back-to-school-toolkit): The toolkit from COLAGE, the national organization for people with LGBTQ parents, offers suggestions for ways students with LGBTQ parents can respond to common questions or assumptions about their families, plus an e-mail template to help students write to their teachers, explaining their family structure (and whether they want this revealed to the class), advocating for representation in the curriculum and on permission slips, and (if relevant), alerting the teacher to LGBTQ-phobic jokes or marginalizing language.

Safe Schools for All (safeschoolsforall.org): This site focuses on student rights and what to do if a student experiences bullying, harassment, or discrimination. It explains how Title IX, a federal civil rights law, protects all students, and how people can file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights if they feel their rights (or those of their child or student) have been violated. The site is a project of PFLAG, GLSEN, the National Center for Lesbian Rights, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), and other members of the Safe Schools for All Coalition.

Unite Against Book Bans (uniteagainstbookbans.org): While several of the above resources also include information about book bans, Unite Against Book Bans is the best single-focus site on the subject, with data, toolkits, news, and ways of reporting censorship. It also includes book résumés of challenged and banned books, with links to news about how bans of that specific title have been handled. The site is a project of the American Library Association in partnership with publishers, LGBTQ organizations, civil rights organizations, and others.

Parenting with Pride (parentingwithpride.org): This project from a number of leading LGBTQ, family, and educational organizations has gathered resources aimed at helping parents in Florida "create communities where every LGBTQ+ child feels safe, affirmed, and loved." It draws on some of the resources above, plus additional ones; parents of LGBTQ youth in other states, as well as LGBTQ parents, may find it a useful portal as well (except for a few items specific to Florida's laws).

The above sites are only the tip of the iceberg. Please visit mombian.com for my full 2024 list of LGBTQ Back-to-School Resources.

Know, too, that you also have resources in the decades of LGBTQ parents who have gone before and encountered many of the challenges and questions you may be experiencing. If you don't know any other LGBTQ families near you, try searching Facebook for "queer parents" or "LGBTQ parents" and you'll find a number of online groups offering community and support. Trust also that you have given your kids tools for resilience that will help them find their way even when you are not present. Lean into the joy and the possibilities. You've got this.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a two-time GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory, plus a searchable database of 1,600+ LGBTQ family books. She serves as an unpaid member of the Family Equality Communications Committee.

Rosendall

Continued from page 1

the first ever prosecuted.

A Trump supporter on social media proudly noted that Trump donated his salary as president. This ignores his shameless profiteering from the presidency. His grift included running up charges for the Secret Service when it protected him during stays at his resorts; profiting by foreign government representatives staying at his hotel when they were in Washington; daughter Ivanka obtaining dozens of trademarks from the Chinese government; and son-in-law Jared receiving $2 billion from the Saudi government after leaving the White House.

Still, darkness appeals to some people. They may be damaged and afraid, but they tend to perpetuate the damage. As William Faulkner once wrote, they cling to that which has robbed them.

Dear reader, if you believe Trump is a selfless patriot and humble servant of the people, I'd like to sell you Greenland. Did you know this modest man autographs Bibles?

The trouble with pointing out signs of the wannabe Glorious Leader's pathology and corruption is that his core supporters cannot get enough of it. They treat him as a paragon of virtues he defiles.

On the other hand, Trump is bleeding support around the edges. Some Republicans who supported him before vow not to do so again. That won't matter if MAGA Republicans succeed in their vote suppression, voter intimidation, and shenanigans around certification. But voting rights defenders are battling back. The fight is not about votes only, but America's soul.

If the 45th president were a Star Wars character, he would be Jabba the Hut. He recently claimed he was better looking than Kamala Harris. If he is entertaining Princess Leia fantasies about her, it could represent a new stage in his cognitive decline.

It is never smart to underestimate an opponent, much less give her free lodging in your head. Trump has flailed in response to the vice president's campaign. He tries to pull her into his darkness; but she is a creature of the light, and offers voters a more uplifting alternative. A group called Professor Pride states that Harris would be the most pro-LGBTQ president in history based on her career so far.

Still, darkness appeals to some people. They may be damaged and afraid, but they tend to perpetuate the damage. As William Faulkner once wrote, they cling to that which has robbed them.

If darkness wins on November 5, it will cost us a great deal of blood and treasure before it can be overcome.

Which brings me to the Resistance—the true patriots who would do all we could to thwart a Trump dictatorship.

We would not sit idly by as our beloved country was destroyed by a treasonous sociopath. How many millions of dissidents does Twitler plan to round up? And how long would the rest of the populace put up with him if he tanked the economy again by deporting millions of migrant workers?

We ourselves should not underestimate the capacity of brazen ignorance to prevail. It is amazing how far Trump's know-nothingism has taken him. But how smart was it for the Heritage Foundation to publish Project 2025 so we could see what they were planning? It's like a Bond villain speech that gives the hero time to turn the tables.

Americans have flirted with fascism before, but it was defeated. It does not sit well with us. Best to avert the Trumpian chaos by embracing a party whose experienced, forward-looking nominee embraces our country's best aspirations. Vote Democratic up and down the ballot.

Richard J. Rosendall is a writer and activist at rrosendall@me.com.

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Continued from page 1

manage the educational environment so that all students have an equal and safe opportunity to learn," said Chris Erchull, Senior Staff Attorney at GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders.

"We are pleased with the court's decision to affirm what we already know, that students deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and have a right to freely express who they are without the fear of being forcibly outed." said Henry Klementowicz, Deputy Legal Director at the ACLU of New Hampshire. "Removing the Manchester School District's existing, affirming policy would have created an environment where LGBTQ+ students don't feel safe being who they are—and in school, they should feel safe, cared for, and able to learn to the best of their ability."

"We are pleased with the court's decision to affirm what we already know, that students deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and have a right to freely express who they are without the fear of being forcibly outed."

– HENRY KLEMENTOWICZ
DEPUTY LEGAL DIRECTOR AT THE ACLU OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

In today's decision the Court cited language from the trial court's ruling regarding the Manchester School District Policy:

[T]he Policy does not prevent parents from observing their children's behavior, moods, and activities; talking to their children; providing religious or other education to their children; choosing where their children live and go to school; obtaining medical care and counseling for their children; monitoring their children's communications on social media; choosing with whom their children may socialize; and deciding what their children may do in their free time. In short, the Policy places no limits on the plaintiff's ability to parent her child as she sees fit.

GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) and the ACLU of New Hampshire represented New Hampshire parent Heather Romeri and her son Nico, a New Hampshire high school student, on a friend-of-the-court brief filed in the case, Jane Doe v. Manchester School District.

"I'm so grateful that Nico has the support he needs in school," said Nico's mother, Heather Romeri, at the time their brief was filed. "Of course I want my child to feel he can talk to me about anything, but above all I want him to feel safe and happy. I understand that he needed to be able to talk about what he was going through with others before he came to me, and I'm so glad he had that chance, just as I am glad that he had the chance to see how much his family loves and supports him once he was ready to come to us."

"It was important for me to have the support of other people I could trust to help me feel ready to talk to my parents, especially people who could help make it easier for me to talk to my mom," said Nico Romeri, a New Hampshire transgender high school student. "Transgender students want the same opportunity to learn and be ourselves, just like any kid, without having to worry that adults at school will violate our trust. If someone had decided to tell my mom what they thought about my gender, it would have made things so much harder for me at school and at home."

Nursing Home

Continued from page 1

the licensing process for "small house nursing homes," alternative care centers that focus on smaller groups of residents and using familiar domestic routines.

Long-term care facilities would also be required to develop outbreak response plans to help contain the spread of disease and ensure communication with state health officials, residents, families and staff.

The bill would also require state health officials to establish training programs on infection prevention and control, resident care plans and staff safety programs. The Department of Public Health would be required to come up with plans to let residents of a facility engage in face-to-face contact, communications, and religious and recreational activities.

Some long-term care facilities became hubs of COVID-19 transmission. In 2020, at least 76 people died in a long-term care veterans home in Massachusetts, one of the nation's worst COVID-19 outbreaks.

Those who make the decision to put their loved ones in a nursing home or long-term care facility deserve to know they will be protected, said Democratic Senate President Karen Spilka.

"This bill will give the Commonwealth the resources and tools to ensure their safety, weed out bad actors in the field, and enforce oversight and accountability," she said.

The legislation would also create a new fund to help recruit a long-term care workforce, including grants to develop new certified nursing assistants and grants for direct care workers to train to become licensed practical nurses.

Under the bill, the DPH would have the authority to revoke a long-term care facility's license for a failure to provide adequate care or for a lack of financial capacity. The bill would also gives health officials the power to appoint a temporary manager.

The bill now heads to Gov. Maura Healey for her signature.

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After spending so much time overseas, I ended my summer with back-to-back excursions to Provincetown. Why didn't I just stay there? Give a fella a chance to catch his breath—and get more condoms! During my first jaunt, I saw the terrific **Thirsty Burlington** in "Cher 1987". Like her previous show ("Cher 1975"), this is locked into a specific era of the diva's career. While Cher spent most of the '80s focusing on acting, 1987 marked her return to recording such hits as "I Found Someone", "We All Sleep Alone", and "Bang Bang"—all sung live by Thirsty. What is **Cher** without spectacular gowns? Earlier this summer, **Bob Mackie** gave Burlington his seal of approval, so that's good enough for me. Having this talented diva back where she belongs is a gift that keeps on giving. She's at The Crown and Anchor on Tuesdays through September 17th. Grab your tickets at OnlyAtTheCrown.com.

I then caught **Jamie Morris** and his talented troupe at the Post Office Caf and Cabaret for "The Devil Wears Payless". I was curious how he'd turn this flick into an hour show. Cleverly, he jettisoned several subplots and focused his abundant gifts on the moments we all wait for (he did similar work with "Mommie Queerest"). Morris' impersonation of Ms. Priestly is a jewel, and the rest of his players provide the perfect setting. It's a clever and triumphant evening of high camp in the best way possible. It runs through October 6th, at which point it will likely trickle down to some tragic dinner theater in your locale. Until then, get your tickets at PostOfficeCafe.net.

Later in the week, I returned to Provincetown to see **John McDaniel and Liz Callaway**—again at the Post Office Cabaret. There aren't enough superlatives in the world to describe Liz Callaway. Strike that—she revealed that one critic called her the **Marni Nixon** of animation (look it up). Quite simply, she is sublime. If I were someone who believed in God, I'd say he kissed those golden vocal cords, which show no sign of stopping. That she is as down to earth as anyone with her extraordinary talent only makes me love her more. The show included a generous portion from her live, Grammy-nominated CD, "To Steve With Love: Liz Callaway Celebrates Sondheim". You can still buy it at all good (and not-so-good) retailers. Credit McDaniel for bringing her to Ptown and collaborating on a delightful show filled with lots of fantastic medleys—and harmonies! And there's dish. You do know about her filling in for Streisand, right? There's only so much she can say, but say it she does. Thanks, Liz (and Johnny).

One could say I saved the best for last. Certainly, it's hard to top **Miss Richfield 1981**—although scores of people have tried. Her show, "Phony Baloney", grapples with the AI crisis—and nobody is facing more of a crisis than Miss Richfield herself. Armed solely with her Sharp cell phone (bought at Radio Shack, y'know), she's had capacity audiences in stitches all summer at the Pilgrim House as she tries to tackle technology. She's assisted (and sometimes not assisted) by audience members who don't know what they're getting into. That's all for the best. Her material is fresh, her mind is lightning fast, and her costumes...well, at least she's got her mind and material. Oh, she's also got shows at the Pilgrim House until September 14th. Get your tickets at PilgrimHousePtown.com.

With all the love in the air, you'd swear it was spring. But here we are, a bit of a nip in the air, on the cusp of fall, and we have oodles of wedding news. First up, our pal **Billy Gilman** tied the knot with his boyfriend, **Anthony Carbone**. The ceremony took place on a 45-acre horse farm in Rhode Island—as all good gay weddings should. Carbone said, "It was not about the pomp and the fuss of everything—but about what it all means to us. I just really wanted to keep it simple, with the closest core of our family and friends who have watched our love story grow every single day." With over 120 in attendance, I can only assume my invitation got lost in the mail.

Then **Rupert Everett** made a shocking announcement—he got married earlier this year! This is surprising since he previously called the institution of marriage, "not my idea of heaven"—which I suppose is better than it being his idea of hell. Not surprisingly, he married long-time beau **Henrique**, who we hear is a Brazilian accountant. A "friend" revealed, "Henrique is absolutely charming. He's rather quiet and happy to let Rupert take centre stage"—which begs the question, where can I find a Henrique of my own? While details remain scarce, we're told the low-key ceremony took place at London's Camden Town Hall, followed by lunch at Ciao Bella—Dutch treat, I'm sure. "I have always hated weddings, although I do love funerals," Rupert quipped. I do hope that wasn't his toast!

Speaking of Rupert, the Ogunquit Playhouse will host the world premiere musical version of "My Best Friend's Wedding". The songs all come from the **Burt Bacharach-Hal David** songbook, and the cast includes two of our favorites. Tony-winner **Matt Doyle** plays Michael—the best friend in question. Assuming the role of George (made famous by Mr. Everett), we have our own **Telly Leung**, who will undoubtedly deliver his special brand of sass. The show runs September 26th through October 27th, and you can get tickets at OgunquitPlayhouse.org.

Not all marriages weather the storm. It's with that sentiment that **Leah Remini** and her husband **Angelo** announced they are splitting up. This one saddens me, because I liked them as a couple. Sure, we never know what people are like when the cameras aren't rolling. Leah acknowledges that in her statement about why the marriage didn't last. "To put it simply, we both changed, as people do, and we got used to playing roles that didn't fit us anymore." Ain't that something? I don't know if I've ever heard it explained as honestly before. Good luck to them both.

First there was Bigfoot. Then, the Loch Ness Monster. And now, a startling, unpredictable, almost other-worldly sighting—**Wendy Williams** in public! On August 19th, she was seen at Bolingo Balance, a Newark shop that sells herbal and holistic health aids! The glamorous gabber was with her son, **Kevin Jr.**, who explained to his mom what all the products were. We're told Williams knew where she was and could even walk unassisted. The photo she took with owner **Victor Bowman** shows her in good spirits if not a good wig—as you can see on BillyMasters.com.

A sighting of Wendy Williams makes me think of **Anna Nicole Smith**. Happily, her daughter Dannielynn was recently seen in a cosplay costume. That means I had to look up what cosplay is. It's short for "costume play", and it's basically when people dress up as characters from anime and video games. It started specifically with "The Power Rangers", but now is a more widely-used term...none of which interests me in the slightest. **Larry Birkhead** brought his daughter to Power Morphicon in Pasadena, where we are told the girl got to meet some of her favorite actors from Japanese live-action TV. She was dressed as a few of her favorite "Kamen Rider" characters—Hino Eiji, Ankh, and a special version of Eiji being possessed by Ankh (I say as if I know what I'm talking about).

You'll recall I recently took a road trip to Baltimore for the crab cakes (G&M and Olive Grove are my favorites). Alas, I didn't run into **Kevin Spacey**. I guess he was busy since his Baltimore abode was foreclosed upon and sold at auction for $3.24 million. It was snapped up by **Sam Asgari**, who is not the Iranian fitness model who married **Britney Spears**. This is a Bethesda-based investor who does not have an "H" in his last name. You know what else he doesn't have? Access to his house! Reportedly, Spacey refuses to leave—not even for crab cakes!! Making it even crazier, Asgari says, "He's asking for six months to leave the property without paying anything." Spacey's lawyers say, "The accusation by Mr. Asgari is false." But if Kevin is still there and not paying, what's false?

A budding reporter sent in this week's "Ask Billy" question. Roger in NYC says, *"I was walking down Madison Avenue and saw a group of hot shirtless guys. Did you know they were filming a scene for 'Sex and the City'?"*

I know you won't get your press card with that kinda journalism. Roger, Roger, Roger—it was a scene for season three of "And Just Like That..."—the sequel to "Sex and the City". But I knew what you meant—just like I know the hot shirtless guys in question are employees of **Mario Cantone's** character Anthony at his Hot Fellas bakery. Did you happen to see any of the girls there? Because they were in the scene—as shot by someone named Mickey Blank for her social media page. Naturally, you can check out more than their buns on BillyMasters.com.

When we're serving hot guys and carbs, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Last week, it was crab cakes and peach cobbler. This week, it's herbs and loaves. Last week wins! We had Cher 1987, and Miss Richfield 1981. Well, I'm Billy Masters 1969. And '69 ain't just a year, as you'll see on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that's as limber as its owner. If you'd like to find out for yourself, send your indecent proposals to me directly at Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you once I get all of the sand out of my crevices. Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

Photo courtesy of Monker MGMT.
Thirsty Burlington

Photo by greg2600, via Wikimedia Commons.
Leah Remini

Photo by WBLS, via Wikimedia Commons.
Wendy Williams

Census

Continued from page 1

gion of western Massachusetts that is home to several colleges, art museums and theaters. Also in the count were counties that are home to Portland, Oregon; Asheville, North Carolina; and Ithaca, New York, where Cornell University and Ithaca College are located.

The locations aren't entirely surprising, since they fall in line with cultural stereotypes of gay men being urban creatures and lesbian women being outdoorsy, said Crissi Dalfonzo, director of the Center for LGBT Education, Outreach and Services at Ithaca College.

"Stereotypes often exist for a reason, but they can be problematic because they can take away the individuality," Dalfonzo said.

Gender pay inequity may be a factor, too. Experts say some of the differences may be due to male couples having higher incomes and able to live in more expensive big cities, while female couples are more likely to be raising children.

"In general, large urban settings are more expensive and less child-friendly than suburban and rural areas. As such, it makes sense that female couples would opt for less urban locales," said Gary Gates, a retired UCLA demographer who studied LGBTQ+ issues.

The differences play into some traditional stereotypes, but they also may boil down to where male and female couples feel most at ease, whether it's a feeling of community or safety in smaller towns or the comfort of "gayborhoods" in big cities, said Amy Stone, a sociology professor at Trinity University in San Antonio.

"It's where people feel safe living or where they find support. Where gay couples feel safe and where female couples feel safe isn't always the same place," Stone said.

Stone studied at Amherst College in Hampshire County, Massachusetts, in the Berkshires, which is also home to the University of Massachusetts Amherst and two historically all-female colleges, Smith and Mount Holyoke colleges. The county had the largest share of female same-sex couple households in the U.S., at almost 4%, according to the 2020 census. Over the decades, it has been home to lesbian music and film festivals, as well as scores of lesbian-owned businesses and cultural institutions.

"Everyone knew it was a place lesbians often stayed after graduating," Stone said. "There have been a lot of lesbian institutions there for a long time."

San Francisco County had the largest share of male same-sex couple households, at almost 6%.

There was some overlap between the 10 cities and counties with the largest share of female and male same-sex couple households — Washington, D.C.; Richmond, Virginia; and St. Louis. Rounding out the list for male same-sex couple households were counties or parishes that are home to New Orleans, Denver, Atlanta and Fort Lauderdale, Florida. For female same-sex couple households, it included the county that is home to Decatur, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta; and Baltimore.

In pure numbers, Los Angeles County was tops for both types of same-sex couples, but it's also by far the most populous county in the U.S., with more than 10 million residents.

In its current form, the once-a-decade census captures LGBTQ+ people only if they are living together as spouses or partners, through queries about household relationships, which is only about a sixth of the LGBTQ+ population in the U.S., according to some estimates. As a result, it misses people who are single or are not cohabitating, as well as transgender people.

It has only been in the last decade that the Census Bureau added "same sex" and "opposite sex" to its relationship categories for spouses and unmarried partners in its surveys and the census.

The Census Bureau currently is looking at adding questions about sexual orientation and gender identity for people ages 15 and older to its annual American Community Survey, which is the agency's most comprehensive survey of American life.

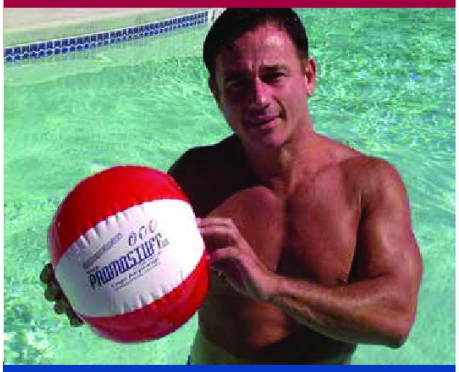
Gay couples are highly visible in Broward County, home to Fort Lauderdale, which has a gay police chief and mayor, said Keith Blackburn, who heads the Greater Fort Lauderdale LGBT Chamber of Commerce.

"It's the warmth and acceptance that everyone in Broward County seems to give our community. We have a lot of openly gay officials," Blackburn said. "You see same-sex couples holding hands everywhere."

Follow Mike Schneider on the social platform X: @MikeSchneiderAP.

A massive rainbow flag is carried through the city's Midtown district during the annual Gay Pride Parade in Atlanta, Ga., Oct. 13, 2019. AP Photo by Robin Rayne.

HOT IDEAS



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