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The NAACP's acceptance of the LGBTQ+ community

by Rev. Irene Monroe
contributing writer

The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) was in Boston from July 26 to August 1. Over 7,000 people attended nationwide, with hundreds of local and national vendors.

The 114th National Convention allowed Boston to reintroduce itself. And Boston showed up and showed out. The theme "Thriving Together" created a milieu to celebrate and acknowledge Black Boston's community's collective entrepreneur and political power.

The Convention was here 41 years ago, in 1982. During that year, the 73rd NAACP National Convention occurred when the news of the day was about an African American home firebombed because three Black families had moved into an all-white Dorchester enclave. That event, coupled with lingering residual animus derived from the Boston busing crisis of the 1970s, left a pox on Beantown, keeping not only the Convention away but also African Americans not wanting to visit, giving the city its earned reputation as one of the racist cities in the country.

see **MONROE,** *page 4*

Vanquishing Earth 2

Delusion and thuggery are Trump's greatest vulnerability

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

Donald Trump's reaction to his arraignment on four federal counts of conspiracy and obstruction was true to form. Not 24 hours passed before he issued a threat on Truth Social: "IF YOU GO AFTER ME, I'M COMING AFTER YOU!" The Government promptly sought a Protective Order to keep him from endangering witnesses and court officials.

Our sociopathic former president thinks he is above the law. That proposition now faces its greatest test. However it may turn out, Trump and his allies are not going quietly.

John Eastman, AKA Co-Conspirator 2, gave an interview in which he reiterated his support for insurrection. Jeffrey Clark, AKA Co-Conspirator 4, talks as if installing a failed candidate as a dictator is what the Insurrection Act is for. Trump diehard Alan Dershowitz went so far as to say that the prosecutor himself could be indicted.

Sen. Tim Scott wrote on August 1, "I remain concerned about the weaponization of Biden's DOJ and its immense power used against political

see **ROSENDALL,** *page 4*

Queer Parents Fight Back as Italy Strips Rights

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

The far-right Italian government of Prime Minister Georgia Meloni is taking parental rights from queer parents and putting their children at risk—but in more than a dozen European cities over seven countries, queer parents and their allies have been rallying in protest.

Same-sex couples in Italy cannot marry or access assisted reproduction, including surrogacy, which is illegal for anyone. Adoption is also technically forbidden to them, but a vagueness of the laws has meant that some jurisdictions, since 2014, have allowed nongesetational parents in same-sex couples to adopt child(ren) born to their partners after the couples have gone abroad to start their families.

After taking power last fall, however, Meloni's government forbid the creation of Italian birth certificates with two mothers and the recognition of foreign birth certificates with two fathers. In mid-July, central government officials in Padua went further, and informed 27 families with two moms, raising 33 children, that the nongestational parent is being removed from their child(ren)'s

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 7*

The House doesn't always win: The Pryde recovers its funding

By Dominique Farrell
Courtesy of GBH News

The Pryde, an affordable housing project for LGBTQ+ seniors, received some good news on the funding front Thursday. U.S. Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Sen. Ed Markey secured $850,000 in funding for The Pryde as part of a Senate appropriations bill.

If that number sounds familiar, it is the same amount House Republicans voted to deny the housing project last week in an appropriations hearing. After that setback, U.S. Rep. Ayanna Pressley, who had championed the project being built in her district, partnered with Warren and Markey to brainstorm other ways to secure that funding.

"While Republicans continue their hateful, anti-gay crusade, we remain undeterred in our fight to affirm the dignity and humanity of our LGBTQ+ neighbors," said Pressley in a comment to GBH News. "I'm grateful to Senators Warren and Markey for working in partnership with me to get this critical funding for The Pryde into the Senate appropriations bill. Our LGBTQ+ elders in the Massa-

see **PRYDE,** *page 4*

NEWS FROM... THE HISTORY PROJECT

LGBTQ+ History Picnic on Cambridge Common

Join The History Project for an LGBTQ+ be-in.

BYOP (bring your own picnic) and connect with local queer history!

Saturday, 8/26, 11am-2pm

In the style of gay liberation "be-ins" where the LGBTQ+ community would meet up to hang out and exist in public space, join The History Project for an LGBTQ+ picnic on Cambridge Common.

Drop-in anytime between 11AM and 2PM, and feel free to BYOP (bring your own picnic)!

More details to be annouced.

This event is free and open to the public, and RSVPs are encouraged. A donation at any level helps us to document, preserve, and share LGBTQ+ history. Thank you for your support! Save the Date!

The History Project's 2023 HistoryMaker Awards

Thursday, 9/7, 6pm-9pm

Join us as we recognize the community members and organizations who make history every day.

The 2023 HistoryMaker Awards will recognize the outstanding lifetime commitment and impact of Gary Bailey. Dr. Bailey is a social work leader and educator, a longtime advocate for people living with HIV/AIDS, and an activist for Black and LGBTQ+ rights. Dr. Bailey's unwavering dedication to social justice has left an indelible mark on the lives of numerous LGBTQ+ individuals, particularly LGBTQ+ youth, people of color, and those affected by HIV/AIDS.

The 2023 HistoryMaker Awards will take place in person at the St. Botolph Club, 199 Commonwealth Avenue, Boston

For more information visit www.historyproject.org

"You guys were talking earlier about the news cycle and getting sick of it and it's so hard to hear about it. I hope that 'Taste the Nation' is an anecdote to that."

—Padma Lakshmi probably means to say "antidote" instead of "anecdote". Unless the two words mean the same thing in her native Tamil tongue.

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

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New York City high school student charged with hate-motivated murder

NEW YORK (AP)—Police have arrested a 17-year-old high school student on a hate-motivated murder charge in the fatal stabbing of a professional dancer during an altercation between two groups of friends at a New York City gas station last weekend.

Police took the teenager into custody Friday in connection with the killing of the 28-year-old O`Shae Sibley, who was gay. Authorities declined to release the defendant`s name.

"Parents lost a child, a child, to something that was clearly a hate crime," Mayor Eric Adams, a former police captain, said Saturday during a news conference outside the Brooklyn gas station where Sibley was killed July 29.

The stabbing occurred after the two groups got into a confrontation at one of the gas pumps, where Sibley was dancing with his friends to a Beyoncé song. Authorities said Sibley's group was being taunted by the other group before the confrontation ended in violence.

Beyoncé would later pay tribute to Sibley on her website.

Security camera video showed the two groups arguing for a few minutes. Both sides had walked away when Sibley and a friend abruptly returned and again confronted one of the young men, who had stayed behind recording on his phone.

In the video, Sibley could be seen following the teen and then lunging at him before the two disappeared out of the camera's view. A moment later, he walks backward into view, checking his side, and then collapses to the sidewalk.

He was stabbed once in the left rib cage, according to Assistant Police Chief Joe Kenny.

"We can see on the video a heated verbal dispute quickly turns physical,`` he said.

"As they waited to refuel their vehicle, Mr. Sibley and his group began dancing to music that was being played in their car. At this point, a male called out to Mr. Sibley and his group demanding that they stop dancing," Kenny said. "As the group began to yell at Mr. Sibley and his friends, they began to call him derogatory names and use homophobic slurs against him."

The initial encounter lasted about four minutes, police said, when Sibley and four other men stopped to refuel while traveling home to New York City from New Jersey.

Authorities said the suspect arranged for his surrender through his attorney.

Lee Soulja Simmons, the executive director for the NYC Center for Black Pride, also spoke at the news conference.

"We wrestle with people within our community constantly facing discrimination—not just because you're Black but because you represent LGBT`` communities, he said.

"The fact that he was doing nothing more but voguing and dancing here, he did not deserve to die in that way," Simmons said.

One of Sibley's friends who was there, Otis Pena, said in a Facebook video that Sibley was killed because he was gay, and "because he stood up for his friends. "

One witness, Summy Ullah, said in interviews that the men complained that their behavior offended them as Muslims.

Some leaders of the area`s Muslim community condemned the slaying.

"The weight of this loss is felt deeply, not just by the family and friends of O'Shae, but by all of us who value life, peace and justice,`` Soniya Ali, the executive director of the Muslim Community Center, said Saturday.

"As Muslims, we are committed to stand up for justice, even if it means standing against our own selves,`` she said. ``We unequivocally condemn the unjust murder of O'Shae."

Sibley performed with the dance company Philadanco in his native Philadelphia and in New York, where he took classes with the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater's Ailey Extension program.

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Pryde

Continued from page 1

chusetts 7th [District] deserve this affordable housing and community space, and we'll keep fighting to get this funding over the finish line."

The funding allocated for The Pryde is part of the Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies bill, which provides $224.4 billion in discretionary funding. The bill will be included in the House and Senate fiscal year 2024 budget negotiations in the fall. But advocates praise this funding in the Senate bill as a huge step in the right direction.

In a comment to GBH News, Warren said, "Senator Markey and I understood the assignment: support The Pryde's effort to build community in Hyde Park by delivering this $850,000 in federal funding into the Senate appropriations bill. Now we're going to keep fighting hard to pass a budget into law that reflects our values, and I am so grateful to have a partner in progress like Congresswoman Ayanna Pressley."

Slated as New England's first senior LGBTQ+ housing development, The Pryde will include 74 mixed-income rental units in addition to a public community center.

"The Pryde will not only be essential in upholding the safety, security, and wellbeing of the LGBTQ+ community here in Boston, but in addressing the city's affordable housing crisis — a crisis that is pushing out our elders and countless families that can no longer afford soaring rents and rising home prices," said Sen. Markey in a comment to GBH News.

Gretchen Van Ness, executive director of LGBTQ Senior Housing Inc., one of the groups behind The Pryde, expressed gratitude for the support.

"We are thrilled with the support that we have received from Senator Markey and Senator Warren's offices. They're just amazing," Van Ness told GBH News. "We worked with them diligently and put together a proposal that would help support programing and services at The Pryde."

Affordable senior housing is a critical need in Massachusetts. By 2030, one in every five people in Massachusetts will be age 60 or older. And LGBTQ+ elders have additional difficulties securing housing. According to advocates, almost half of same-sex couples who apply for elder housing have faced discrimination in the process.

The majority of Americans approve laws that protect LGBTQ+ people against discrimination in jobs, housing and communal spaces.

"We know that people across the country support the LGBTQ community and support affordable housing for seniors," said Van Ness. "That's reflected in the Senate. The House is not doing what people want."

Rosendall

Continued from page 1

opponents. What we see today are two different tracks of justice. One for political opponents and another for the son of the current president." Does he think he can win the Republican nomination by stooping to such desperate nonsense?

Trump was not arrested by Joe Biden. The special counsel is an independent career prosecutor. The charges were handed down by a grand jury. Trump's indictment for trying to remain in office after losing the election in 2020 is essential to restoring stability to our republic.

Some Trump supporters think that if he is jailed for violating his terms of release, it will make him such a martyr that he will win election in a landslide. I think that is just another excuse for remaining hostage to a would-be tyrant's mob. If we are doomed whether we defend constitutional government or not, we might as well stand up for what we believe. As Edward R. Murrow said, we are not descended from fearful people.

Life is not something we can put off until we are ready. We must live it now. For several days I have been staring at a beautiful photo of Brooklyn dancer O'Shae Sibley, who was murdered recently for voguing at a gas station. The GOP's culture-war politics is treated as a mere free speech issue while its practitioners deny any connection between the toxicity they sow and senseless hate crimes that rob us of so many who bring us light and joy.

We who still have our voices cannot be silent in the face of viral intolerance and cruelty from which the GOP refuses to break because the poison promises power.

Every generation faces its tests. Two citizens for whom I am grateful are Special Counsel Jack Smith and U.S. District Court Judge Tanya Chutkan, the trial judge in the January 6 case. Smith previously served as chief prosecutor for the special court at The Hague. Chutkan, born in Jamaica, was confirmed by the Senate 95-0. These two jurists are not fooling around, and will not be intimidated nor deterred by insults and threats.

There was a congressional hearing recently on possible extraterrestrial visitors. The fact is that other worlds are very far away from us. The real threat is much closer to home. The divorce from reality of so many MAGA minions prompts some to accuse them of living on Earth 2. They are the ones we Earth 1 denizens must defeat, or perhaps just awaken.

Trump's lies and projection have helped him dodge consequences for a long time. Then again, considering his failure to turn out large crowds at his arraignments, and the prosecution of two thousand insurrectionists, it appears to be dawning on many of his supporters that they cannot depend on Glorious Leader for help.

Trump is his own superhero on social media and at his rallies. He sells cards of his photoshopped alter egos as collector's items. (This is why I cannot begrudge Mike Pence for selling "Too Honest" T-shirts.) Back on Earth 1, 45 reverts to his true flab.

Justice and political sanity, however, are not self-implementing. Trump and his allies are planning a program of retribution upon his return to office that would gut DOJ and fill it with his own henchmen. It is up to us to thwart them and vindicate the rule of law. We have a right to be here.

When the breakup (or wake up) will finally occur is anyone's guess. In the meantime, let the wheels of justice turn.

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

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Monroe

Continued from page 1

Today Boston presents itself ready to change—not to erase its past—but rather as a city now able to provide opportunities for people of color and uphold their civil and human rights without discrimination.

Also, the NAACP Convention came to Boston when the organization's acceptance of its LGBTQ+ members was no longer an ongoing controversy. The NAACP was once as homophobic as the Black Church. However, the NAACP did a 180 degree turn on LGBTQ+ issues in 2018 when it invited me and other LGBTQ+ activists from across the country to its 109th Annual Convention in July at the Henry B Gonzales Convention Center, San Antonio, TX.

"I am pleased to extend this letter of invitation, requesting your participation as a panelist during the LGBTQ workshop titled "The State of LGBTQ People of Color in America." The session will take place on Tuesday, July 17, 2018, from 2:30pm to 4:30 pm.

The panel will focus on the following discussion topics:

- Effective Strategies for LGBTQ Activism
- Evolution of Thinking: Acceptance & Inclusion
- Living Out Loud: LGBTQ Representation in the Workplace, Congress and Media
- Power of the Vote: Mobilization, Registration, Anti-discrimination Laws & How to Overcome Them

My colleagues and I sincerely hope that you will accept this invitation. In connection with convention-related LGBTQ events, we will cover travel and hotel accommodation expenses."

At the NAACP Town Hall, Leon W. Russell, Chair of the NAACP National Board of Directors, apologized on behalf of the organization. "You cannot profess to be a civil rights fighter and then insert exceptions, Russell stated. "It's none of your business who I love. You just have to let me have the right to do that."

Still Today, The NAACP Town Hall meeting is one of its most-watched programs on C-Span.

For many years there was an ongoing debate between civil rights v gay rights. In 2004, during a June 12 Capitol Hill ceremony commemorating the 40th anniversary of the landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that struck down anti-miscegenation laws—and sponsored by several straight and queer civil rights organizations across the country—The Legal Defense Fund – also referred to as the NAACP-LDF—was founded in 1940 as a part of the NAACP, but now operates as a completely separate entity- released a historical statement that best explains why the struggle for same-sex marriage is indeed a civil rights struggle: "It is undeniable that the experience of African Americans differs in many important ways from that of gay men and lesbians; among other things, the legacy of slavery and segregation is profound. But differences in historical experiences should not preclude the application of constitutional provisions to gay men and lesbians who are denied the right to marry the person of their choice."

Today, the NAACP has an LGBTQIA Committee Chairperson, Demar Roberts from S. C., who works to protect and advance the rights of the LGBTQ+ community. At the Convention LGBTQIA Reception, former Cambridge mayor and now Councilwoman E. Denise Simmon (the first openly lesbian African-American mayor in the United States.) was awarded the first NAACP social justice award to an LGBTQ+ person.

Holding the National Convention of the NAACP in Boston was important. As the first chartered branch of the NAACP, Boston helped lay the foundation for the vitality and vibrancy of black social justice activism. The pox on Boston's reputation as one of the racist cities in our nation has held us all back, all Bostonians-black and white- and the entire Commonwealth. And the NAACP once homophobic stance on LGBTQ+ civil rights held the black community back and the organization from thriving together.

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After clash over teaching on gender, psychology class may be available to Florida students

By Annie Ma and Adriana Gomez Licon
Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The first time the College Board bumped up against Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis's efforts to inject conservative ideals into education standards, it ultimately revamped the Advanced Placement course for African American studies, watering down curriculum on slavery reparations and the Black Lives Matter movement — and a nationwide backlash ensued.

Now, faced with altering its AP Psychology course to comply with Florida's limits on teaching about sexual orientation and gender identity, the nonprofit College Board is pushing back. It advised the state`s school districts Thursday to not offer the college-level course to Florida's high school students unless it can be taught in full.

By late Friday, statements from both sides suggested students in Florida would be able to take the full course after all.

In a letter to state superintendents, Florida Education Commissioner Manny Diaz Jr. said the state believed the psychology course could be taught "in its entirety."

The College Board said it hoped Florida teachers now will be able ``to teach the full course, including content on gender and sexual orientation, without fear of punishment in the upcoming school year."

With students preparing to return to school in less than a week in many school districts, it remained unclear whether any modifications to the course would be expected to comply with Florida`s rules.

Parents and students were left trying to figure out what to do.

Brandon Taylor Charpied said his daughter, who goes to school in a suburb of Jacksonville, had been set to take an AP psychology course but made a last-minute switch a few weeks ago after "rumblings" about the rift between Florida and the College Board.

"To be fair, we saw the writing on the wall," Charpied said. "It's a very difficult situation for high schools to navigate right now with only days until the school year starts."

In Tallahassee, Florida's capital, the Leon County school district's superintendent met with high school teachers and principals to decide what to do about the roughly 300 students who had already registered for the course this year — and who bank on AP classes to earn college credits. In Orlando, Orange County Public Schools sent a message to parents who have children who were registered for AP Psychology to say they were working to come up with other options.

Because the College Board is standing by its decades-old psychology curriculum, school districts in the rest of the country are not being affected — unlike when it made changes to the African American studies curriculum.

In its statement Thursday, the College Board said DeSantis` administration "has effectively banned AP Psychology in the state by instructing Florida superintendents that teaching foundational content on sexual orientation and gender identity is illegal under state law."

Florida's Department of Education rejected the assertion that it had banned the course. The statement Friday from Diaz said the AP course can be taught "in a manner that is age and developmentally appropriate."

Under an expanded Florida law, lessons on sexual orientation and gender identity are not allowed unless required by existing state standards or as part of reproductive health instruction that students can choose not to take. In the spring the state asked the College Board and other providers of college-level courses to review their offerings for potential violations.

The College Board refused to modify the psychology course to comply with Florida's new legislation. The course asks students to describe how sex and gender influence a person's development — topics that have been part of the curriculum since it launched 30 years ago.

In standing firm against pressure from Florida officials, the College Board, which administers the SAT and AP exams, has acknowledged missteps in the way it handled the African American studies curriculum.

"We have learned from our mistakes in the recent rollout of AP African American Studies and know that we must be clear from the outset where we stand," the non- profit said in June.

Literacy and free-speech experts lauded the College Board`s new approach.

"These concessions are not a strategy that's working,`` said Kasey Meehan, the Freedom to Read program director at PEN America, a nonprofit dedicated to the advancement of literature and human rights. "It's not like there's some common middle ground and then we've resolved it and moved on."

Meehan said that while other states may not have gone as far as Florida in asking for course revisions, legislation across the country is having a chilling effect on teachers at all grade levels. Even if concepts are not explicitly banned, many educators are left in the dark about what they may get in trouble for teaching in the classroom, she said.

"We have heard that it's hard to teach about everything from the Civil War to Harvey Milk, who is the first openly gay elected official in California,`` Meehan said. "There's just an increased culture of fear and intimidation that's playing out."

The American Psychological Association said Florida`s new policy means students will receive an incomplete education.

"Requiring what is effectively censored educational material does an enormous disservice to students across Florida, who will receive an incomplete picture of the psychological research into human development," said Arthur Evans Jr., CEO of the association.

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billy masters

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One thing everyone who has been through a breakup will tell you is that it isn't caused by one thing —unless, of course, your mate is bad in bed. That is a dealbreaker. In the case of the divorce of **Ricky Martin and Jwan Yosef**, we now know that it's been on a downward spiral for three years —which is particularly long since they've only been married for six! "This isn't something new," said Ricky. "We have been planning this situation for a long time. This is pre-pandemic." I've heard of people staying together for the children —but for the pandemic? "When the public found out that we were divorcing, we had already gone through a process of much solitude. We were firm that this is what needed to happen for his well-being, my well-being, and for our children." All I got out of that was Jwan isn't that bad in bed. After all, didn't Ricky say it was "firm"? And, frankly, the fact that Yosef spells his name "Jwan" would probably be a dealbreaker for moi!

I must confess that I've spent more than a few sleepless nights pondering the breakup of **Justin Trudeau's** marriage —or, perhaps, longing for Trudeau to ponder me. The couple went public with their uncoupling while revealing no details... except that they have already signed a "legal separation agreement". What we do know is that both men and women are coming out of the closet wanting Trudeau to come...well, wherever he wants.

Isaac Mizrahi is apparently the only gay out there to not know that **Andy Cohen** identifies as a top. When Cohen guested on the "Hello Isaac" podcast, one of the fashionista's more pointed questions was, "Are you a top or a bottom?" Andy didn't hesitate to proclaim, "I'm a top". Predictable. Less so was Cohen's follow-up statement. "I wish that I could...I need to loosen up, as they say." I know some men who could help him in that department.

Apparently everyone has been assuming that **Troye Sivan** is a power bottom. I, on the other hand, would have a devil of a time picking him out of a police lineup. Yes, I've read his name a lot, but all I'm actually certain of is that he isn't that little person from the "Austin Powers" movies. Beyond that, no clue. Well, I know he sings —but don't ask me to hum any of his ditties. One such ditty is called "Bloom", which Troye (with an "e") believes led people to assume he's a bottom. "I think in the sort of consciousness of gay people, I'm some crazy power bottom or something, which is just not the case, and I just wanted to put that out there." First, methinks the lady doth protest too much, Macduff. And, honey, if you're putting it out there —well, that's how rumors get started!

This leads to a story about **Tom Daley** —and the connection is not what you'd think...or maybe it is. Daley announced that he's in training for the Paris Olympics. In making the announcement via YouTube, he was playing Troye Silvan's "Rush", which is an ode to gay intimacy. At least that's what I'm told —I never heard the song.

Thankfully, I know who **J. Harrison Ghee** is. And yet, I readily confess that I have not yet made it to Broadway to see "Some Like It Hot". By the time I go, the role might be played by **Jimmy "Dynomite" Walker**! I say that because the Tony winner is already looking toward the next project. JHG is about to do what they call an "industry reading" of a new musical based on "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil". Not surprisingly, the role on the table is the one played by **The Lady Chablis** in the film. I don't know this for a fact, but I would bet **Kevin Spacey** has not been invited to participate.

And now, a story about somebody I not only have heard of, but actually know. My pal **Varla Jean Merman** has revealed that she's about to embark on an exciting new career opportunity —a Vegas residency! Admittedly, it's a rather short residency —October 3-5. As Varla says, "It's not so much a residency. It's more like a Residence Inn". But, as I say, a gig's a gig. Varla will be playing the Westgate in Las Vegas. "It has such history. My colleague **Barbra Streisand**, my colleague **Elvis**, they performed there —and now I'm carrying the torch." I can guarantee you, there's no way I'll be missing Varla Las Vegas!

Then there's **Lizzo**. And, yes, I do know who Lizzo is. Anyone who can play the flute while twerking in a bathing suit onstage is my kinda gal. Alas, Lizzo is in the news for all the wrong reasons. It's no surprise that she's a big girl. Hell, she called her reality show "Watch Out for the Big Grrrls". Three of her backup dancers (two of whom were vets of the reality show) are suing her for sexual harassment, assault, discrimination and fostering what is called a "hostile work environment". The part that grabbed me was the accusation that the dancers were forced to attend and participate in sex shows in Amsterdam. Allegedly, Lizzo pressured them to go with her —I guess saying "Thanks, but no thanks" was not an option. Let me quote some of the suit's more colorful prose: "Lizzo began inviting cast members to take turns touching the nude performers, catching dildos launched from the performers' vaginas, and eating bananas protruding from the performers' vaginas." Not only does this sound unappetizing, it also sounds unhygienic. The suit claims that Lizzo was "robbing them of the choice not to participate." Robbed? At banana point? So, the dancers didn't feel comfortable saying no, but now feel comfortable suing? Could it be that they didn't want to rock the boat while on the payroll, but now that they've cashed the checks, they're looking to cash in? I'm just asking...

Meanwhile, the strikes plaguing the performing community continue. And two performers found themselves on the wrong side of the picket line. First was **Stephen Amell**, who went public at GalaxyCon in Raleigh, North Carolina, saying, "I do not support striking". He added that he found the strike a "reductive negotiating tactic", "incredibly frustrating", and "myopic". There he goes, showing off that Canadian education! After being vilified online, he explained that while he stands with the union, he does not stand with how the impasse is being handled. He added, "When you see me on the picket line, please don't whip any hard fruit". I can't promise that.

Zachary Levi was also at a ComicCon —but his was in Manchester, England. During his "presentation" (for which he was paid a pretty penny), the "Shazam" star said, "I'm not allowed to talk about —this is so dumb —I'm not allowed to talk about any of my previous work." While this is technically true, it's not actually true. Zachary was paid to attend the convention as a personality, not to promote any specific project. After being raked over the coals (figuratively, I'm sure), he said, "It's come to my attention that an offhand remark I made in jest last weekend is being taken out of context." See, this is why you need writers —we're much better at crafting jests! "So let me be clear," continued Zach. "I fully support my union, the WGA, and the strike." Either way, I'd still fuck him. As to Amell —only if forced at fruit point. Or if his cousin were involved.

On the other hand, **Billy Crystal** rented an ice cream truck and provided free refreshing treats for his colleagues on the picket line in LA. The menu (which included cones, cups, sundaes, floats, and shaved ice), was signed, "Stay Strong —Billy Crystal". It almost makes me wish I'd picketed in 90-something degree temps...almost.

Since we don't have room for an "Ask Billy" question this week, I'll take a second to tell you that the recently deleted workout videos of **Orlando Bloom** can be found on BillyMasters.com.

When we're giving you a reason to flex a certain muscle, we've definitely come to the end of another column. Before signing off, we must acknowledge the passing of **Paul Reubens**, aka **Pee-wee Herman**. While he was cagey about his private life, it's hard not to love anyone who frolicked with **Joe Manganiello**. Plus, he did something very clever —he wrote his own obituary. Maybe I'll do something like that on www.BillyMasters.com —the site that's always thinking ahead. If you have a question, drop a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I'll get back to you before someone gives me head! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

Photo by Rhododendrites, via Wikimedia Commons.

Isaac Mizrahi

Photo by Raph_PH, via Wikimedia Commons.

Lizzo

Photo via Netflix.

Joe Manganiello & Pee-wee Herman

Mombian

Continued from page 1

existing birth certificate(s).

The Eurocentralasian Lesbian* Community (EL*C), a network of hundreds of organizational and individual members. issued an open letter to Meloni last week, explaining that the government's actions "will have major impacts" on the everyday life of children in these families. "Their mom cannot pick them up at school, they might not be able to do educational activities and they will not be able to travel. Their right to healthcare will be in danger, as only one parent will be able to authorize medical procedures (from the flu shot to urgent life-saving procedures)," EL*C said.

One impacted couple, Vanessa Finesso and Cristina Zambon, had their child via reciprocal IVF using Zambon's egg, carried in Finesso's uterus, but Zambon is still being removed from the birth certificate despite being the child's genetic parent. To make things worse, the couple told the U.K.'s Daily Mail, Finesso has cancer; if she dies, Zambon will have no rights to their child. In other cases, the parent being stripped of rights has neither genetic nor gestational ties, but nevertheless planned for and is raising the child(ren) jointly with her partner.

Famiglie Arcobaleno (Rainbow Families), the country's largest organization for LGBTQ parents, said in a statement that the Meloni government's actions were "removing a legal parent from minors even 6 years after birth: a shameful act unworthy of a civilized country." ("togliere un genitore legale a minori anche a distanza di 6 anni dalla nascita: un atto vergognoso e indegno di un paese civile." Google Translate translations.)

In another statement they called the government's moves "a violent and overbearing action against our children who risk being suddenly deprived of their family identity and of any legal protection by the intentional parent." ("un'azione violenta e prepotente nei confronti dei nostri figli che rischiano di vedersi improvvisamente privati della loro identità familiare e di qualsiasi protezione legale da parte del genitore intenzionale.")

EL*C called on its members to demonstrate at Italian embassies and consulates, and such protests have taken place so far in Belgium (Brussels), France (Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseilles, Nice, Paris), Germany (Berlin, Cologne), Portugal (Lisbon, Porto), Spain (Alicante), the U.K. (Dublin, London), and at the Vatican. More may be forthcoming.

The organization is also encouraging people to print their open letter (at lesbiangenius.org, "Lesbians March on Italian Embassies!") and send it to the Italian embassy or consulate near them. (The Italian Embassy in Washington D.C. is at 3000 Whitehaven Street NW, Washington, DC 20008, and its e-mail address is washington.ambasciata@esteri.it.)

Queer families are under attack in Italy in other ways as well. The lower house of the Italian Parliament, the Chamber of Deputies, voted in late July to go beyond simply outlawing surrogacy within Italy and to declare it a "universal crime" ("reato universale"), penalizing Italian citizens with up to two years in prison and fines of up to one million euros if they go abroad for surrogacy, even to places where it is legal. The Senate will vote on the bill this fall.

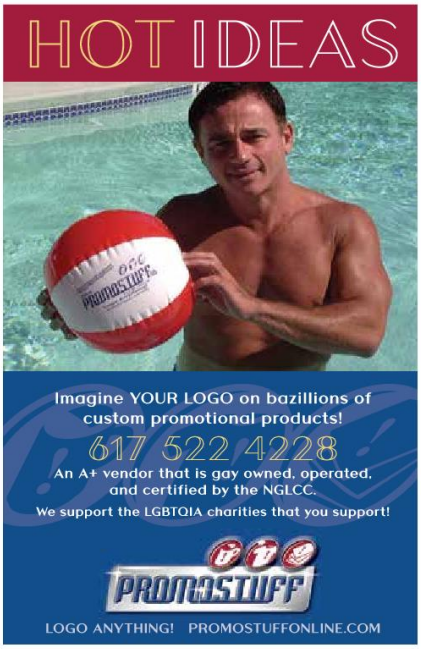
While the U.S. has not seen a mass removal of parentage rights as in Padua, several trial courts, including ones in Oklahoma and Pennsylvania, have recently removed nongestational mothers from their children's birth certificates in individual cases. And if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns the right to marriage equality, as Justice Clarence Thomas has hinted could happen, nongestational LGBTQ parents in even more states could face further difficulties securing their parentage.

Even now, as a recent report from the Movement Advancement Project (MAP) has shown, LGBTQ parents, married and not, are subject to a "patchwork" of parentage laws across the United States that often leave their children vulnerable, without secure legal ties to one or more of their parents ("Relationships at Risk," mapresearch.org).

Some states, such as Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Colorado, have recently modernized their laws to clarify and simplify paths to parentage for all families today, while others continue to make it difficult for LGBTQ families and others formed via assisted reproduction to secure their family's legal ties. (See "LGBTQ Paths to Parentage Security," at lgbtqparentage.org, for a guide that GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD) and I developed to help LGBTQ parents and prospective parents understand current options for legally protecting our families.)

We should therefore stand in solidarity with the queer-parent families in Italy, even as we push for laws that better protect children of LGBTQ families in the U.S. In our connected global world, we can do no less.

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 1300+ LGBTQ family books.



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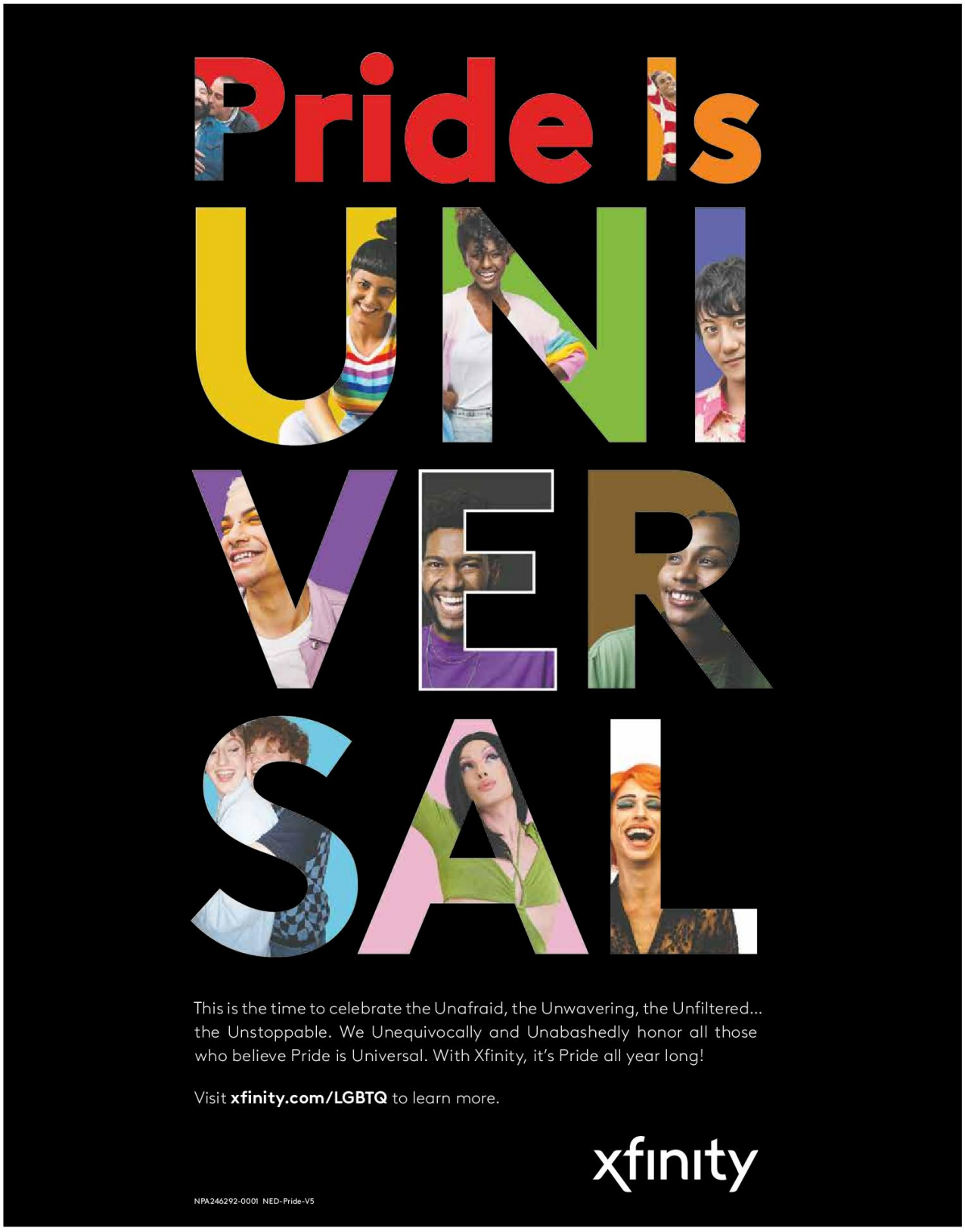
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