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A Parent By Any Other Name: What Kids Call Their LGBTQ Parents

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

One of the most frequent questions I've heard from prospective LGBTQ parents is "What should our kids call us?" I therefore began the Mombian LGBTQ Parental Names Project in 2011 to collect examples of our parental names. Here are just a few of the names—and the stories behind them—that more than 400 people have now anonymously shared.

There are, unsurprisingly, lots of "Mom," "Mommy," "Mama," "Dad," "Daddy," and "Papa," occasionally with a first name or initial added.

Sometimes names can change, as in this family:

"We started parenting first as foster parents.... In the last ten years we've had 16 kids come and go through our

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 4*

50th Anniversary of the Combahee River Collective

by Rev. Irene Monroe
contributing writer

Fifty years ago, in 1974, the Combahee River Collective was founded in Boston by several lesbian and feminist women of African descent. As a sisterhood, they understood that their acts of protest were shouldered by and because of their ancestors—known and unknown—who came before them. The CRC's name honors the military actions of abolitionist Harriet Tubman, known as the 1863 Combahee River Raid, which freed over 750 enslaved people.

The CRC founders and frequent participants are the A-list of Black feminism's foremothers: Cheryl Clarke, Demita Frazier, Gloria Akasha Hull, Audre Lorde, Chirlane McCray, Margo Okazawa-Rey and twins Barba-

see **MONROE,** *page 4*

OBITUARY

Genelle Bishop

Carolyn Genelle Bishop passed away peacefully, at her home in Boston, Massachusetts, on March 1, 2024, just one week past her 88th birthday celebration.

Born in the small town of Goose Creek, Texas, to Frederic and Martha Lee Fenton, Genelle enjoyed a childhood filled with tennis, waterskiing,

see **BISHOP,** *page 5*

Photo by Marilyn Humphries.

NATIONAL NEWS

Things to know about developments impacting LGBTQ+ rights across the US

By Geoff Mulvihill
Associated Press

A legal settlement in Florida, legislative action in Arkansas and a lawsuit in Georgia this week made waves in an ongoing national battle over the rights of LGBTQ+ Americans.

Over the past three years or so, many Republican officials have been trying to limit those rights, imposing rules on which sports transgender students can play and which bathrooms they can use,

see **NATIONAL,** *page 7*

LGBTQ+ rights supporters rally in the hallway outside an Iowa House Judiciary subcommittee hearing, Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2024, at the Statehouse in Des Moines, Iowa. The rights of LGBTQ+ people continue to be in flux across the U.S. with a new flurry of developments. AP Photo by Photo/Charlie Neibergal.

The true worth of the *Cost of Living*

Gina Fonseca as Jess and Sean Leviashvili as John in "Cost of Living" at SpeakEasy Stage Company. Photo by Nile Scott Studios.

Cost of Living, SpeakEasy Stage Company at Roberts Studio Theatre, Calderwood Pavilion, Boston Center for the Arts, through March 30. 617-933-8600 or www.SpeakEasyStage.com

By Jules Becker
Contributing Writer

Caring and being cared for are universal human needs—often satisfied at great personal cost. As Martyna Majok powerfully demonstrates in her 2018 Pulitzer Prize winning play "Cost of Living" (2016 at Williamstown and 2023 Tony nominee), such connection can be all the more challenging for people with disabilities. Under the strong direction of Alex Lonati, SpeakEasy Stage Company's moving Boston area premiere is capturing the emotional journeys and physical challenges of two such people,John, a mid-20's Princeton

see **COST OF LIVING,** *page 5*

"I didn't marry, Robin. And I didn't give birth to children. I married Nature. Nature's my husband!"

—Jenifer Lewis tells ABC's Robin Roberts about her near-death experience in Africa.

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

Photo courtesy of ABC.

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OBITUARY

David Mixner, LGBTQ+ activist and Bill Clinton campaign advisor, dies at 77

NEW YORK (AP) — David Mixner, a longtime LGBTQ+ activist who was an adviser to Bill Clinton during his presidential campaign and later called him out over the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy regarding gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender or queer personnel in the military, has died. He was 77.

Mixner died Monday at his home in New York City, according to Annise Parker, president and CEO of the LGBTQ+ Victory Fund. Mixner had been in hospice for some time, Parker said. In 1991, Mixner was one of the founding members of the organization that recruits and supports LGBTQ+ political candidates.

"David was a courageous, resilient and unyielding force for social change at a time when our community faced widespread discrimination and an HIV/AIDS crisis ignored by the political class in Washington, DC," the Victory Fund said in a statement Monday. "In 1987, David joined one of the first HIV/AIDS protests outside the Reagan White House, where police wore latex gloves because of the stigma and misinformation around HIV/AIDS," and was arrested.

Mixner believed that the LGBTQ+ community needed to be visibly and consistently involved in the political process and "dragged people along with him," said Parker, the former mayor of Houston, Texas. He was social and witty and had a big personality, she said, but added that it was his moral compass that people should remember the most: He was willing to speak up and stand up.

"He got other people to be involved but he also held people accountable," Parker said. "When politicians didn't make their commitments, he was willing to call them out on it."

Mixner grew up in Elmer, New Jersey, according to the New Jersey Hall of Fame, which he was inducted into in 2021.

Mixner's father, Benjamin, was a farmer and his mother, Mary, was a homemaker and notary and later a bookkeeper for the local John Deere dealership, according to his niece, Lizzy Yates. His sister, Patsy Annison, died in 2018 and he is survived by his brother, Melvin Mixner, Yates said.

He attended Arizona State University and the University of Maryland and later helped organize efforts to end the war in Vietnam and worked for political campaigns. He also wrote several books, including a memoir "Stranger Among Friends."

In a statement, Mixner's family said they were grieving the loss of a much loved brother and uncle, who at age 6 was convinced by his brother that he could fly and if he ran fast enough, he wouldn't fall from the hayloft and break an arm.

"He taught us to open our arms and our hearts. He taught us to stand up for those things and people who we hold dear," the statement read. "He taught us to try to at least try to fly because bones heal."

Mixner, who was credited with raising millions of dollars for Clinton from gay and lesbian voters, angered the White House in 1993 by attacking then-U.S. Sen. Sam Nunn, D-Ga. In a speech, Mixner called Nunn, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, an "old-fashioned bigot" for opposing Clinton's plan to lift the ban on gays in the military.

When Clinton began to compromise with Congress and the Pentagon on the issue later that year, Mixner accused the White House of misleading gay leaders. He said Clinton "sacrificed the freedom of millions for your own political expediency." Days later, Mixner was among more than two dozen people arrested in front of the White House in a protest of Clinton's retreat from his campaign pledge to lift the ban by executive order.

Neil Giuliano, the former mayor of Tempe, Arizona, traveled to New York last month to visit with Mixner, whom he had known for decades, and they talked about politics and life and the afterlife.

"Facing death compels one to be totally bare and totally honest," he said.

Giuliano described Mixner as an "activist with grace" who was influential with people at all levels.

"It's not like he wasn't angry, but he came forward with a way of talking about issues and with such grace and he presented in such a way that brought people in and didn't keep people out," said Giuliano, who now serves on the LGBTQ+ Victory Fund's board. "I think that's why so many people were drawn to him."

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Mombian

Continued from page 1

home and four stay forever. Sometimes I am just Mama and sometimes Meggie and sometimes both and increasingly "MOM" as our adopted kids get older."

Sometimes the kids chose the names, accidentally or on purpose:

"Our son chose to call me mommo at about 18 months old.... I called him baby-o and buddy-o, so I think that's why I became mom-o. Our daughter just called us what my son already did."

"When I would come home from work, my wife would announce 'Mama Tara Is Home' and when our daughter was learning to talk, she shortened it to Mataya, and it is my favorite word in the world."

"[I go by] Mr. Mom. I'm femme nonbinary, and didn't realize it or come out until my kids were teens. They adapted quickly, have been super supportive, and made up my new name."

"Our kid's other bio-parent and my sweet wife transitioned and our kid started calling her Momz pretty early on after she came out.... She was always the more maternal of the two of us from the start. We really let the kid decide what honorifics they wanted to bestow on us."

"[I am a] non-binary gestational parent.... My kids were 3 and 7 when I started transitioning, so I wanted them to have a say in the term.... I finally heard someone else say they use 'Otter' as a pun off of 'other parent.' I thought it was cute and it won over my 7-year-old (who was the holdout on many other options) because she loves puns."

Many parents drew on their heritage, with names including "Nimama" (Cree/Michif for "my mother"), "Maman," (French for "Mother"), "Pabbi" (Icelandic for "Daddy"), "Papou" (French, short for "Papounet," a nickname for "dad"), "Mutti" (German for "Mom"), "Papa" (German for "Father"), "Ima" (and "Eema" and "Eemah"; Hebrew for "Mother"), "Anya" (Hungarian for "Mother"), and "Papá" (Spanish for ""Dad).

Nonbinary parents also tapped into their heritage:

"I am Mapa due to combining the French maman and papa to represent my non-binary identity."

"I came out as non-binary when my kids were hitting their tween years, so they asked to rename me.... We chose the word "tuiste" ... it is Gaelic for parent."

"I'm a trans non-binary single adopter from Wales. 'Mamtad' is a combination of the Welsh words for mother and father."

"[I am a] transmasc nonbinary parent. [I use] Mado, shortened from 'amado,' meaning 'beloved' in Portuguese."

Nonbinary parents created parental names in other ways, too:

"I'm non-binary.... I finally settled on Pompom, a combination of Papa and Mom... My girls were 7 & 9 when I asked them to make the switch. They were a little slow to adopt, but they call me it more and more. Definitely euphoria."

"I didn't want to be called Mommy or Daddy, so we came up with a creative solution: Nomie. A mixture of nonbinary and mommy!"

"I ... ended up going with fommy because it was a mix of mommy and father which I am both."

"Everyone I know calls me Tigger, an old camp counselor name that stuck. So the kids were introduced to me as Tigger. I'm nonbinary and masc presenting so 'mom' or any derivatives didn't feel right. I don't identify as male so 'dad' felt wrong. The kids call me Tigger, but I'm 'their Tigger' so it's more like a parent term then just my name."

"I'm a nonbinary person who uses they/them pronouns and dabbles in both masc and fem presentation.... After I gave birth I got worried as none of the titles for nonbinary parents felt right. Eventually I went with my gut and now I'm Dad ... and my Latino partner is Papá."

"I love ze/hir/hirs pronouns, but mostly use they/them since they're more familiar, so I felt like Zaze (pronounced Zazee) was perfect when I was considering gender-neutral parent names."

"[I am a] genderqueer, masc, non-bio parent. My wife breastfed and I gave bottles. The title of "bottle mom" slowly turned into "Baba Mama" and then eventually Baba.... Now all my daughter's friends and teachers call me Baba. It is like I'm everyone's Baba, and I love it!"

One person also noted how a parental name may provide important affirmation of identity in the world at large:

"My parent name ('Aba') means 'dad' in Hebrew.... Especially since I'm still read as female most of the time, having a more masculine-coded parent title helps be a counterpoint to the song of constant misgendering when other people refer to me as 'mom' or some variation."

LGBTQ parental names, as these examples show, are as varied, creative, and intersectional as our community itself. I encourage you to visit mombian.com and click "Naming" on the menu to see even more names and stories and to submit your own.

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 1,500+ LGBTQ family books.

Monroe

Continued from page 1

ra and Beverly Smith. The CRC was formed to respond to the Black Nationalist and misogynistic politics of the Black Power Movement and the exclusionary practices of white feminism.

The social upheaval of the 1960s and '70s revealed a confluence of political struggles — the Vietnam War, Black Civil Rights, Black Power, Women's Rights, and LGBTQ+ rights movements, which informed and ignited Second Wave Feminism. In Boston, the busing crisis and the Roxbury murders of 11 black women in 1979 added to the explosive tenor. The surge of activism and organizing was epic, and the CRC was in the mix.

Black Feminists

The National Black Feminist Organization (1973–'76) in New York City was formed at a time when the single-issue agendas of Black men and white women ignored the oppressions of racism and sexism Black women confronted. In the 1970s, NBFO was one of the earliest and most influential Black feminist organizations in Second Wave Feminism, with 10 chapters nationwide. When the Boston Chapter of NBFO broke away — which Smith and Frazier established and then formed CRC — CRC became the other.

The breakaway from NBFO happened for many reasons. One of the reasons was that CRC was anti-capitalist. "We believed socialist theory was important as we considered the material situations of Black women under capitalism. That did not appear to be a conversation taking place in the NBFO," Frazier told The Nation Magazine in 2021. For poor Black and LBTQ women, NBFO was too myopic in its scope and in advocating for them because of its "bourgeois-feminist stance." Because CRC was radical, grassroots, and inclusive in their organizing efforts across diverse racial, class, and identity groups, the CRC felt by explicitly challenging homophobia, NBFO would not do enough to address the specific needs of Black lesbians in organizing as Black feminists.

The Statement

In explaining Black women's lives as interlocking oppressions (laying the groundwork for the theory and practice of intersectionality), the "Combahee River Collective Statement" is one of the most referenced manifestos across various identity groups and movements.

The most famous line in the Statement captures CRC's core belief: "If Black women were free, it would mean that everyone else would have to be free since our freedom would necessitate the destruction of all the systems of oppression." Simply put, it means all systems of oppression impact Black women. If Black women's interlocking systems of oppression were eradicated, then all other marginalized groups would be free, too. In depicting the struggles of Black women, the term "identity politics" was coined, often maligned by the Left and the Right, and used to justify separatism. Separatism is antithetical to CRC's core actions of coalition-building. However, "identity politics" means that because Black women's lived experiences in a capitalist heteropatriarchal society choke our quality of life, we have the right to determine our political agenda.

The Statement's principal writers were Barbara, Beverly Smith, and Demita Frazier. Queried in a 2014 interview if the Statement's writers knew at the time what a seminal document they were writing, Frazier replied, "We wrote it as a collective. We crafted the Statement at a time it was ready to be heard. The content and the fullness of it came from our conscious-raising groups and testifying with one another. Although we were young and evolving, we wanted to ensure an intergenerational connection to Black and women of color feminism."

And still, we rise!

To kick off Black History Month last year, Florida Governor DeSantis rolled out his list of banned Black books. I told Smith I was amused to see the CRC Statement not banned from Florida's AP African American Studies curriculum.

"I don't know why the Combahee remains, but it's a primary document," Smith says, laughing. "It's not an individual saying this is what I think Black feminism is as an individual. It's a political manifesto."

The Statement has informed the activist and political framework for Black feminist organizing in Puerto Rico and the Black Lives Matter Movement. It's referenced in academic, political, and grassroots discourses on reparations, mass incarceration, homelessness, and now in the #MeToo Movement. The Statement is frequented in African American Studies, feminist studies, and LGBTQ studies, all the subjects DeSantis has loudly criticized as part of "WOKE" culture.

The CRC was active from 1974 to 1980. Its impact is still seen today.

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Cost of Living

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graduate student with cerebral palsy and Ani, an early 40's separated Bayonne, New Jersey wife paralyzed with spinal cord injury as the result of an accident.

Janie E. Howland's smart scenic design places John and Ani's respective stories side by side—with the former stage right and the latter stage left. The apartment building backdrop contains window evocations with shadows suggesting residents struggling with their own bouts of loneliness. The title costs have as much to do with John and Ani's caregivers as they do with the challenged man and woman themselves. Playwright Majok writes with authority and insight as someone who actually served as a personal care aide herself. Her knowledge invests John's mid-20's caregiver Jess—a Princeton alum herself—with remarkable authenticity as she shaves, dresses and lifts him to his shower seat (in a frank but subtle sequence) .

By contrast, unemployed late 40's truck driver and would-be caregiver Eddie admits to being sober for the last 12 of 21 faithful years with Ani. Insisting that he has come a long way, Eddie does what he can to care for Ani—who speaks of a strictly business visiting nurse—and help her bathe (with a bathtub that he moves). Ani speaks of wanting to go to Maine. While both have "too much dirt on each other," emotionally conflicted Eddie indicates a willingness to tear up the divorce. In a striking prologue—monologue, Eddie details a grief in which he tries texting Ani. Common to both John and Ani is an ongoing quest for self-realization.

That focal quest informs the attitude-rich exchanges between John and Jess and the blunt banter between Ani and Eddie. Humor and flirting have their moments in the former as Jess speaks of using perfume samples from Sephora and a date becomes an option. To the play's credit, what follows avoids any neat resolution. In fact, an unusual meeting between Eddie and Jess creates a satisfying new possibility for connection.

To ensure the full authenticity of the care-giving and the individual quests for real living and connection, playwright Majok specifically asks that John and Ani be played by actors with disabilities—a request richly carried out by SpeakEasy Stage. Sean Leviashvili, a gay New Yorker born with cerebral palsy, captures John's vocal tension and his demanding stance in initially interviewing Jess and making sure his needs are fulfilled. Stephanie Gould—who grew up with cerebral palsy in Melrose—finds Ani's tenacity and spunk in the face of vulnerability and conflict with Eddie. Lewis D. Wheeler catches Eddie's angst and profound loneliness—especially in the vivid prologue. Boston University graduate and Cuban American Gina Fonseca has all of first generation immigrant Jess' attitude and street savvy as she cares for John and begins to feel drawn to him. Wheeler and Fonseca make the unusual encounter between Eddie and Jess alternately edgy and touching.

For some theatergoers "Cost of Living" will be a valuable eye-opener to the spirit and strengths of people with disabilities as they confront their daunting challenges. For all audience members, Majok's uplifting play should provide always timely insight about the pricelessness of human connection.

Bishop

Continued from page 1

and family camping trips. She moved to Houston as a young woman and worked at Humble Oil (later Exxon), and during the heyday of the Apollo and Skylab missions, she worked at NASA as a geological draftsperson.

In the early 1980s, Genelle moved to Massachusetts and embraced her new life as a member of the LGBTQ+ community. Whether in Boston or at her place in Provincetown, with her then-partner Deborah Kerr, she was the life of every party. Blessed with an easy Southern charm and boundless energy, she treated everyone as an old friend, even those she'd just met. She was passionate about the fight for marriage equality, progressive politics and candidates, the Red Sox, and closest to her heart, Fenway Health.

Over the years, she marched in countless Pride parades. She was lovingly cared for by her brother, David Fenton, and her daughter, Katherine (née Todd) Bishop; Genelle's family would like to thank the hospice team from Good Shepherd and her devoted caregivers at Springhouse. Along with David and Katherine, Genelle also leaves her brother, Larry Fenton and wife Barbara; dear nephew, Benjamin Fenton and wife Emily, and their young son, John, who brought her so much joy these past months. She leaves, too, her extended family of wonderful friends.

Later in the spring, in lieu of a funeral, there will be a tea dance fundraiser-just as Genelle wanted-to benefit Fenway Health's LGBTQIA+ Aging Project. Details will be forthcoming. To make a donation in her memory https://support.fenwayhealth.org/page/64681/donate/1 or mail to Fenway Health, Development Office, 1340 Boylston Street, Boston, MA 02215.

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billy masters

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Many people think that since I write this type of column, I can't keep a secret. Of course, being able to keep a secret is precisely why I'm still doing this after almost three decades. A perfect example was when **Jenifer Lewis** went public last week regarding her near-death experience deep in the heart of the Serengeti. For those who missed it, the "Black-ish" star took a harrowing 10-foot tumble off the balcony of her hotel in Tanzania and was almost mounted by a herd of cape buffalos—admittedly, something a few of my readers might enjoy. That she was able to keep details secret—complete with being carted away by Maasai warriors, airlifted out of the country by Doctors Without Borders, enduring a nine-hour surgery in Nairobi, three blood transfusions, and six days in ICU—is not the most remarkable part of the story. That I have kept my mouth shut for over two years—well, that's something! I wouldn't do that for just anyone. My brave, strong, talented friend Jenny might have fallen. But she got up!

It's an old showbiz joke. Jenifer Lewis occasionally uses it in her shows. She'll get a standing ovation, and then point to an imaginary person in the back row. "Why aren't you getting up? I don't care if you're in a wheelchair—GET UP!" Well, that always gets a laugh. But it was no laughing matter when **Madonna**—not a laugh riot under the best of circumstances—chastised someone in the front row of her Vancouver concert last month. "What are you doing sitting down over there?" Madonna had a spotlight put on **Vanessa Gorman**, who happened to be in a bright pink wheelchair. "Oh, okay. Politically incorrect. Sorry about that. I'm glad you're here," backtracked the Material Girl. Vanessa happens to be a paraplegic. She recently responded to all of the criticism Madonna got over the issues. "Some people are in wheelchairs and can stand. She had no idea I was paralyzed."

You've all heard about **Rose Hanbury**, right? The woman **Prince William** allegedly had an affair with? As if the Royal Family doesn't have enough problems. Meanwhile, **Kate Middleton** is in an undisclosed location (probably with **Shelly Miscavige**), recovering from God-only-knows what. How many of you believe that on her way to the throne, Princess Kate took an online Photoshopping course. Hands? I didn't think so. But I'm supposed to believe that in the middle of a medical crisis, the future Queen of England decided to do some digital manipulation on a photo of her and her kids—a photo where she's not sporting a ring. And she's able to edit photos, why can't she release a video statement? Something is rotten in the state of Denmark, Macduff! "But who is Rose Hanbury?" I can hear you wistfully crying. She is the Marchioness of Cholmondeley—an explanation that sheds virtually no light on the situation. She's a former model, married to **David Rocksavage**, and has three kids... presumably with her husband. Her grandmother was one of **Queen Elizabeth's** bridesmaids. A while back, some of the more scurrilous British rags broke the affair rumors, pointing out that there is a long tradition of British monarchs having mistresses. True or not, the rumors resurfacing at this time coincide with Kate's mysterious absence.

Watch this seamless transition. Believe it or not, the Oscars were only a week ago. I remember, because we waited to publish this column in case something gossip-worthy happened. Turns out, the gossip happened days earlier. Members of **Prince Harry's** court got in touch with **Elton John** asking for an invite to the singer's iconic Oscars-viewing party. The answer received was a terse, "No". Turns out, Elton harbors some anger ever since Harry questioned some comments in John's autobiography—all of which turns out to be hilarious in light of Harry's casual relationship with facts in his own memoir. The two had been lumped in with other notable persons in a suit against the publisher of the "Daily Mail". Harry dropped his portion of the suit after allegedly being paid a substantial sum of money. Integrity, you see, cannot be bought. But it can be rented... for the right price.

I really don't know what to say about **Al Pacino**. This is one of those "he says/nobody says" controversies that could only be solved by **Robert Stack**. In case you missed it, Pacino was the last presenter at the Academy Awards and ambled onstage with all the panache of an unmade bed. After some forgettable comments, he simply announced that the winner of Best Picture was "Oppenheimer". No list of nominees or producers. No formalities. Just, "Oppenheimer", and see ya. True, he didn't proclaim "La La Land", but still... Most people chalked it up to Al being somewhat bewildered. However, Pacino explains that he did not botch the assignment—he simply was following orders. "There seems to be some controversy about my not mentioning every film by name last night before announcing the Best Picture award. I just want to be clear it was not my intention to omit them, rather a choice by the producers not to have them said again since they were highlighted individually throughout the ceremony. I was honored to be a part of the evening and chose to follow the way they wished for this award to be presented." His explanation seems to hinge on the presumption that the awards show was running long. Problem is that host **Jimmy Kimmel** had just said that they were ahead of schedule. Producers have remained mum on the subject—and I would expect them to either continue that tacit solution or to back up what the legendary star said. Personally, I suspect we have an **Elizabeth Taylor** "Gladiator" situation on our hands.

Have you heard about Allstora? **RuPaul's** new online bookstore? In a video from March 4th, Ru said "Allstora is supporting authors, it is supporting you—all voices, everywhere. This is a platform that I am in love with because the conversation needs to move forward, it really does, through books, through conversations, through community." A week later, it was discovered that Allstora was carrying several books by anti-LGBTQ authors. Works by people like **Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Kirk Cameron**, and other "luminaries" that I have somehow never heard of. Well, except for Adolf Hitler, whose "Mein Kampf" was available for purchase in both English and German...for those of you who enjoy a foreign tongue. CEO **Eric Cervini** took the blame. "While a library should fulfill its civic duty of making all perspectives, however abhorrent, available to all, the environment I envisioned for Allstora was one that made its guests feel safe. In building that space, I failed...While other online bookstores will continue selling hate-filled books, Allstora will not."

Which leads us to a story about someone taking lemons and attempting to make lemonade...literally. When **Don Lemon** announced his new show would be on Twitter/X, everyone thought he was crazy. Then he booked the craziest person he could find as his first guest. And when **Elon Musk** bristled under the scrutiny of Lemon, they parted ways. How anyone thought this venture would end differently is a matter for the theologians. I saw this coming a mile away (so did **Kara Swisher**, as it turns out). Lemon now reveals that his show was never under Musk's purview—he made that revelation on "The View". It was a partnership. Lemon claims to own the footage, which will still pop up everywhere—including on X—on March 18th. Something tells me there is more to this story, even if it ends with Don Lemon being sued or collecting unemployment!

Our "Ask Billy" question looks back to those long-ago Oscars. Randy in Chicago says, *"I loved the **John Cena** streaker bit at the Oscars. Is there any behind-the-scenes footage? Was he actually nude? I figure you'd know."*

I do know. Of course, even without knowing, I would have known. I suspect most people who would be invited to appear on the Academy Awards wouldn't be the type of people who would want to be nude on the Academy Awards. Even John Cena—longing as he may be to have his name linked in any way with the Oscars—is not that person. He is also not so acclaimed as an actor to not go for a laugh, particularly a laugh in which he gets to flaunt his almost-flawless physique alongside his somewhat less-developed comedic chops. Cena was wearing what is known in the biz as a "modesty garment" (and not the type those nice Mormon boys wear). This flesh-colored panel adheres directly to one's skin to provide the illusion of nudity—to say nothing of the genitalia of Ken (of "Barbie" fame). Although we've previously seen his ass in all its glory, we are happy to share some behind-the-scenes stills of Cena's modesty on BillyMasters.com.

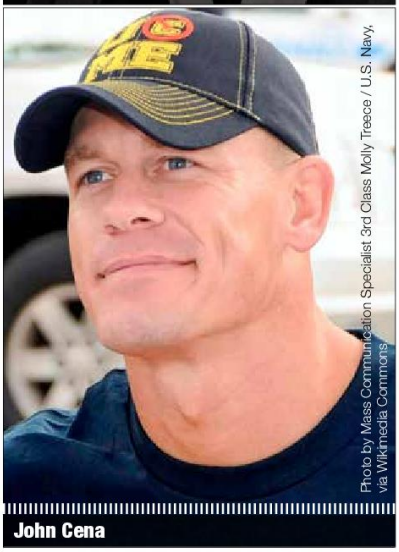
When the only one with something to hide is John Cena, we've definitely come to the end of yet another column. Happily, there's enough dish to go around on www.BillyMasters.com, the site that has nothing to hide. I'll be in Fort Lauderdale this week, but I'm always here to answer your questions. Write to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before any garment I don protects my modesty! So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

Photo by David Shankbone, via Wikimedia Commons

Madonna

Photo by Embajada de EEUU en la Argentina, via Wikimedia Commons

Al Pacino



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John Cena

National

Continued from page 1

among other policies.

The conservative pushback has coincided with more younger people identifying as LGBTQ+.

A Gallup poll released this week based on telephone interviews of more than 12,000 Americans finds that about 1 in 13 U.S. adults identify as LGBTQ+, including less than 1 in 100 of the total population who say they are transgender. But a higher proportion of the youngest adults identified as LGBTQ+ — a little over one-fifth of those born from 1997 through 2005.

The legal and legislative issues at the heart of the debates remain in flux.

Some things to know about last week's flurry of developments.

Florida agrees students, teachers can say 'gay'

Florida this week settled a legal challenge to its 2022 law that bars instruction on sexual orientation and gender identity in public schools, a measure that critics had dubbed "Don't Say Gay."

Under the deal, the law remains in place but some of the restrictions that resulted will be lifted.

The agreement clarifies, for example, that students and teachers are allowed to discuss LGBTQ+ issues. In addition, schools don't have to remove library books that feature LGBTQ+ characters, halt anti-bullying programs that address bullying of LGBTQ+ people, censor valedictorian speeches in which the speaker talks about their gender identity or sexual orientation, or force teachers to remove rainbow flags from classroom doors.

Florida's law barring the instruction of sexual orientation and gender identity, championed by the state's Republican governor and former presidential primary candidate Ron DeSantis, was one of the highest-profile among dozens of measures adopted in Republican-controlled states over the past few years to try to rein in what can be taught about LGBTQ+ issues — and the rights of LGBTQ+ people.

A handful of other states have also limited school curriculums in similar ways.

States push to allow only sex at birth on drivers licenses

Arkansas this week stopped allowing residents to use "X" rather than "F" or "M" to designate their sex on driver's licenses and official identifications.

On Thursday, a predominantly Republican subcommittee endorsed the move, approving the emergency rules for the new policy despite some Democratic lawmakers' objections. The full panel upheld that vote on Friday, allowing them to take effect immediately.

Earlier in the week, a judge in Kansas left in place the state's policy of not allowing transgender people to change the listing for sex on their driver's licenses to something other than their sex at birth.

The policy grew out of a 2023 law that recognizes people's legal gender identities based only on their anatomy at birth. Lawmakers passed the measure by overriding the veto of Democratic Gov. Laura Kelly, whose administration had previously allowed people to change the sex designation on their licenses and birth certificates.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Kansas announced Thursday that it will appeal the latest ruling on behalf of transgender clients.

Lawmakers consider restrictions on gender-affirming care for minors

Lawmakers in Kansas are trying to do what most Republican-controlled states have done already: ban gender-affirming care for minors.

The Kansas House this week approved a ban on puberty blockers, hormones and gender-affirming surgery — which is rarely used — for those under 18. Senate Republicans delayed a vote that had been planned for Thursday to allow time to tweak the bill with the intent of getting two-thirds of the chamber to support it.

If they can do it, it would put the legislature in position to override an expected veto from Gov. Kelly.

Under the bill, doctors who violate the ban could lose their licenses.

At least 23 states have adopted bans on gender-affirming care for minors in recent years. One of those laws — in Arkansas — was struck down by a court. Judges have put the Idaho and Montana versions on hold while their constitutionality is considered.

Tennessee lawmakers are planning a hearing for Wednesday on a measure that would allow lawsuits against anyone who takes a minor to another state for gender-affirming care without a parent's consent.

The bill, framed as a parental rights measure, in some ways echoes an Idaho abortion law that was adopted last year and later put on hold by a court while its constitutionality is considered.

The move to prohibit helping minors travel for care is one of several Tennessee proposals that LGBTQ+ rights advocates are concerned about. Others include a bill that would block businesses from setting their own rules about bathroom access — a move that critics say could target transgender people. One measure would bar the state from requiring adoptive or foster parents to agree with a child's sexual orientation or gender identity. Another would require educators to tell the school's administration and student's parents of any request to affirm the student's gender identity.

None of these proposals have made it to Republican Gov. Bill Lee's desk for his signature.

Idaho considers ban on Medicaid money for gender-affirming care

An Idaho state Senate committee advanced a bill Thursday to block using public funding for gender-affirming care.

The ban would apply to Medicaid and the state employees heath insurance plan. It has already passed the House and could be up for a final vote in the Senate next week.

The issue of paying for gender-affirming care has been a big one in Idaho. In 2022, the state lost a lawsuit filed by a transgender prison inmate who said she was wrongly denied gender-affirming surgery. In a separate lawsuit, plaintiffs accuse the state's Medicaid program of moving too slowly to approve such surgeries.

The advocacy and information organization Movement Advancement Project says that nine states ban Medicaid funding for gender-affirming health care for people of all ages.

College athletes sue over allowing transgender women to compete

More than a dozen current and former women's college athletes on Thursday filed a lawsuit against the NCAA in U.S. District Court in Atlanta, accusing the college sports governing body of violating their rights by allowing transgender women to compete in women's sports.

The highest-profile plaintiff in the case is Riley Gaines, a former University of Kentucky swimmer who tied for fifth in the Division I 200 meter freestyle championship two years ago with Lia Thomas, a University of Pennsylvania swimmer. Thomas, who is transgender, also won the 500 freestyle and finished eighth in the 100 that year.

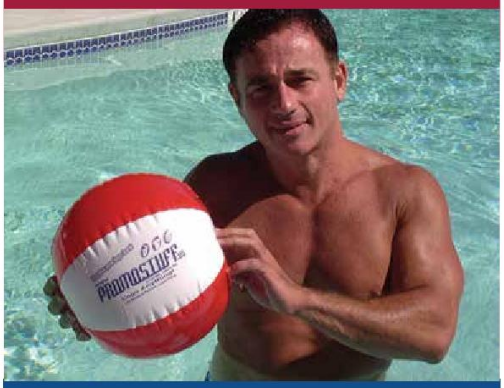
Gaines has remained a major voice against allowing transgender women to compete in women's events.

She and others assert in their legal claim that the NCAA violated the federal Title IX education equity legislation. A proposed federal rule would go the other way by barring outright bans on transgender women in sports.

At least 25 states have passed restrictions on transgender women and girls competing, though some of those measures have been put on hold by courts.

Associated Press reporters Rebecca Boone in Boise, Idaho; Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock, Arkansas; and Kimberlee Kruesi in Nashville, Tennessee, contributed to this report.

HOT IDEAS



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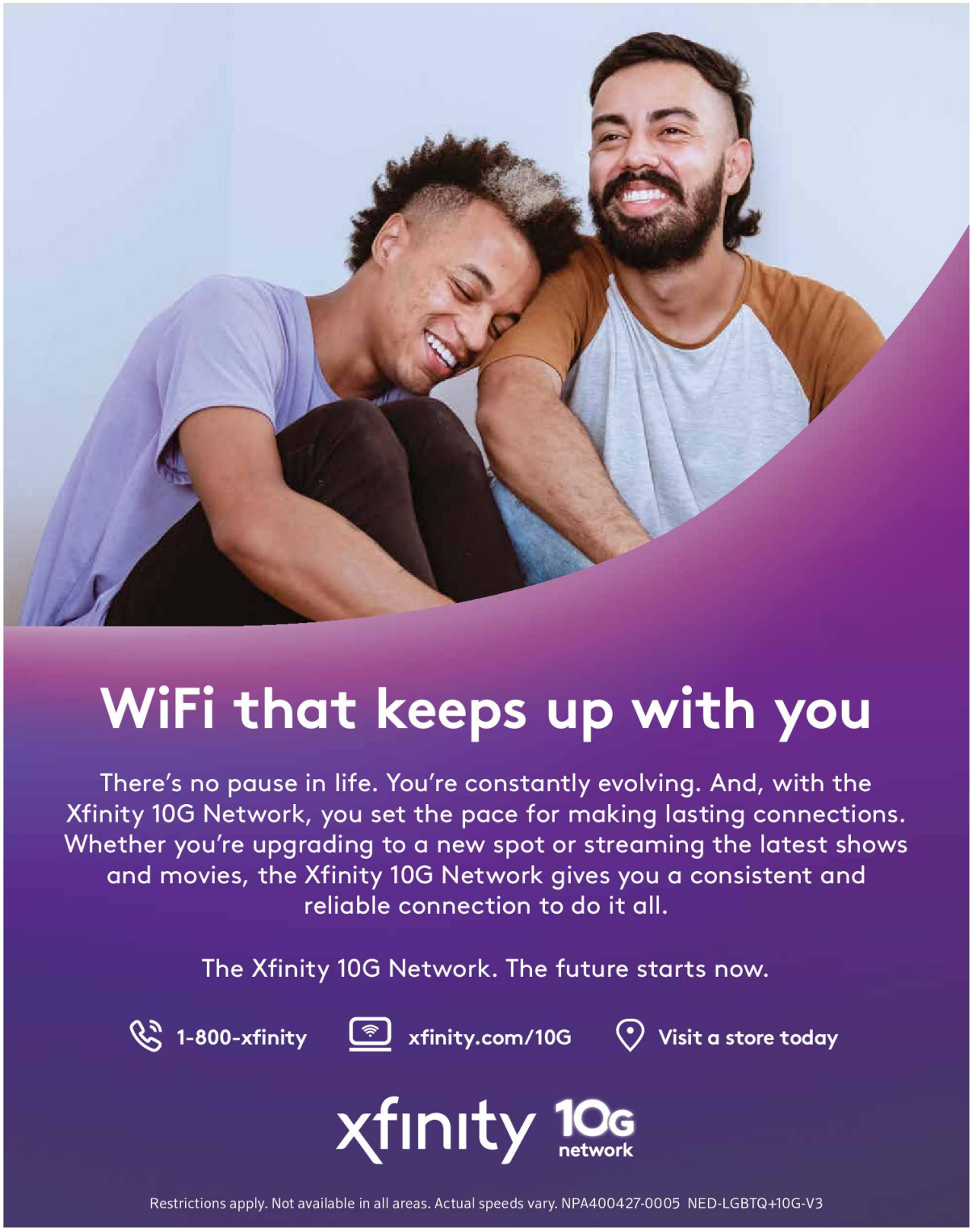
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