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Appeals courts are still blocking Biden's efforts to expand LGBTQ+ protections under Title IX

By Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — A federal appeals court in New Orleans has refused to pause a lower court order that blocks a Biden administration effort to enhance protections for LGBTQ+ students under the federal law known as Title IX.

At issue is an administration rule meant to expand the definition of sexual harassment at schools and colleges and add safeguards for victims. The new protections have been praised by civil rights advocates. Opponents say they undermine the spirit of Title IX, a 1972 law barring sex discrimination in education.

A federal judge in western Louisiana had blocked the rule, responding

see **TITLE IX,** *page 3*

Demonstrators advocating for transgender rights and healthcare stand outside of the Ohio Statehouse, Jan. 24, 2024, in Columbus, Ohio. A federal appeals court on Wednesday, July 17, refused to lift a judge's order temporarily blocking the Biden administration's new Title IX rule meant to expand protections for LGBTQ+ students. Photo by Patrick Orsagos, AP.

It's Kamala time!

by Rev. Irene Monroe
contributing writer

Photo by Alex Morse

Kamala Harris's life as Vice President took a 180-turn in 24 hours from her stumping for Biden in Provincetown, an LGBTQ+ culture hub and haven, on Saturday, July 20, to becoming a potential presidential nominee on Sunday, July 21, when the news broke of Biden leaving the race.

The Biden Victory Fund event at the Pilgrim Monument and Provincetown Museum showed enthusiasm about a possible November win with the Biden-Harris ticket. As the keynote speaker, Harris was wildly welcomed to P-town with placards that read "VP-Town!" Everybody on the Biden team at the event was on message. However, most attendees hoped Biden would exit.

So when the news hit that Kamala Harris was now a potential presidential

see **MONROE,** *page 4*

Gays With Kids Founder Talks Parenting and Progress

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

Brian Rosenberg (R); husband Ferd Van Gameren (L) and children. Photo courtesy of Dana Rudolph.

Brian Rosenberg is on a very personal mission to help LGBTQ+ people build their families. When he was in his 20s and 30s, he said in an interview, "Gay men were not thinking about becoming parents because everyone who would have done it was dying, and many of us, like myself, have HIV, and so we weren't planning for it."

Now, Rosenberg and his husband, Ferd van Gameren, who live in the Boston area, are the fathers of three young teens and co-founders of Gays With Kids (gayswithkids.com), an online community and resource for gay and queer men parents and prospective parents, which will soon ex-

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 7*

America's "first spouse" experiment

46 Plays for America's First Ladies, Hub Theatre Company of Boston at Club Cafe,209 Columbus Avenue, Back Bay, through August 3.Pay-What-You-Can.www.hubtheatreboston.org.

Photo by Andrew Keefe.

By Jules Becker
Contributing Writer

How do you define the role of America's First Lady? Nancy Reagan observed, "There is no job description for the first lady and she's only there because her husband got elected President." Hillary

see **THEATER,** *page 4*

"All of my gay friends were like, 'Honey, I saw your text messages. That's it?!' They go, 'Oh my God, if people hacked into Grindr and put Grindr chats public, none of us would have jobs anymore!'"

- Armie Hammer tells Bill Maher reactions to his so-called scandalous texts. This begs the question - what does it take to become one of Armie's gay friends?

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

Photo by Maximilian Bühn, via Wikimedia Commons.

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MMAA urges the Senate to remove anti-LGBTQ+ healthcare amendments from the NDAA

Submitted by MMAA

We are extremely disappointed that the Senate has included amendments that target service members and their families by limiting their access to medical care. Transgender service members have openly served this country honorably for nearly a decade. Eliminating service members' medical care dishonors their service and breaks the promise our nation made to care for and support those who courageously defend our freedoms.

The proposed NDAA prohibits essential medical treatments which undermine the established standards of care recommended by major medical associations, including the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), the Endocrine Society, and the World Medical Association (WMA). These organizations recognize that affirming medical care, including hormone therapy and puberty blockers, is crucial for the mental and physical health of transgender people.

The specifics of medical care should remain in the hands of medical professionals and their patients. Transgender service members and LGBTQ+ military dependents deserve unwavering access to affirming, safe, and inclusive health care. Transgender service members represent 1% of active-duty personnel with 15,500+ transgender people serving honorably. Creating a discriminatory ban on "sex change surgeries" opens many types of medically necessary surgery to a potential ban.

Military families already face unique challenges and denying LGBTQ+ children access to essential medical care only adds to their burdens. Furthermore, puberty blockers do not affect fertility, and when stopped, puberty resumes.

Many military families with LGBTQ+ children already struggle to access essential healthcare services due to statewide healthcare bans. By denying coverage for medically necessary interventions, legislators are stripping away the right of transgender youth to receive comprehensive and affirming healthcare. This legislative move will likely lead to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide among transgender minors, as well as exacerbate feelings of isolation and rejection. Studies have consistently shown that access to gender-affirming care significantly improves the mental health outcomes of transgender youth, reducing the risk of severe psychological distress.

It is imperative that Congress supports all LGBTQ+ service members and dependents by ensuring they have access to the necessary healthcare services that promote their overall well-being. If service members and their families lose access to comprehensive medically necessary care, it will exacerbate the current readiness, retention, and recruitment issues in the armed forces. Already, military families with transgender youth are choosing to leave service rather than force their dependents to live without medically necessary care.

We urge lawmakers to remove these amendments from the NDAA and recognize the critical importance of gender-affirming care for transgender individuals. Protecting the health and rights of LGBTQ+ individuals, including young people, should be a priority. Denying necessary medical treatments is not only discriminatory but also poses a direct threat to the lives and futures of transgender people.

Modern Military is the nation's largest organization of LGBTQ+ service members, military spouses, veterans, their families, and allies. Modern Military educates, advocates, and champions for the rights and well-being of LGBTQ+ service members, veterans, and their families as well as people living with HIV. We envision an inclusive and equitable military environment where every member of the LGBTQ+ and HIV-positive community is respected, valued, and empowered to thrive.

Title IX

Continued from page 1

to a lawsuit filed by Republican state officials in Louisiana, Mississippi and Montana. The 2-1 ruling from the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in New Orleans was dated Wednesday — the same day the Cincinnati-based 6th Circuit appeals court issued a similar ruling in a Kentucky-filed lawsuit. That has so far resulted in the law being blocked in Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia.

Other states where federal judges have blocked the new rule while it is litigated include Alaska, Idaho, Kansas, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming.

Republicans argue the policy is a ruse to allow transgender girls to play on some sports teams. The Biden administration said the rule does not apply to athletics.

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CALENDAR

Faces & Places: LGBTQ+ History in the West End - A Walking Tour

Sunday, August 11 · 1 - 2:30pm EDT

This walking tour will take visitors through the history of the LGBTQ+ community in the West End, primarily around the North Slope neighborhood. From the late nineteenth century onward, this neighborhood was a hub for LGBTQ+ people in Boston, even when much of their history and activities flew under the radar. This area featured speakeasies, raids, Boston marriages, early publication of queer literature, famous gay bars, and AIDS epidemic protests. This tour will focus on the faces and places of the queer community in the West End and how they shifted over time.

More info and tickets: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/faces-places-lgbtq-history-in-the-west-end-a-walking-tour-tickets-944203808007

Monroe

Continued from page 1

nominee for the head of the ticket, enthusiasm swelled. Both the Black Caucus and Asian American Caucus immediately endorsed Harris. Within 30 minutes of her announcement, One Silicon Valley, a software engineering consulting firm, raised more than $ 1 million.

Also hours later, a national Zoom call from the D.C.-based Black women's organization "#WinWithBlackWomen" had over 40,000 sistahs in attendance. In three hours, these women raised over $1 million to support Harris, which T.V. personality Star Jones, the campaign chair, spearheaded.

"#WinWithBlackWomen" is a national intergenerational and intersectional sisterhood of black diasporic women who leverage talent, influence, and networks to support Black women.

WITHIN 30 MINUTES OF HER ANNOUNCEMENT, ONE SILICON VALLEY, A SOFTWARE ENGINEERING CONSULTING FIRM, RAISED MORE THAN $1 MILLION.

The politics of being the first

When I heard the news of Harris running for president, I immediately thought about how my deceased Brooklyn Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm would be proud of this moment. Chisholm was the first African American woman to campaign for the presidential nomination in 1972 on the Democratic ticket. A woman of temerity and integrity, her slogan was "Unbought and Unbossed." Confronted with racist and sexist opposition, Chisholm lost the nomination. In 2024, similar concerns arise for Harris, too.

When news broke that Kamala was in the race for the White House, Black Twitter was abuzz with exuberance and trepidation." Much of Black Twitter is on board with Kamala as a candidate, but unsure if America feels the same way, "The Root reports.

"Okay, so now it's Kamala. Every white person who wanted him to drop out needs to figure out how to defend a Black woman in person and online for the first time in their lives. That's the job now. I'd like to see it, but I never have," Comedian and podcaster Akilah Hughes wrote on Twitter.

Prominent Democratic donor John Morgan of Florida emphatically stated he would not fundraise for Harris. "She would not be my first choice," Morgan quoted in The Hill. "The donors holding the 90 million can release those funds in the morning. It's all yours. You can keep my million. And good luck," he continued.

Striking the right balance with white Americans - Republican or Democrat-is difficult in this polarized era, especially for a woman of color in power who identifies as black. The "angry black woman" trope hovers over all sisters of African descent. Harris is attacked for her laugh. She runs the risk of being perceived as too loud, too forceful, not knowing her place, not staying in her lane, and being arrogant, albeit she is the V.P.

Must Harris struggle to avoid the misogynoir trope when asserting her power and authority? She mustn't be a titular head for fear of being perceived as unqualified, tokenized, or a DEI hire. Research shows that Harris is one of the most targeted politicians on the Internet, and FOX News runs a constant thread of bogus articles about her.

Job performance

Harris struggled to carve out a lane for herself in her early years, feeling the weight of being the first Black and Asian American V.P. With a job performance approval rating no higher than 39 percent from multiple polls, she had to convince the American public for a second term.

Republicans have made Harris the face of Biden's unfavorable immigration policy to win political ground in this election period. The intersexuality of her race and gender was weaponized to discredit her ability. It was unsurprising to women and people of color that Harris was appointed to fix immigration that previous administrations couldn't resolve, which set her up to fail.

I'm with her!

Harris's blunders were magnified, and her victories muted. Harris has accomplished a lot since taking office. Alongside Biden, Harris helped America get vaccinated, rebuild the economy due to COVID, led Congress to protect voter's rights by building a broad and diverse coalition, expand workers' rights to organize and collectively bargain, and women's issues-reproductive justice since the overturn of Roe v Wade, maternal health, child poverty.

In her first public speech since her running announcement, Harris said, "Building up the middle class will be a defining goal of my presidency. We here know when our middle class is strong, America is strong."

In one day, Harris garnered more than half the delegates needed to win the nomination. She has reenergized the base and injected hope, focusing on working folks like me.

Theater

Continued from page 1

Clinton noted, "The First Lady role is really difficult...You have to create it for yourself."

Notwithstanding such definition challenges, five playwrights—Genevieve Gallo-Bayiates, Sharon Greene, Chloe Johnston, Bilal Dardai and Andy Bayiates—have put together short pieces stretching from Martha Washington to Jill Biden in an appropriately titled effort "46 Plays for America's First Ladies." By turns disturbing, touching, informative and humorous, this often insightful 2020 collaboration (by authors known as Neo-Futurists) has as much to say about the admittedly imperfect American experiment as it does about the very different First Ladies themselves. Hub Theatre Company of Boston—in a vivid and energetic area premiere—is bringing timely attention to White House women at a time when democracy and women's rights are very much at stake.

"46 Plays" calls for versatile actresses and an inventive design team—both of which Hub Theatre brings together under the sharp guidance of director-choreographer Ilyse Robbins in the intimate performance room at Club Café (where the 12 year old company presents a staging each summer). The multi-talented cast—Yasmeen Duncan, Lauren Elias, Eleni Kontzamanys, Sophia Muharram and Katie Pickett—smoothly portray the 46 and occasionally gender-bend as some of the presidents. The quintet—especially Duncan and Pickett—sing vibrantly on solo, duo and ensemble as well as in rich harmony under the strong music direction of Jack Cline.

Kudos goes to Emily Bearce for very effective strobe lighting and Katie Chen's inspired AI. E. Rosser ranges from patriotic and informal to parodic and casual in her costume design, and Justin Lahue brings the right ambiance and period evocations to his sets. Also look for smart puppet complement from double threat Rosser and Samantha Mastrati—with gifted actor Brooks Reeves as puppet captain (though the Hillary one is rather unflattering, and her work as Secretary of State is not mentioned).

Do not let the lighter elements of "46 Ladies" fool you. There are revealing details about 10 slave-owning early first ladies. Some first ladies confront brutal treatment of Native Americans. The fact that bachelor James Buchanan lived with his male best friend for 10 years—here in gender-bending evocation- is seen as evidence that he was actually America's first gay president. Mary Lincoln's many family losses seem to mitigate the frequent claim about her being mad. Duncan movingly delivers a "Blue and Gray Blues" song connected with Ulysses Grant and the Civil War."

Gage Baker's effective sound design joins with a haunting projection of the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the order of Harry Truman. Kontzamanys brings poetry to a modern movement sequence as professionally trained dancer Betty Ford is recalled as a supporter of the Equal Rights Amendment (as yet not fully ratified) and abortion rights. Book-loving Laura Bush is taken to task for standing by as husband George and fellow Republicans were working to dismantle school systems.

Where will future first ladies focus their talents and attention? Will some continue the push for universal health care or for student debt forgiveness? Will others concentrate on LGBT rights? Will a woman president counsel a first gentleman to carry the torch of such activism? "46 Plays for America's First Ladies" pays tribute to some and takes exception to others. Even so,this worthy effort suggests that activism for the American experiment should be the work of us all. Hub Theatre Company's exuberant premiere should inspire all Americans.

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Then they came for the cat ladies

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

J.D. Vance's hostility toward childfree women

I think it is better to treat animals like people than to treat people like animals.

Republican vice presidential candidate J.D. Vance said in 2021, "We are effectively run in this country ... by a bunch of childless cat ladies who are miserable at their own lives and the choices that they've made, and so they want to make the rest of the country miserable, too."

My reaction when I read that was to ask, "What is the Latin for government by cat ladies?" My answer was to coin the term felefeminocracy.

I was not aware that America was run by cat ladies. Since we're making things up, I suspect Sen. Vance is one of the people from "Men In Black" who are controlled by tiny aliens inside their heads.

Vance, to put it mildly, has a problem with women. He thinks they should stay home and raise children, and be forced to stay with abusive husbands. Never mind that his wife Usha is an attorney with a JD from Yale who served as a law clerk for Brett Kavanaugh and John Roberts.

The busybodies of the far right think that rules—as Leona Helmsley said about taxes—are for the little people. Paleoconservative and anti-feminist Phyllis Schlafly went around the country for years saying women should stay at home. Evidently she felt at home on the lecture circuit.

Vance also suggested that people's children should be given the vote, to be managed by their parents. His reasoning is that people without children have no stake in the future of the country. He favors the nuclear family over the extended family prevalent in many cultures. He wants to eliminate diverse families (I'm looking at you, Pete and Chasten) and trap everyone in the 1950s sitcom "Father Knows Best."

Before the looming Trump autocracy even starts, I might as well confess that I have no biological children. I do have lots of nephews and nieces whose futures I very much care about, and my partner has a wonderful son who calls me Daddy Rick. There are also a few LGBTQ refugees in Kenya who call me Daddy for helping them after they were forced to flee their homes and countries to avoid honor killings.

Some of those refugees have already been resettled to the United States. No doubt the man at the top of Vance's ticket, Donald Trump, considers them vermin who are poisoning white American blood, even if they are here legally. When the ICE police are rounding up people next year in the promised mass deportation that was cheered by delegates at the Republican National Convention, don't count on them to care who is documented and who is not. If you look like one of "those people," out you go.

To be honest, I think I have more and better family values in my pinky finger than J.D. Vance has in his entire body.

There is no doubt in my mind that my cat lady friends would do a far better job of running this country than the likes of Sen. Vance. As for people being miserable, he seems pretty unhappy himself.

As shown by their demonization of diversity, equity, and inclusion, Trump, Vance, and their diehards think the only sensibilities that deserve respect are their own. Anything they don't like should be mocked, vilified, and possibly banned. It's like going to a restaurant and insisting on ordering for the strangers at the next table.

Why don't these people mind their own business? For that matter, what do they have against cats? Since wild speculation has apparently replaced evidence and science in this country, let me venture to guess that the answer lies in the aloofness cats are often known for, in contrast to the adoration exhibited by dogs. Cats probably remind Vance of the girls who ignored him in school.

Unlike Mrs. Vance, I do not have a degree from Yale. But my own alma mater, Villanova University, has a page on its website titled "LGBTQIA+ Resources." This is in happy contrast with the time I risked expulsion by organizing a debate on gay rights at the Villanova Political Union in 1978.

Times change. We don't have to let kitty-hating authoritarians turn back the clock.

The MAGA concept of liberty is that they are entitled to do whatever they like, and the rest of us must offer abject deference. Let's give them a purrfectly dreadful time on Election Day.

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

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billy masters

Continued from page 1

Being in Europe, you get a very different view of American politics. Everyone I've talked to was worried that **President Joe Biden** would drop out of the election—which is ultimately what has happened. Of course, these were the same people who applauded QEII for not resigning, who elected a hooker to the Italian Parliament, and approved of a French president who showed up places with his wife and mistress. Be that as it may, I decided to take a look at **Senator J.D. Vance**. I was intrigued when I heard that his birth name was James Donald Bowman. I assumed that's where "JD" came from. While Bowman was his birth father, his mother's third husband was Hamel—and while in college, JD used that as his last name. Fine. At some point, he fell out with Mr. Hamel, and came up with Vance—which I mistakenly believed was an homage to Vivian! Turns out "Vance" is his mother's maiden name. In fact, his maternal grandparents were strongly involved in his upbringing. "Finally, the same name as the family to which I belonged," which sounds kinda sweet. Plus, really, what do I care? It's his business. Except he's not quite so accepting when it comes to other people changing their name. In fact, he's been vocally opposed to transgender people changing their name. In fact, he's against most trans rights, women's rights, gay rights, reproductive rights, and any gun control. He's also been known to call **Donald Trump** "Hitler" in private. So, I guess he's not all bad!

Someone is else is stepping aside! It's **Tom Viola**, who has been the tireless head of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS for the past 36 years. In fact, Viola has been with the foundation since its inception, which is no small feat in the philanthropic world. I don't believe there's a single person in the entertainment industry that Tom can't get on the phone or cajole into helping the cause. He's done his work with energy, passion, and dignity. His successor will be the organization's Director of Development, **Danny Whitman**—who, it should be noted, has been with the group for 15 years. Talk about longevity.

When does saying goodbye not mean goodbye? When you're **Pat Sajak**. After a year—plus—long farewell lap as host of "Wheel of Fortune", Sajak is coming back in the fall as host of "Celebrity Wheel of Fortune". This is gonna be one of those primetime game shows that ABC plugs in when there's no Monday Night Football. His new contract lasts three years. No word if Vanna will play with him—but she has a new two—year contract to join **Ryan Seacrest** for the syndicated version of the show.

Longtime readers know nothing makes me happier than the annual Kennedy Center Honors. Oh, sure, it's lost a bit of luster with a revolving door of hosts. Give me the days when **Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg** would amble out, mosey on over to the podium and welcome people in those dulcet tones more appropriate for a very special episode of "Bonanza". Now, it's anyone's guess who'll walk onstage. So let's talk about the recipients. For years, a popular online game has been to predict who won't make the cut. Happily, **Liza Minnelli's** streak as the most overlooked person is intact. The Susan Lucci of the Kennedy Center Honors once again didn't get a nod. She's been passed over in favor of **Francis Ford Coppola, Bonnie Raitt**, jazz trumpeter **Arturo Sandoval, The Grateful Dead and The Apollo Theatre**. I remind everyone that the Kennedy Center Honors are NOT given out posthumously—so someone better get on the stick!

Apropos of our last item, I've never typed the name **Tom Sandoval**. This would follow that I've never watched an episode of "Vanderpump Rules"—although I once shared a crab cake with **Lisa**... but that's another story. My avoidance of such trash (the show and the person) doesn't mean I'm oblivious to the Scandoval situation. And I must sadly acknowledge that that many fans have sent in questions about the participants. To briefly summarize—Tom Sandoval and **Ariana Madix** were a couple. Tom had an affair with **Rachel Leviss**, Ariana's best friend. For reasons known only by her family doctor and priest, Rachel made a video pleasuring herself, which was on Tom's phone. This video went public through what can only be described as murky means. Rachel is suing Ariana and Tom for distributing "revenge porn". Then Tom decided to sue Ariana—not only pointing a finger at his wronged "ex", but also shirking any responsibility. And you wonder why he's known as the "most hated man in America"—at least by all those who know who the hell he is. On advice of counsel, he's dropped that suit. Rachel's suit is still moving forward with a trial date of November 3, 2025. And you think the courts moved slowly for Trump!

Prior to winging my way to the Continent, I made a quick day trip to Ogunquit and heard lots of excited chatter about the Ogunquit Playhouse's production of "A Little Night Music". Sure, most of it had to do with "Friends" chanteuse, Kathleen Turner. But many were excited that Broadway belter **Julia Murney** would be playing the role of Desiree. Since Murney is a most compelling stage presence, I'm intrigued to see what she'll do with the part when I get back. It runs through August 17, and what few tickets are left can be snagged at OgunquitPlayhouse.org.

A late addition to the Provincetown summer lineup takes place at the end of the season at the Provincetown Theater. **Lisa Lampanelli** will be doing a reading of her new solo show, "Lisa Lampanelli: Irrelevant!" on August 31st. This is her second time trying out new material at the famed venue since her 2019 reading of "The Gorge". This show chronicles the comedienne's rise to prominence as a stand—up, leaving it behind to become a life coach, and suddenly feeling..."irrelevant". I can't wait to see it! You can grab tickets at ProvincetownTheater.org.

One of my favorite people has squeezed Provincetown into his already—packed ass—ignments. That would be the ridiculously rambunctious **Randy Roberts**, who will hit the Crown & Anchor on select Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays in August. Don't miss this chance to spend an evening with a legend at a choice venue...and at bargain prices! Specific dates and tickets can be found on OnlyAtTheCrown.com.

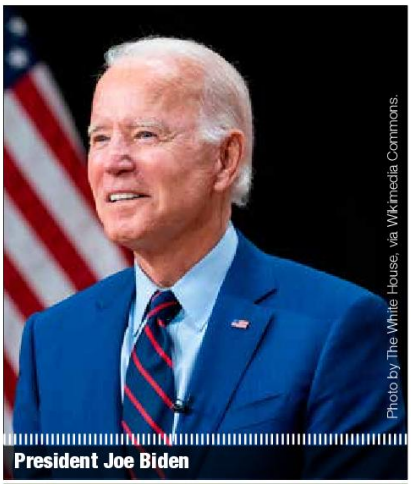
Since everyone here in Europe has Olympic fever, I'm going to shine a spotlight on an athlete who, alas, will not be competing. **Trey Cunningham** is a strapping 25-year-old hurdler who also happens to be a Ford Model. What's not to love? Shortly after not making the cut for Team USA, he made a revelation. "I'm just Trey, and apparently it's a special thing that I like to kiss guys." Apparently kissing guys was not something he explored back in his hometown in rural Alabama—which he described as "the sort of place where you did not want to be the gay kid at school".

Despite not getting an Emmy nod, the reboot of "Frasier" is returning for season two on Paramount+ with some familiar faces and places. We hear that Frasier will return to Seattle and his old radio station KACL. That episode will feature **Dan Butler, Edward Hibbert,** and the devilishly divine **Harriet Sansom Harris** as Frasier's old agent Bebe. No word if either **David Hyde Pierce or Jane Leeves** will turn up—which one would expect since it's been made clear that Niles and Daphne still live in Seattle. The new season commences on September 19th.

And this leads perfectly into our "Ask Billy" question. Victor in Dallas writes, *"I hear **Kim Cattrall** is going to return to 'And Just Like That...'. Any truth to the rumor? Will it be another phone cameo like last season?"*

I've heard the same rumors—but with a twist. Response to her cameo last season was so positive, the powers—that—be are willing to do whatever they can to get her back. I'm told that negotiations are ongoing for an actual storyline. Cattrall, who previously was adamant about not appearing, seems to have warmed to the idea...with a few stipulations. She wants all of her scenes filmed in England. She'd like Samantha to have a storyline of her own. She wants to be paid plenty (she got $1 million for last season's two—minute scene—and she got to keep the clothes). And she would prefer not to appear with any of the other three ladies. What does that mean? Stay tuned...

When actors can make half a mil a minute, it's time for me to consider changing professions and end yet another column. And I thought **Stormy Daniels** had a good payday! I'm getting a bit hot under the collar—but that could be because it's been around 100 degrees every day during this trip. My God, it feels as if they've already started the cremation process. While I try to cool off, you can check out www.BillyMasters.com—the site that's always steamy. If you have a question for me, dash it off to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before J.D. Vance changes his name...again! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.



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President Joe Biden

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Pat Sajak

Photo by Canadian Film Centre, via Wikimedia Commons.

Kim Cattrall

Mombian

Continued from page 1

pand to serve the entire LGBTQ community.

Their own path to parenthood in the late aughts was "complicated and confusing," with "scant resources available," Rosenberg said. After some twists and turns, they had a son via adoption and twin girls via surrogacy, but Rosenberg reflected, "I don't think that there is a single decision we made, either in surrogacy or during our adoption journey, where we felt really confident about that decision."

Rosenberg noted that he is the girls' genetic parent, which is "really no one else's business," but that he mentions "because I'm also HIV positive. I have been since before I met my husband, and we're about to celebrate our 31st anniversary." Rosenberg explained, "I want to make sure people know if they're HIV positive, it doesn't stop them from being able to become dads through adoption, foster care, or surrogacy and IVF."

As new dads, they knew they stood out. "We had three little babies, one of them is Black; we had a chihuahua; and we're two men," Rosenberg related. "Wherever we went—and I'm not exaggerating—it was like the circus sideshow." Straight people would ask intrusive questions, and "we were constantly having to explain our stories." Rosenberg longed to hang out with other gay dads where he wouldn't feel so "other," and to share learnings from their own parenthood journey. He couldn't find the community he sought, however.

Fast forward to 2014, when their oldest was in preschool, and the twins were out of diapers. "Let's launch something for all gay dads and dads-to-be," proposed Rosenberg, whose background was in sales and marketing. Gays With Kids (gayswithkids.com) was born.

Initially, the site focused on sharing queer dads' stories. "We did a lot to give visibility to our families. I know we helped change hearts and minds," he said.

About three years ago, however, one of the site's readers reached out to thank Rosenberg "for inspiring me to become a dad."

Rosenberg was touched, and asked, "What are you going to do now that you're inspired?"

The man responded, "I have no idea. I guess I'll just have to wing it."

"I had an aha moment," Rosenberg said. While visibility and inspiration were important, he realized they weren't enough. Instead, he said, "I really wanted to provide a tangible and valuable service."

That led to the 2022 launch of GWK Academy (gwkacademy.com), which offers community, education, and resources, including online courses and coaching, for gay and queer men considering parenthood. Before the end of 2024, Rosenberg said, his goal is "to expand our content and our focus to include everyone under the LGBTQ+ umbrella."

The site also just became free to join, and Rosenberg hopes that gay and queer men—and soon any LGBTQ+ person—will use it as a first stop to "get educated" if they are thinking about parenthood. Topics covered include the various paths available, costs, timeframes, types of organizations people will need to work with, which ones are LGBTQ+ competent, and more. "They say it takes a village to raise a child," he said. "The truth of the matter is, for us those in the LGBTQ+ community, it also takes a village to create a child."

After getting educated, he said, people will be able to have more productive conversations with clinics, agencies, and other family-building organizations. The problem today, however, is not the lack of such organizations, but the sheer number of them. "A lot of people find it overwhelming," he observed, noting that part of GWK Academy's value is "to help them get through all the clutter." It therefore works with an "exclusive network of surrogacy and IVF family building partners," whom Rosenberg ensures are "as passionate as I am about LGBTQ+ family building." Referrals to those partners comprise GWK Academy's revenue stream. While site members can work with any agency or clinic they choose, he said, "I know that ours will take good care of you."

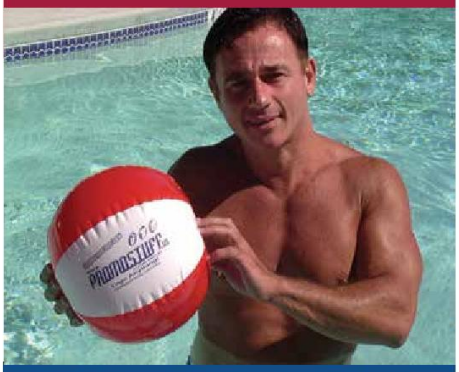
The site also partners with organizations dedicated to foster care and adoption (but earns no fees from them), and Rosenberg is eager to encourage more gay and queer men to consider becoming foster parents and adopting from foster care. He also makes sure GWK Academy's programming talks specifically about LGBTQ+ youth in the foster care system, asserting, "I feel like we have some kind of moral obligation as the adults within the community to make sure our young ones are taken care of properly."

He is in turn inspired by the next generation. "What I love, love, love today," he said, is that all of the dozens of young gay men he has spoken with in recent years "knew they would have to think about whether they wanted to become parents." For almost all of them, the answer was yes. "They just weren't sure yet when or how," he said. "Sometimes I would cry because it wasn't an option for us. To see how much things have changed in that respect is so powerful for me."

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.

Brian Rosenberg (L); husband Ferd Van Gameren (R) and children. Photo courtesy of Dana Rudolph.

HOT IDEAS



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