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2.6 Million LGBTQ Adults Are Raising 5 Million Children

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

A new report on the number and characteristics of LGBTQ parents is a reminder that common perceptions of LGBTQ families may not always match the realities, and that despite progress, there is still room for improvement to make sure we are treated equitably.

The July report from UCLA's Williams Institute, "LGBTQ Parenting in the US," by Bianca D.M. Wilson and Lauren J.A. Bouton, analyzed multiple national datasets and found that overall, 18% of all LGBTQ adults, nearly 2.6 million people, are parents of minors. This is slightly lower than previous estimates, which the researchers say is because earlier studies sometimes counted adult siblings, grandparents, or unrelated adults in a household as parents. (Future research, they note, should explore all of these household relationships.) In addition to LGBTQ parents with minor children, 32% of LGBTQ adults report ever having a child (who may now be grown or living elsewhere).

Looking just at LGBTQ parents of minors, however, the study found that the vast majority (61%) are cisgender bisexual women, followed by cisgender lesbian women (14%), cisgender bisexual men (11%), cisgender gay men (5%), trans men (4%), trans women (2%), and trans, gender nonconforming people (2%). (I am rounding for ease of reading.)

Not only do bisexual parents form

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 4*

A new pluralist age beckons

Persuading voters beats insults

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

Our focus on political threats, and the media's habit of embracing Republican framing to avoid charges of liberal bias, obscures the fact that America is on the cusp of a new age in which pluralism has triumphed.

Just as diversity is a reality whether the far right likes it or not, the truth has a liberal bias. The concept of different races has no biological basis. Women do not need others to make their reproductive decisions for them. Most people identify as either male or female without public authorities enforcing the gender binary, which only pretends to erase those who do not conform.

With their lives, those who are different echo Galileo's reported response to Inquisitors who insisted the Earth was motionless at the center of the universe: "But it moves."

In short, there is room for all of us without a lot of supremacist bullying.

The far right does pose a real threat with its efforts at voter suppression and its plans to refuse to certify election results it doesn't like. Democrats are duly prepared with armies of lawyers to prevent the theft.

But while we cannot afford to go to sleep, neither should we overreact. We have sufficient power to win if we are prepared to use it. We need not be diverted by the relative few on the far left who are determined to be perpetually outraged and believe (like eccentric third-party candidate Cornel West) that America is the greatest threat to

see **ROSENDALL,** *page 7*

Healey Signs Massachusetts Parentage Act

Supports LGBTQ Families and More

Dana Rudolph
Contributing Writer

Massachusetts Gov. Maura Healey (D) has signed legislation updating the state's parentage laws to be more equitable for LGBTQ parents and their children, families formed via assisted reproduction, and those with de

see **HEALEY,** *page 4*

Photo courtesy of the Governor's Office.

Judge allows trans New Hampshire girl to play soccer as lawsuit challenges ban

Trans teens filed lawsuit challenging NH law banning them from girls' sports

By Nick Perry
Associated Press with additional Bay Windows Staff reporting

On Monday, a federal judge temporarily allowed a transgender girl to play soccer for her high school team while she and another student challenge a New Hampshire ban.

The families of Parker Tirrell, 15, and Iris Turmelle, 14, filed a lawsuit last Friday seeking to overturn the "Fairness in

see **NEW HAMPSHIRE,** *page 7*

Parker Tirrell, a transgender teen, whose family along with another family, filed a lawsuit challenging a New Hampshire state law that bans them from playing on girls' sports teams at their public high schools. Photo provided by Sara Tirrell via AP.

A new global health emergency: What is mpox, where are the outbreaks and will the virus spread?

By Maria Cheng
AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP) — The World Health Organization declared Wednesday that the increasing spread of mpox in Africa is a global health emergency, warning the virus might ultimately spill across international borders.

The announcement by WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus came after a meeting of the U.N. health agency's emergency committee. The Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention declared mpox a public health emergency on the continent on Tuesday.

WHO said there have been more than 14,000 cases and 524 deaths in Africa this year, which already exceed last year's figures.

see **MPOX,** *page 5*

"My God—if Gena Rowlands thought this is how she would be remembered, she'd have died years ago!"

—Billy Masters' quip when he saw the way some publications announced the passing of the multiple—award—winning actress. The most egregious headline said, "Gena Rowlands Dies: Actress in 'The Notebook'". Oh, the humanity...

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

Photo by Georges Biard, via Wikimedia Commons.

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Judge says Maine can forbid discrimination by religious schools that take state tuition money

By DAVID SHARP
Associated Press

PORTLAND, Maine (AP) — Maine didn't violate the U.S. constitutional rights of religious schools by requiring them to abide by the state's antidiscrimination law to receive taxpayer-funded tuition assistance, a federal judge ruled. But the judge also acknowledged that a higher court will ultimately have the final say.

U.S. District Judge John Woodcock Jr. said he sees no constitutional violation in requiring religious schools to abide by the Maine Human Rights Act.

"The plaintiffs are free to practice their religion, including the teaching of their religion as they see fit, but cannot require the state to subsidize their religious teachings if they conflict with state antidiscrimination law," the judge wrote.

A notice of appeal to the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston was filed on Friday, a day after Woodcock issued his 75-page decision rejecting the plaintiffs' request for an injunction.

The lawsuit is one of two in Maine that focus on the collision between a 2022 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that Maine cannot discrimination against religious schools in providing tuition assistance and a state law requiring that schools participating in the tuition program must abide by the Maine Human Rights Act, which includes protections for LGBTQ students and faculty.

The Maine Human Rights Act was amended by state legislators regarding how it applies to schools before the Supreme Court decision. The law bans discrimination on the basis of race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or disability. This means schools must not discriminate against gay and transgender teachers and students, which could conflict with some religious schools' beliefs.

Adele Keim, senior counsel for Becket Law, which is representing the plaintiffs, accused Maine lawmakers of using the antidiscrimination measure to "make an end run around the Supreme Court" with the specific aim of preventing the participation of religious schools. She also said the law is applied unevenly because the state has sent tuition dollars to an all-girls school in Massachusetts.

The lawsuits were filed after the justices ruled 6-3 that Maine cannot discriminate between secular and religious schools when providing tuition assistance to kids in rural communities that don't have a public high school. The program allows those students to attend another school, public or private, of their choosing.

A spokesperson for Attorney General Aaron Frey declined comment on Monday.

The lawsuit was brought on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portland; a Roman Catholic-affiliated school, St. Dominic's Academy in Auburn, Maine; and parents who want to use state tuition funds to send their children to St. Dominic's. Another lawsuit, brought by parents who wanted to send a child to Crosspoint Church in Bangor, is already pending before the appeals court in Boston. Keim said she wouldn't be surprised if the appeals court hears arguments from both cases at the same time.

The high court's decision was hailed as a victory for school choice proponents — potentially giving life to efforts in some of the states that have not directed taxpayer money to private, religious education.

But the impact in Maine has been small. Since the ruling, only one religious school, Cheverus High School, a Jesuit college preparatory school in Portland, has participated in the state's tuition reimbursement plan, a spokesperson said.

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Healey

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facto or functional parents. "It's a great, great day as we celebrate full parental equality," she said at the signing ceremony.

Gov. Healey signed the Massachusetts Parentage Act (MPA) on August 8, after the legislature passed the bill August 1 in a unanimous show of bipartisan support. In the public signing August 12 at the State House in Boston, she said that Massachusetts is "the place that 20 years ago declared that love is love, and that we should be able to marry the people we love. But we've known that there is more work to do." She continued:

Today we take another decisive step forward, because we're able to say with one voice, 'What defines a family is love and commitment.' That's what defines a family, not outdated notions of who should be a parent or how a child should come into the world. This is a victory indeed for all families in Massachusetts, because as we strengthen the definition, we elevate and honor the parent-child bond.

She later noted that "as somebody who's proud to be the first gay woman elected governor in the country," she appreciated the effort put into the legislation. At the same time, she stressed, "When we defend freedoms, when we ensure and fight for greater rights and protections, it benefits not just those directly impacted, but it benefits everyone. It makes us a stronger community, state, country."

Healey thanked the many people involved in supporting the bill and seeing it through the legislative process, including Rep. Sarah Peake (D), Sen. Julian Cyr (D), Rep. Hannah Kane (R), Senate Minority Leader Bruce Tarr (R), Rep. Kay Khan (D), and Rep. Adam Scanlon (D), Speaker Pro Tempore Kate Hogan (D), Rep. Michael Day (D), Sen. Will Brownsberger (D), Sen. Jamie Eldridge (D), and Rep. Sally Kerans (D), along with advocates from the MPA Coalition led by GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD; not to be confused with media advocacy organization GLAAD), and AllPaths Family Building.

"Most of all," she said, she was grateful for the parents, children, and families in attendance who had experienced exclusion and obstacles in creating and growing their families, but were "incredible role models and representatives and today helped us get to where we need to be as a state." She told them, "Your courage has ensured that future families will not have to endure some of the same experiences that some of you may have had to endure."

One of those was Karen Partanen, a nongestational mother who had fought a long battle for legal parentage. Partanen told the audience her harrowing story of being cut off from her young children after she and her partner separated. "As devastating as it was for me, just imagine how that was for a 2- and a 5-year-old, who didn't understand 'Where did Mommy go?'" she said. She drained her bank account and was eating out of food pantries as she fought a years-long legal battle that ended in 2016 with a Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruling in her favor. After that, she said, "My family was protected," but "there was still so much work to be done." The signing of the MPA means that "No other family has to go through what my family went through."

Following Partanen, recent high school graduate Darmany Jimenez shared his story of being raised since birth by his mom Caeli, a close friend of his biological mother, because his biological mother "faced mental health challenges and needed help raising me and my siblings." Even though Caeli "went through the long, expensive process of being established as our de facto parent in court," he said, "that didn't give her the recognition as our full legal parent." The MPA will change that.

Sen. Cyr, a lead sponsor of the bill, also spoke at the signing, explaining, "LGBTQ+ families like mine face excessive and expensive hoops just to ensure our children have the security of legal parentage." The MPA's passage, he said, "marks a critical step to guarantee that all children can benefit from the stability of a legal parent-child relationship no matter how they came to be in this world."

While she didn't speak at the event, Rep. Kane, another lead sponsor, said in a press statement that the legislation was personal for her, too. She and her husband easily established parentage of their three children, she explained, but one of their daughters is lesbian, "and if she chooses, I want her to experience the joy of being a parent someday with the same rights to establish her parentage, and to have the same legal protections, as my husband Jim and I had."

Polly Crozier, director of family advocacy at GLAD, reminded the audience that the legislation was first filed seven years ago, "but we have been able to witness incredible grit, incredible spirit, as we never, ever gave up on a vision of Massachusetts that included and protected and loved every child." She added, "This has never been a political issue in Massachusetts, this has been a moral imperative, to protect our children and families both in Massachusetts and wherever they go."

The MPA will go into effect on January 1, 2025.

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.

Mombian

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the largest subcategory, but the majority (53%) of partnered LGBTQ parents are partnered with a different gender, cisgender person, versus 47% partnered with same-gender, cisgender people or with transgender or nonbinary people. Heather may have two mommies and penguin Tango two dads in the famed picture books, but they are only part of the picture.

Single LGBTQ parents, too, are more common than one might think. Of the 2.6 million LGBTQ parents, approximately 1.6 million are married or partnered, but 1 million are single.

Looking from the children's perspective, 5 million children are being raised by an LGBTQ parent, but only about 300,000 are being raised by parents in same-sex couples. Two million children live in LGBTQ single-parent households, "the majority among bisexual women." The rest, we must presume, are in households with different-sex parents or other structures.

Other findings are that a higher percentage of Black LGBTQ adults are parents than White LGBTQ adults, and that the highest percentage of LGBTQ parents live in the South (31%), followed by the Midwest (26%), Northeast (24%), and West (19%). LGBTQ parents are also more likely to be living in poverty than LGBTQ non-parents and straight cisgender parents. Finally, same-sex couples adopt, foster, and have stepchildren at significantly higher rates than different-sex couples.

These trends all generally confirm older studies (while bringing greater accuracy and recency to the numbers), but to my mind, are still not always reflected in the media or popular culture, where White, financially secure, same-sex couples predominate. Granted, different configurations of LGBTQ families may move through the world differently, in terms of family formation options, the stigma they experience, and more. We must be thoughtful about those differences and recognize that some families will need more support. But we are all part of the same big rainbow tent, and all of our kids need to see their families affirmed and represented.

That's especially important because the number of LGBTQ parents and our children is likely to grow. The report also found that about half of LGBQ adults said it was somewhat or very important to have children in the future, and 22% of LGBQ adults thought it was very or extremely likely that they would do so.

At the same time, many LGBTQ people who want to have children "fear they will not be able to," especially "GBQ cisgender men and transgender women across sexual orientations." As I see it, this is why LGBTQ family-building resources like Gays With Kids' GWK Academy (gwkacademy.com), PregnantTogether (pregnanttogether.com), Trans Fertility Co. (transfertility.co), and the offerings from Family Equality (family-equality.org) are so important.

Notably, too, the report found that "About 30% of LGBQ parents are not legally recognized or are unsure about their legal status as the parent/guardian of at least one child." As LGBTQ legal experts have long advised, nongestational and nongenetic parents, even if they are married and on their children's birth certificates, should take extra steps to secure their parentage.

The ease of doing so varies by state, however. Some states, including Colorado, Connecticut, Maine, Michigan, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, and just this month, Massachusetts, have modernized their parentage laws to equitably protect all parent-child relationships, regardless of how the families formed or the gender or marital status of the parents. Updating parentage laws in other states should be an urgent task for LGBTQ, child welfare, and reproductive rights advocates, benefiting both LGBTQ families and others.

More broadly, as lead author Wilson observed in a statement, "Policies that aim to improve the lives of LGBTQ communities should focus on issues LGBTQ parents face, including barriers to accessing alternative reproductive technologies and adoption services as well as LGBTQ parental recognition rights, particularly for non-biological parents in same-sex couples."

With both national and state elections looming, the likelihood of advancing those policies remains an open question. But studies like this help give us a sense of how many children and families are at stake.

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

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MPOX

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So far, more than 96% of all cases and deaths are in a single country — Congo. Scientists are concerned by the spread of a new version of the disease there that might be more easily transmitted among people.

Here's a look at what we know about mpox, and what might be done to contain it:

What is mpox?

Mpox, also known as monkeypox, was first identified by scientists in 1958 when there were outbreaks of a "pox-like" disease in monkeys. Until recently, most human cases were seen in people in central and West Africa who had close contact with infected animals.

In 2022, the virus was confirmed to spread via sex for the first time and triggered outbreaks in more than 70 countries across the world that had not previously reported mpox.

Mpox belongs to the same family of viruses as smallpox but causes milder symptoms like fever, chills and body aches. People with more serious cases can develop lesions on the face, hands, chest and genitals.

What's happening in Africa that's causing all this concern?

The number of cases has jumped dramatically. Last week, the Africa CDC reported that mpox has now been detected in at least 13 African countries. Compared with the same period last year, the agency said cases are up 160% and deaths have increased by 19%.

Earlier this year, scientists reported the emergence of a new form of mpox in a Congolese mining town that can kill up to 10% of people and may spread more easily.

Unlike in previous mpox outbreaks, where lesions were mostly seen on the chest, hands and feet, the new form of mpox causes milder symptoms and lesions on the genitals.

That makes it harder to spot, meaning people might also sicken others without knowing they're infected, said Dr. Placide Mbala-Kingebeni, a Congolese researcher who led the research into the new form of mpox.

WHO said mpox was recently identified for the first time in four East African countries: Burundi, Kenya, Rwanda and Uganda. All of those outbreaks were linked to the epidemic in Congo. Tedros said there was concern for the further spread of the disease within Africa and beyond.

In the Ivory Coast and South Africa, health authorities have reported outbreaks of a different and less dangerous version of mpox that spread worldwide in 2022 and infected nearly 100,000 people.

What's the threat to the rest of the world?

Like any infectious disease, the new form of mpox seen in Congo could cross borders — cases have already been detected in four other East African countries.

On Thursday, Sweden's public health agency said it identified the first case of the new mpox variant in someone who had recently been in Africa, and who sought health care in Stockholm.

Officials said the risk to the general public was considered "very low" and that they expected sporadic imported cases to continue.

Kamituga, the region in Congo where the new form of mpox was first spotted, is home to a significant transient population traveling through Africa and beyond.

Still, given the resources in rich countries to stop mpox, scientists suspect that if new outbreaks linked to Congo were to be identified, transmission could be stopped relatively quickly.

Unlike COVID-19 or measles, mpox is not airborne and typically requires close, skin-to-skin contact to spread.

What does an emergency declaration mean?

WHO's emergency declaration is meant to spur donor agencies and countries into action. But the global response to previous declarations has been mixed.

Africa CDC Director General Dr. Jean Kaseya said the agency's declaration of a public health emergency was meant "to mobilize our institutions, our collective will and our resources to act swiftly and decisively." He appealed to Africa's international partners for help, saying that the escalating caseload in Africa had largely been ignored.

Dr. Boghuma Titanji, an infectious diseases expert at Emory University, said the last WHO emergency declaration for mpox "did very little to move the needle" on getting things like diagnostic tests, medicines and vaccines to Africa.

What's different about the current outbreak in Africa compared to the 2022 epidemic?

During the global outbreak of mpox in 2022, gay and bisexual men made up the vast majority of cases and the virus was mostly spread through close contact, including sex.

Although some similar patterns have been seen in Africa, children under 15 now account for more than 70% of the mpox cases and 85% of deaths in Congo.

Greg Ramm, Save the Children's Congo director, said the organization was particularly worried about the spread of mpox in the crowded camps for refugees in the east, noting there were 345,000 children "crammed into tents in unsanitary conditions." He said the country's health system was already "collapsing" under the strain of malnutrition, measles and cholera.

Emory's Titanji said it was unclear why children were so disproportionately hit by mpox in Congo. She said it might be because kids are more susceptible to the virus or that social factors, like overcrowding and exposure to parents who caught the disease, might explain it.

How might mpox be stopped?

The 2022 outbreak of mpox in dozens of countries was largely shut down with the use of vaccines and treatments in rich countries, in addition to convincing people to avoid risky behavior. But barely any vaccines or treatments have been available in Africa.

Marks, of the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, said that immunization would likely help — including inoculating people against smallpox, a related virus.

"We need a large supply of vaccine so that we can vaccinate populations most at risk," he said, adding that would mean sex workers, children and adults living in outbreak regions.

Congolese authorities have asked for 4 million doses mostly for young children , but no doses have yet been received, said Cris Kacita Osako, coordinator of Congo's Monkeypox Response Committee.

Associated Press writer Christina Malkia in Kinshasa, Congo, contributed to this report.

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Last week, **Tom Daley** announced that this would not only be his last competitive appearance in an Olympic Games (it is his fifth), but he was also hanging up the ol' Speedos. "It's hard to talk about. It's very hard to talk about. But you have to hang it up sometime. I'm very proud." He's particularly proud to have shared the experience with his family. In fact, it was his son Robbie who inspired him to compete this time around. Robbie, who is 6, said, "I want to see you dive at the Olympics." Ask and you shall receive. And with a silver medal, to boot!

Daley did leave us with an important message. In a new public service announcement, he's walking poolside wearing a robe and carrying a cocktail, as one does. He drops the robe to reveal he's wearing a red crocheted Speedo (his own design—he's a whiz with a needle). He mounts the board—I think that's the correct verb—and we see a message at the bottom of the pool: "1 in 4 UK drowning involve alcohol." On his bum is the message of the video: "Don't Drink and Dive". Sponsored by Malibu Rum UK, naturally. While there was merchandise for sale, don't bother looking—everything's sold out.

New Zealand's **Robbie Manson** and Australia's **Matthew Mitcham** had a post—Olympic summit in Paris, which was immortalized by some photos. Mitcham was the first to post, "Did someone say collab? *OF* course!!"—a sly reference to both lads having OnlyFans pages. Manson later posted, "It was great to catch up with @matthewmitcham again and do a cheeky collab." Mitcham responded, "Do you want to see the other shots from the series?" I assume the best is yet to come, but what there is can be found on BillyMasters.com.

We've spilt much ink about **Imane Khelif**, the Algerian wrestler who was the subject of Olympic—sized controversy. Despite proof that she is and has always been a female, many still question her gender. And she's not taking it lying down. The Paris Prosecutor's office is investigating several "acts of aggravated cyber harassment". The charges have been filed against "X", which in France means that the specific persons are unknown. But we're told that **J.K. Rowling, Elon Musk**, and even **Donald Trump** are being looked into regarding statements they've made on social media and to reporters. When the latest kerfuffle began, Khelif made a bold and prophetic statement: "God willing, this crisis will culminate in a gold medal, and that would be the best response." And so it has.

Some things are questionable, while others can be proven in black and white—and occasionally in living color. Take **JD Vance**...please! When you see headlines talking about a politician's "drag scandal", one immediately thinks of **George Santos**—and perhaps even **Rudy Giuliani**. The photo of Vance in a blonde wig and fetching black slip dress stems from his Yale years. An assistant professor from the esteemed institution says, "It's from a group chat of Vance's fellow classmates and is from a friend of a friend. I believe it was...taken at a Halloween party." More damaging may be that the photo was posted with the hashtag #SofaLoren—referring to rumors that Vance once had sex with a couch. Look, at least it wasn't a pie! I can only imagine what his fellow "hillbillies" think of that. Still, I suspect none of this would have any resonance, except Vance has strongly supported anti—LGBT policies, to say nothing of "Don't Say Gay" bills. He also introduced the "Protect Children's Innocence Act". What about the poor sofa? And let's not even get started on what he could have done with an ottoman!

In a move that has surprised nobody, Hulu has picked up a sitcom being termed as the gay "Golden Girls". As we've previously reported, "Mid-Century Modern" is about three gay men of a certain age who move in together in Palm Springs—and one brings his mother. The pilot was written by **David Kohan and Max Mutchnick**—creators of "Will & Grace". Four weeks after being written, the pilot was shot in front of a live studio audience, with the legendary **James Burrows** directing. Less than two months later, Hulu picked up the show. **Nathan Lane** is one roommate, with **Linda Lavin** playing his mother (think Dorothy and Sophia). **Matt Bomer** is a Morman who is described as "pure of heart...also hard of body and soft of head." He's Rose. Nathan Lee Graham's character is described as refined and dignified, so I guess he's Dr. Smith—damn, there I go channel surfing again!

Those of you holding your breath for a "Facts of Life" reunion are probably out of luck. According to sources, the cast got this close to getting back together...that is, until money started to be discussed (it should be noted that when **Jimmy Kimmel** hosted one of those live all—star episodes, **Lisa Whelchel** performed the theme song and was then joined by **Kim Fields** and **Mindy Cohn** to introduce the show). During a chat with **Jeff Lewis** on SiriusXM, Cohn revealed that the cast members were contacted during the pandemic about doing a full-scale reunion for **Norman Lear**. They were all interested, writers were hired, and then...kaboom! "One of the girls went behind our backs and tried to make a separate deal for a spinoff just for herself and devastated the rest of us." She added, "A couple of people can't move past it, don't want to move past it. We are not as united. We were united for 40 years over not talking about each other, not doing dirty, not, you know, all for one, one for all. And this kind of wrecked that, which is sad. Really sad." You take the good, you take the bad, you take them both, and there you have...a mess!

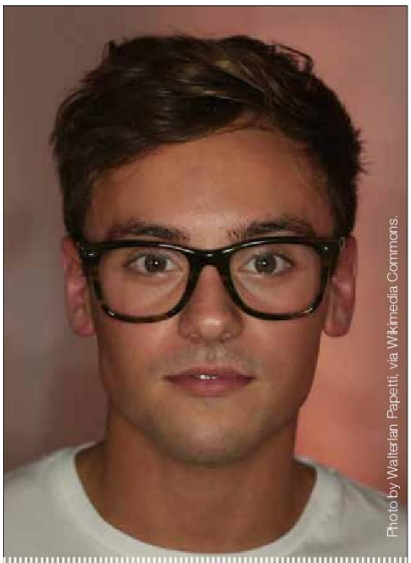
Jordan Peele just announced that he's reviving the hidden camera show "Scare Tactics" for the USA Network. Some of you may know that when the show debuted in 2003, the host was **Shannen Doherty** (immortalized in a particularly funny "MADtv" sketch). While I'm sure Peele's version has been in the works for a while, the timing of the announcement is dubious, to say the least. Still, I'm in favor of anything that keeps Shannen's legacy alive.

Being an unofficial founder of Gay Days Anaheim, I take great pride in the annual event celebrating 26 years—and I'm even prouder that nobody carded me that first year. The event takes place September 13—15 at Disneyland in Anaheim (hence the name—we were quite clever in the '90s). The pinnacle of the weekend takes place in Disneyland itself on Saturday, September 14th. But I'd like to shine a spotlight on some of the other special events planned for the weekend. **Cheyenne Jackson** is doing a show on Friday, September 13th. That same night, **Michele Lee, Donna Mills and Joan Van Ark** will sit down for an interview with author **Eddie Shapiro**. On Saturday, September 14th, dance the night away at the Kingdom party at the House of Blues with **Kimberly S** DJing. And on Sunday, September 15th, the *Plunge!* pool party hits the Anaheim Majestic Garden Hotel—which sounds very fancy to me. Topping it all off (a term I use loosely), **Varla Jean Merman** does two performances of her acclaimed "Errors Tour" also on Sunday. All of the events are listed on the official website of GayDaysAnaheim.com.

In an unfortunate segue, we have an "Ask Billy" question from Jerry in Los Angeles: *"What do you think of the arrests made in the **Matthew Perry** case?"*

I'm torn. While I certainly don't want to excuse anyone, it is true that addicts have a way of getting what they want. In the case of Matthew Perry, he had plenty of money and opportunity. Trust me—when someone of his stature says, "Shoot me up with a big one," they'll get it from someone. And if one person says no, another will be happy to oblige—especially if money is no object. Almost proving the point, we now know that one doctor had vials of ketamine that cost $12 and sold them to Perry for $2,000. Adding insult to injury, the doctor texted another saying, "I wonder how much this moron will pay." While perhaps not a smoking gun, it certainly isn't very nice. Call me old—fashioned, but I expect better bedside manner from my doctors...and my drug dealers.

When drug dealers are more professional than doctors, it's definitely time to end yet another column. We started with Tom Daley and Malibu Rum warning against drinking and diving. And maybe he's onto something. Matthew Perry—in a hot tub. Whitney Houston—in a tub. And Natalie Wood—well, who really knows. Since I'm en route to my sumptuous Fort Lauderdale Beach House, I'm staying away from all substances...and perhaps bodies of water. Other types of bodies can be found on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that's squeaky clean! If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I'll get back to you before we find a photo of JD Vance dressed like Vivian! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.



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Tom Daley

Photo by Wilson Cleveland, via Wikimedia Commons.

Shannen Doherty

Public domain photo, via Wikimedia Commons.

Matthew Perry

Rosendall

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the world.

I don't mean to suggest that yelling in the street is not activism. It is just ineffective. When pro-Palestinian demonstrators screamed at me on Sixth Avenue after the "Three Presidents" fundraiser at Radio City Music Hall in March, I pointed out that they didn't know me and were not helping their cause.

Christ said, "Blessed are the peacemakers." They would not be needed if people were not constantly warring with one another. As I write, President Biden is working tirelessly for a ceasefire in the Mideast. Whether he succeeds or not, peace requires participation by both sides. Palestinians must renounce terrorism and recognize the right of Israel to exist, and Israel must abandon annexation and recognize that brutality toward Palestinians only recruits more terrorists. Loudly insisting that everyone who disagrees with you supports genocide may be cathartic, but will neither change American policy nor push the Jews into the sea.

The radicals' attitude, which is that anything but total agreement with them is a betrayal, is not how the LGBTQ community built support for equality. We did it by coming out, organizing, communicating, campaigning, and voting. We did it by participating and nurturing relationships, not by holding one another hostage. From Tammy Baldwin to Pete Buttigieg to Malcolm Kenyatta to Sarah McBride to Danica Roem and many others, we are not only in the game—we are in government.

White Christian nationalists are losing their minds because they can see that minorities they have long despised and oppressed are nonetheless thriving.

As with Trump, growing numbers of people are sick of the toxic MAGA nonsense and are standing up to the radical right. If we were ever the country of their selective and self-serving nostalgia, we are no longer. If all of us who are targeted for disenfranchisement stand together, we can overcome the reactionaries. You might say our need to make common cause is screamingly obvious.

What we need is not to take the power of the Democratic coalition for granted, but recognize it and use it effectively.

One of the great strengths of the Democratic ticket in this year's presidential election is the positive energy of Vice President Harris and Governor Walz. They know how to handle hecklers while sticking to their message.

The Republican nominee, meanwhile, has no discipline and no positive message. He says Harris is of low intelligence. Aside from his unfitness to pass such a judgment, could he say anything less plausible? He is like an unruly child setting off firecrackers to scare people, but none of them go off. Still, it is sobering that he enjoys more support than makes any decent sense.

Shakespeare writes in Julius Caesar: "There is a tide in the affairs of men, Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune ... And we must take the current when it serves, Or lose our ventures."

In this case, an extraordinary woman has taken the current. Our nation is at an inflection point. We have only to take the leap.

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New Hampshire

Continued from page 1

Women's Sports Act" that Republican Gov. Chris Sununu signed into law last month.

Tirrell, who is starting 10th grade this year at Plymouth Regional High School, played soccer with the girls' team in 9th grade and said she wants to start practicing with the team again ahead of the first game on Aug. 30.

U.S. District Court Chief Judge Landya McCafferty granted the request finding that Tirrell had demonstrated likely success on the merits of the case. The two sides now have 14 days to schedule a hearing on the plaintiffs' broader motion for a preliminary order blocking the state from enforcing the law while the case proceeds.

The issue of how to treat transgender athletes has been fiercely debated across the U.S. in recent years and has sparked numerous lawsuits. Two weeks ago, a Florida school employee who allowed her transgender daughter to play on the high school's girls volleyball team was suspended for 10 days. The employee is part of a federal lawsuit to block the state's law. Meanwhile a legal challenge to Connecticut's policy about trans students competing in school sports has been making it's way through the court system for several years.

The suit says both girls have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria, feelings of distress due to a mismatch between their birth sex and their gender identity. Both have been taking puberty-blocking medication to prevent bodily changes such as muscle development, facial hair growth or a deepening voice that might add to that distress.

The lawsuit claims the New Hampshire law violates constitutional protections and federal laws because the teens are being denied equal educational opportunities and are being discriminated against because they are transgender.

The lawsuit names New Hampshire Education Commissioner Frank Edelblut and other education officials as defendants.

New Hampshire's Republican Governor Chris Sununu signed the "Fairness in Women's Sports Act" into law last month, and it takes effect next week.

He said at the time that the law was widely supported and that New Hampshire was joining nearly half of all U.S. states in taking such a measure.

The law "ensures fairness and safety in women's sports by maintaining integrity and competitive balance in athletic competitions," Sununu said in a statement last month.

Turmelle is entering her first year of high school at Pembroke Academy and says she's looking forward to trying out for both the tennis and track and field teams.

"I'm a transgender girl, I've known that my whole life and everyone knows I'm a girl," she said in a statement. "I don't understand why I shouldn't get to have the same opportunities as other girls at school."

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court in Concord, seeks for an immediate ruling to allow both girls to play or participate in tryouts. The girls and their families are represented by GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders (GLAD), the ACLU of New Hampshire and Goodwin.

"New Hampshire cannot justify singling out transgender girls to deny them essential educational benefits available to other students," said Chris Erchull, a senior staff attorney at GLAD.

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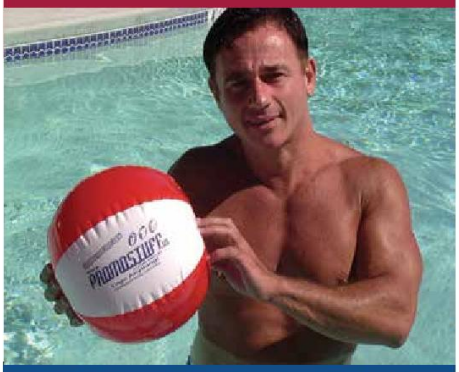

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