



A Rainbow of Stories In New Pride Picture Books

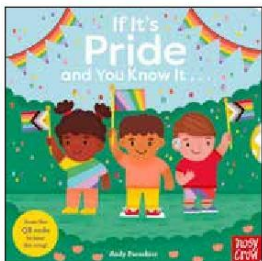
by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

Pride is almost upon us, and young readers can enjoy a great new batch of Pride-themed picture books this year, from simple, interactive board books for the youngest readers to stories that explore both the history and the current personal impact of Pride.

Board Books

"If It's Pride and You Know It ...," by Andy Passchier (Nosy Crow), gives us a Pride-themed version of the classic song, along with sliders, spinners, and pull-outs sure to engage young readers (and maybe even their adults). The vivid rainbow hues and author/illustrator Andy Passchier's cheery families exude queer joy.

"Busy Pride," from Campbell Books, illustrated by Tommy Doyle, follows a child and two moms as they prepare for and attend a Pride parade. Slid-



ers and pull-outs make face paint appear, extend the parade, and make the singer sway, while prompts ("Can you find...?") add more interaction. It's cheery and fun, with a sweet sense of community.

"Pride Is Love," by Dano Moreno, illustrated by Nakul P. (Random

see **MOMBIAN**, page 3

Supreme Court lets trans military ban proceed, for now

By Lisa Keen
Keen News Service

Despite what some early headlines are saying, the U.S. Supreme Court has not upheld the Trump administration's ban on transgender people in the military—at least not yet. There was a strong signal today that the Supreme Court is poised to do so: By a 6 to 3 vote, the court issued an order Tuesday afternoon that stays a national injunction against the ban until the constitutional issues can be fully litigated in the lower courts. By issuing the stay, the Supreme Court is allowing the Trump administration to enforce its ban until the Ninth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals and the Supreme Court can act on the constitutional issues involved.

If this feels like déjà vu, it is. During the first Trump administration, the Supreme Court also issued an order

enabling a Trump directive—issued by declaration through a Twitter post—to take effect, pending a Ninth Circuit ruling on the constitutional issues. That vote in 2019, was 5 to 4 (Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg has since been replaced with Trump appointee Amy Coney Barrett.)

Both Tuesday's Supreme Court order and its actions in 2019 focused on servicemembers in Washington State and the Ninth Circuit. There were four pending cases in 2019, and three today.

The subject of the Supreme Court order May 6 is *Shilling v. U.S.*, a case challenging Trump's executive order entitled Prioritizing Military Excellence and Readiness. Lambda Legal filed the lawsuit on behalf of seven active duty transgender servicemembers, one transgender person who would

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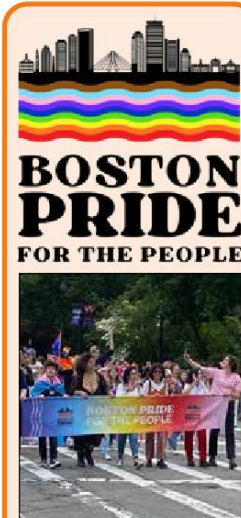


Photo by Bay Windows Staff

Festival & Parade June 14, 2025

Boston Pride For The People is excited to announce Pride Month celebration in Boston on June 14, 2025. The celebration will include a parade, a festival, and more!

Boston Pride For The People is a volunteer-led organization that plans activities and events that celebrate the rich diversity, culture, and intersectionality of the LGBTQ+ community.

"Boston has a historic legacy of advancing equity and celebrating the LGBTQ+ community. I'm grateful to Boston Pride for The People for their critical work to ensure that we are creating space for joy and inclusivity throughout the year. I look forward to welcoming people from all across the region and country to Boston this June."

-Mayor Michelle Wu

For more information go to bostonprideforthepeople.org

OPINION

Dancing on my phone

Protecting digital privacy in gay clubs

By Trevor Gardemal

Lon Pierson scoped out the crowd. It was a Saturday night, and of the three friends he had gone to Club Café with, two had left and one had already met someone. Pierson had gone to the Boston gay club that night to dance with his friends, but a change of plans wasn't the end of the world. He could dance with cute guys instead.

Pierson hit it off with a young man who matched his tall stature. Under flashing purple lights and to a remix

of "Defying Gravity," they started to make out.

He didn't think much of this experience. Kissing strangers in a gay club is an unparalleled pleasure in this world, and though there didn't seem to be a spark between the two of them without the influence of house music, Pierson had a fun night at the club.

Then he started getting texts.

"All of a sudden, multiple people are sending me this TikTok saying, 'Is this you?' I'm front and center in the TikTok making out with this guy, and all the comments are about us," Pierson told me.

see **DANCING**, page 5

A 2012 video shows comments from new pope that disappoint LGBTQ+ activists



Same-sex couples take part in a public blessing ceremony in front of the Cologne Cathedral in Cologne, Germany, on Sept. 20, 2023. Photo by /Martin Meissner/AP.

By Coleen Barry, David Crary
and Giada Zampano
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Leo XIV, in remarks in 2012 when he was the Augustinian prior general in Chicago, made comments critical of what he called the "homosexual lifestyle" and the role of mass media in promoting acceptance of same-sex relationships that conflicted with Catholic doctrine.

Reports about the 2012 comments emerged after Thursday's election of U.S. Cardinal Robert Prevost to succeed Pope Francis; he took the name Leo XIV.

see **POPE**, page 4



**"Today, he opened to the world.
To me, he opened 50 years ago."**

—Diane von Fürstenberg's response to Barry Diller's tell-all. I'm not exactly sure, but I think she just called him a bottom.

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

Photo by David Shankbone, via Wikimedia Commons.



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Praying for peace, preparing for battle

It is our turn to defend freedom

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

I am wondering, on a cold May morning in Washington, if I will see the Immigration and Customs Enforcement police make arrests here on 17th Street, a portion of which was renamed Frank Kameny Way in 2010 in honor of the gay rights pioneer.

Frank was my friend and colleague. He would have denounced what is going on in this country. I can hear him now: "This is not some Balkan principality where I have to show my papers!"

Speaking of which, Frank's correspondence and other writings are housed at the Library of Congress. Its first black and woman librarian, Carla Hayden, was fired by the president last week as another salvo in the culture war. Trump's spokesperson said Hayden had acquired books inappropriate for children. The LoC is a research library, not a children's library. A copy of every published book is sent there as part of the copyright process. Register of Copyrights Shira Perlmutter has also been fired.

Elon Musk, who owns AI startup xAI, has expressed support for the abolition of intellectual property laws. That would amount to legalized theft.

I helped Charles Francis get the Kameny Papers to LoC. I am worried about what might happen to them if Trump extends the culture war to questioning the library's holdings.

Frank Kameny's May 21 centennial fittingly occurs during World Pride. The work of freedom, equality and visibility that he pioneered is now up to us.

The need to raise our voices is more evident every day. This was illustrated by the arrest of Newark, NJ Mayor Ras Baraka by ICE police. He had joined protesters in objecting to ICE opening a detention facility in his city. Members of Congress who were there to conduct oversight were roughed up. Acting US Attorney and Trump lawyer Alina Habba lied about the incident in a statement calling the Democratic officials lawless. Arrests of the Congress members are being threatened.

I am tired of listening to ignorant and contemptuous agents of a convicted felon talk about law and order.

ICE should be abolished. The temptation to abuse is too great. When masked thugs mistreat members of Congress and arrest mayors in the name of national security, we have gone seriously astray.

Speaking of extremists wrapping themselves in the mantle of law and order, Trump has named Judge Jeanine Pirro of Fox News as Acting US

Attorney for DC. As one example of Pirro's trademark fanaticism, last month she attacked Social Security benefits for orphaned children.

Journalist Adam Serwer says the cruelty is the point with the Trump administration. Trump aide Stephen Miller is now floating the idea of suspending the writ of habeas corpus to facilitate deportations of undocumented migrant workers.

President Lincoln famously suspended the writ of habeas corpus during the Civil War. It means "you have the body" and is a

bedrock legal principle that protects individuals from unlawful imprisonment. Trump and associates have decided to pretend we are at war as justification for their unconstitutional actions. To the extent that we are witnessing acts of war, the tracks lead to the White House.

War and people eager to wage it are too much with us. Thus it was fitting that Chicago-born Cardinal Robert Prevost's first words as Pope Leo XIV were, "Peace be with all of you!"

A meme circulated on social media telling transphobes: "You are about to watch the whole world respect a chosen name. It is that easy."

Trump's first reaction to Leo's elevation was to celebrate the first American pope. But his MAGA crowd went on the attack after learning of Prevost's Twitter posts criticizing Trump, including on immigration. One factually challenged Trump supporter called the new pope "an anchor baby from Peru."

The pope did spend much of his career in Peru, and became a citizen of that country. He was also an ally of Pope Francis, whose tolerant instincts earned the wrath of the radical right.

The new pontiff graduated from Villanova University in 1977, a year before I did. I did not know him; but I join my fellow alums in celebrating the elevation of one of our own, even as I hope his social justice concerns will extend to the LGBTQ+ community.

One pundit noted that suddenly there is an American more famous worldwide than Trump. I am afraid this will only provoke Trump into accelerating his reckless actions to avoid being upstaged.

Alas, when His Holiness spoke of peace, it was a blessing, not an observation.

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SCOTUS

Continued from page 1

like to serve, and the Gender Justice League. Federal district Judge Benjamin Settle in Seattle issued a stay of the Trump ban in March; and a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit denied the Trump administration's request in April for relief from that stay.

The Trump administration applied to the Supreme Court for an emergency order to overcome the lower court stays. In response Tuesday, the Supreme Court granted that request, "pending the disposition of the appeal" in the Ninth Circuit and the Supreme Court. Although no justice signed the order, it indicated three justices—Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, and Ketanji Jackson—would have denied the Trump

administration's request.

President Trump's executive order in January rescinded an executive order issued by President Biden in 2021, which undid Trump's Twitter order. The Biden executive order declared "all qualified Americans" could serve in the military.

In 2019, a three-judge panel of the Ninth Circuit ruled in 2019 that the Trump ban "must be evaluated ... with the appropriate deference due to a proffered military decision."

Two other legal cases have also been pushing back against the Trump ban. They are being jointly led by the National Center for Lesbian Rights (NCLR) and Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders (GLAD). The first of the three cases, *Talbott v. U.S.*, in U.S. District Court for Washington, D.C., led to a national injunction against the Trump ban taking effect. That was issued by

Judge Ana Reyes, an openly gay appointee of President Biden. The second case, *Ireland v. Hegseth*, challenges the ban in federal court in New Jersey. A district court judge there ordered the Department of Defense not to enforce the ban.

GLAD attorney Jennifer Levi and NCLR attorney Shannon Minter, both transgender, issued a statement Tuesday said the Supreme Court's order allowing the ban to take effect—even though preliminary—will have a "devastating" effect on transgender servicemembers.

"Today's decision," said Levi, in a statement for the press, "adds to the chaos and destruction caused by this administration."

"It's not the end of the case, but the havoc it will wreak is devastating and irreparable," said Levi.

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Mombian

Continued from page 1

House), is a warm and joyous board book that focuses on the internal meaning of pride, even as it takes us to a more literal Pride celebration. In it, a girl tries to make a chain of daisies as she and her dads walk outside. When the chain breaks, however, the dads offer gentle lessons about resilience, speaking up, and being kind. The girl tries again, and the family, wreathed in flower crowns, make their way to a Pride parade of celebration and love.

Picture Books

"Make Your Own Rainbow: A Drag Queen's Guide to Colors," by Drag Queen Story Hour board member Lil Miss Hot Mess and illustrator Olga de Dios Ruiz (Running Press Kids), is an ode to color and creativity. A variety of drag queens and kings express themselves on each page through an assortment of hues and shades between and beyond the colors of the rainbow. Sure, there's red, but there's also crimson, maroon, scarlet, and more—and so on for each color. It all ends in a joyous, multi-colored extravaganza. Whether in a group at a story hour or at home, this joyful volume is bound to spark imaginations.

"My Little Golden Book About Pride," by Kyle Lukoff, illustrated by Michelle Jing Chan (Golden Books), explains what a Pride celebration is and offers a short history of the Stonewall rebellion and the creation of the rainbow flag—but also adds personal relevance by connecting the meanings of the flag's colors to LGBTQIA people's experiences. For example, red is for life, and "all LGBTQIA people deserve to have full, happy lives." Orange, however, represents healing, and "Sometimes people are hurt or left out because of their identities." It's therefore important, Lukoff explains, to find others who share your experience so you can help each other heal, "an important part of pride." Acknowledging queer challenges while also highlighting queer joys is a tricky balance, but Newbery Award honoree and two-time Stonewall Award winner Lukoff handles it with aplomb.

"One Day in June: A Story Inspired by the Life and Activism of Marsha P. Johnson," by Tourmaline, illustrated by Charlot Kristensen (G.P. Putnam's Sons), is a lively, lyrical, and evocative picture book about the trans icon that feels like the reminiscences of an old friend. It focuses less on biographical detail than on the boundless spirit,

self-confidence, and belief in human connection that make Johnson worth remembering.

"Under One Rainbow," by Chris Ayala-Kronos, illustrated by Sol Salinas (Clarion), is a bold and colorful book whose verses celebrate many people walking, rolling, riding, skipping and dancing their way to a Pride parade. Even when an unexpected thunderstorm dampens the day, "together, we weather the storm." It's simple but affirming.

"Rainbow Boy and the Pride Parade," by Taylor Rouanzion, illustrated by Stacey Chomiak (Beaming Books), is a standalone sequel to the duo's "Rainbow Boy," and a tale of parental support, community, and self-affirmation. Here, the titular boy is no longer wearing his pink tutu or other colorful clothes, and doesn't like rainbows anymore, "because they make me different." His mom and dad therefore take him to a Pride parade, and the book becomes a counting book as the boy sees "One grand marshal... Two daddies," and so on. When he sees "four boys in sparkly dresses," he is delighted to "twirl just like them." By the end of the parade, the boy reflects on all the people there who were different but welcome, and decides that he's proud to be a Rainbow Boy.

"Pride," by Eric Huang, illustrated by Amy Phelps (words & pictures), tells of a boy who is excited about going to a Pride parade with his two dads, plus his best friends and their two-mom and mom-dad families. The kids aren't sure what to wear, however, which creates low-stakes dramatic tension as the story explores the history of Pride and how the school and neighborhood are celebrating it today. The book offers a delightful vision of a place where LGBTQ+ equality and inclusion are woven throughout the community. Extensive backmatter covers the LGBTQ+ civil rights movement, the Pride flag, LGBTQ+ celebrations around the world, and suggested crafts and activities, making it perfect for use in schools and libraries, although home readers will enjoy it, too.

For Pride books from previous years and the many terrific LGBTQ+-inclusive picture books on other topics, please visit my Mombian Database of LGBTQ+ Family Books (mombian.com/database). May Pride bring you and your families joy, resilience, and love.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a two-time GLAAD Media Award-winning blog for LGBTQ+ parents plus a searchable database of 1,800+ LGBTQ+ family books.

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GUEST OPINION

Transgender Servicemembers in Talbott Urge SCOTUS to Continue to Prevent Implementation of the Transgender Military Ban

Submitted by GLAD Law

WASHINGTON, DC—Today, the plaintiffs, 32 transgender servicemembers and recruits, in *Talbott v. USA* (formerly *Talbott v. Trump*) filed an amicus brief with the Supreme Court of the United States, urging the Court to leave multiple preliminary injunctions in place preventing implementation of President Trump's transgender military ban.

On April 18, the Trump administration filed an emergency motion with the Supreme Court in *United States v. Shilling*, requesting that it stay the preliminary injunction in that case, which was put in place by the courts to prevent irreparable harms associated with the ban while the case is being heard in court. Both the constitutionality and lack of any rational reason or data underpinning the ban have come under fire during this litigation. Past filings have indicated there are currently thousands of distinguished transgender servicemembers in critical roles who have deployed globally and earned numerous commendations.

On March 18, U.S. District Court Judge for the District of Columbia Ana Reyes issued a nationwide preliminary injunction blocking implementation of the transgender military ban in *Talbott*. In a forceful order in which she held that the ban undermines national security and is likely unconstitutional, calling it "soaked with animus and dripping with pretext." That injunction halted implementation of the ban and protected transgender ser-

vicemembers and recruits from its significant harms while the future of the ban is being decided in court. These harms include servicemembers being removed from deployments, denied commissions and promotions, placed on administrative leave, denied medically needed care, and ultimately being placed in involuntary separation proceedings, a process used to address instances of misconduct. On March 28, U.S. District Court Judge for the 9th Circuit Benjamin H. Settle issued a second nationwide preliminary injunction in *Shilling v. Trump*.

The lead attorneys in *Talbott v. Trump*, GLAD Law Senior Director of Transgender and Queer Rights Jennifer Levi and NCLR Legal Director Shannon Minter, issued the following statements:

"The government has not and cannot provide any rational reason to justify the systematic purge of transgender troops who are meeting all performance standards. In fact, the government has actually conceded that each active-duty plaintiff is honorable, disciplined, and fit to serve," said GLAD Law Senior Director of Transgender and Queer Rights Jennifer Levi. "In the absence of reason or data, the government has attempted to frame this insidious ban as a run-of-the-mill medical policy. But the naked animus within the language of the ban—and its focus on lobbying insults at the 'honesty,' 'discipline,' and 'integrity' of all transgender servicemembers makes clear that the ban is meant to describe people, not a medical condition. Existing policies do not describe a person

with diabetes or a heart condition as dishonest or lacking integrity."

"The government falsely claims its request for a stay would only require the Supreme Court to do what has been done before, when in reality, it is asking for a shocking, unprecedented purge of thousands of current servicemembers for a reason unrelated to their ability to serve," said NCLR Legal Director Shannon Minter. "This type of mass purge has never before happened in our nation's history. It would cause an avalanche of irreparable harms that would stain the records of thousands of our nation's heroes who have been deployed and served around the globe in critical missions. There is no precedent for such a devastating and wholly un-American betrayal of dedicated troops."

Talbott v. Trump was the first legal challenge filed against President Trump's recent transgender military ban executive order. The case is on behalf of 32 plaintiffs and was brought by LGBTQ+ legal groups GLAD Law and NCLR with pro bono legal counsel from Wardenski P.C. and Kropf Moseley PLLC.

GLAD Law's Jennifer Levi and NCLR's Shannon Minter, the lead attorneys in this case, are transgender themselves and each have more than three decades of experience litigating landmark and key LGBTQ+ cases. Together, Levi and Minter led the legal fight in 2017 against the transgender military ban in *Doe v. Trump* and *Stockman v. Trump*, which also secured a nationwide preliminary injunction blocking that ban.

Pope

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The remarks were "disappointing," said Francis DeBernardo of New Ways Ministry, a U.S.-based group that advocates for greater inclusion of LGBTQ+ Catholics in the church.

"We pray that in the 13 years that have passed, 12 of which were under the papacy of Pope Francis, that his (Leo's) heart and mind have developed more progressively on LGBTQ+ issues, and we will take a wait-and-see attitude to see if that has happened," DeBernardo said in a statement.

A 2012 video provided to Catholic News Service, the news agency of the U.S. bishops conference, featured Prevost's address to the world Synod of Bishops against the backdrop of images from popular TV series and movies.

"Western mass media is extraordinarily effective in fostering within the general public enormous sympathy for beliefs and practices that are at odds with the gospel, for example abortion, homosexual lifestyle, euthanasia," Prevost said.

He singled out "how alternative families comprised of same-sex partners and their adopted children are so benignly and sympathetically portrayed in television programs and cinema today."

When he became a cardinal in 2023, Catholic News Service asked him if his views had changed. He acknowledged Pope Francis' call for a more inclusive church, saying Francis "made it very clear that he doesn't want people to be excluded simply on the basis of choices that they make, whether it be lifestyle, work, way to dress, or whatever."

But he underlined that doctrine had not changed, in line with Francis. "And people haven't said yet (that) we're looking for that kind of change," Prevost said. "But we are looking to be more welcoming and more open and to say all people are welcome in the church."

In his first remarks as pope on Thursday night, Leo spoke about building bridges and God's love for all.

The Rev. James Martin, an American Jesuit who founded an LGBTQ+ outreach ministry, said such an invitation to inclusiveness and welcome was important and he considered the cardinals' choice of Prevost "brilliant."

"He is humble, reserved, straightforward, trustworthy. I think he brings a wealth of experience not only (from) his long time in Peru working with the poor, but also in the Vatican," Martin said. "It's rare to come in contact with someone who is actually humble and not pretending to be humble. And he's the real deal. And that really cemented my respect for him. He always treated me with great respect, dig-

nity, friendship. He's a man of few words, and I'll say that when he talked, people listened."

Francis, more than any of his predecessors, incrementally conveyed through his actions, formal statements and occasional casual remarks that he wanted the church to be a more welcoming place for LGBTQ+ people. Yet his papacy ended with the same core doctrine for LGBTQ+ people that he inherited: The Catholic Church still rejected same-sex marriage and condemned any sexual relations between gay or lesbian partners as "intrinsically disordered."

The U.S.-based LGBTQ+ advocacy group GLAAD called on the new pontiff to "build on the progress" made by his predecessor.

"The Roman Catholic Church stands on the threshold of a hopeful and inclusive new chapter. With Pope Leo XIV's leadership, there is an extraordinary opportunity to inspire billions around the world and further embrace LGBTQ+ people with compassion, dignity, and love," GLAAD president and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis said in a statement.

Crary reported from New York. Barry reported from Soave, Italy. Nicole Winfield contributed.

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Dancing

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The video features a panoramic shot of the club, doubling back to Pierson. It got more than 45,000 views. And though there were relatively few likes or comments, reactions were harsh. "Must have been their first kiss," one commenter said. Others made assumptions about his character: "They've never met before and will never meet again."

I was there with Pierson that night, and I stumbled upon the TikTok before Pierson had the chance to. In order to protect his privacy, I messaged the poster, asking him to delete the video. He never replied, and it remains online.

Pierson is open about his bisexuality in social circles, but he prefers to keep things on the down low with his conservative parents. Although they aren't on TikTok, Pierson knows that viral videos can expand to other platforms.

"They're helping me pay for my school," he said. "I need their support, and I can imagine that if that was how they found out, they'd probably react a lot more negatively than if I had just said something to them, and I think a lot of people are probably in much worse situations than

mine."

Every weekend, queer people across the world flock to gay bars and other safe spaces. If the owners and guardians of these spaces fail to protect the privacy of their patrons, however, they are failing to keep customers safe in the modern world.

Lucas Hilderbrand is a professor of film and media studies at the University of California, Irvine. He's spent much of the last two decades researching and writing about the history of American gay bars, culminating in his 2023 book, "The Bars Are Ours."

"In the early days of bars, they really operated as a private space, insofar as the people going there often felt like it was sort of a shared understanding and a shared agreement that one's privacy would be respected in these spaces," Hilderbrand said. "And that really begins to change with mobile phones."

Hilderbrand has noticed two recurring uses of phones in bars over the last 15 years: digital cruising and documentation.

"You see someone cute at the bar, so you open Grindr, you open Scruff, you open whatever apps you're on," he said. "And the other is that people are taking pictures and videos. Oftentimes that's selfies, or taking pictures on the dance floor,

or oftentimes people are taking videos of drag performers or other events that are happening in this space. We've become a culture where we kind of expect the possibility of being photographed or filmed with other people's devices, which doesn't mean we're consenting to it."

For those born after the advent of Facebook, privacy has largely become a thing of the past. We live in a time when tech platforms from Google to TikTok make the majority of their money by selling personal data, and social media has permeated every facet of our lives.

So spaces where privacy is protected is a bit of a welcome novelty. Enter Feral.

Flyers posted on the streets of Boston call it "a queer dance party for sativa divas & power bttms." "Tara Dikhof's all-out rager for limp wrist baddies" and, most important, "a no phones dance party for high themes & high femmes."

The party is hosted by Tara Dikhof, a Boston-based drag queen and DJ, and changes location each month. Previous themes have included Lady Gaga, Mad Max and slumber parties. The next event is themed around Shrek and Doechii. For young queer people in Boston like recent Northeastern graduate Phi Garcia, it's an oasis.

"I think the first time I ever heard of Feral, my old roommate — who is a lesbian — invited us

because she said the vibes are good and that it was no phones," Garcia said. "I like dressing up for stuff, so that was kind of the draw for me."

When Garcia and their boyfriend, Northeastern graduate student Jonathan Bacdayan, arrived at Feral, they were debriefed on the rules before being allowed to enter.

Although Dikhof declined an interview, she posts the rules on Instagram along with each announcement of shows. The rules include: "no phones, photos, or videos on the dance floor," a zero tolerance policy for bigotry and discrimination, and mandatory consent before dancing or kissing a fellow partygoer. In addition to the debrief at the doors, posters displaying the commandments are on walls throughout the venue.

"It seems to me like it's a move to allow people to feel fully comfortable just living in the moment," Bacdayan said about the recording ban. "I think there are so many places we've kind of just grown accustomed to being recorded with security cameras and all that. It's almost kind of a throwback to have no recording and to just be able to know that what happens there stays there. I think it's a very comforting feeling."

Club Café's Stevie Psychone, who DJs every

see **DANCING**, page 7

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billy masters

You know I hate to complain. But what the hell kinda conclave was that? My God, the movie was longer (or maybe it just seemed longer). Anyway, we have a new Pope—Leo XIV. Didya know the new pope watched the film “Conclave” before going into the actual conclave? At least that’s what his brother told the press. Just what the Vatican needs, the papal equivalent of **Roger Clinton**! I have friends who aren’t happy that this pope is somewhat conservative regarding gays and women in the church. People, grow up. This is the Catholic Church! It’s like saying McDonald’s should hire more vegetarians! Speaking of food, here’s a fun fact—apparently it’s against the rules to serve ravioli during a conclave? In the past, people would send secret messages inside the certain food. That’s why tubular pastas and roast chickens are also against the rules. At least now I know why so many priests have turned to me in a confessional and said, “Is that cannelloni in your pants, or are you just happy to see me?”

You know who should have gone to confession once or twice? **Anna Wintour**. If someone had guided her to forgive **André Leon Talley**, she wouldn’t have had to mount an entire Met Gala just to make amends with the late (and certainly great) fashionista! But there we were, celebrating the ultimate Black Dandy. For me, the Met Gala is rarely a fashion show and more a freak show. I find most of the outfits either ridiculous or ludicrous. I will admit that **Whoopi** looked quite fetching in her **Thom Browne** ensemble. But is there any reason she couldn’t smile? Even a little? I’ve seen happier people in hostage videos. Then there’s that singer Lisa, who you’ll remember from the recent Oscars. If you looked closely (and you’re forgiven if you didn’t), you’d have noticed the crotch area of her Louis Vuitton ensemble seemed to be embroidered with the image of **Rosa Parks**! Turns out, Lisa had the likeness of several notable people included in the fabric. And who doesn’t want a little inspiration when looking down at their crotch? Especially of someone who is most notable for taking a seat...up front!

Then there was that buck-tooth actress from “White Lotus” whose name escapes me—who attended the gala with **Patrick Schwarzenegger**. On the red carpet, she was questioned about her alleged feud with co-star **Walton Goggins** (who was only feet away from her). She said she adores him. Enough to show up when he hosts “Saturday Night Live”? She said she expects him to hit it out of the park, but has no plans to be there. FYI, she didn’t show up and wasn’t even mentioned.

Schwarzy is campaigning to star in **Luca Guadagnino**’s remake of “American Psycho”—a role I presume will go to someone with a higher profile (not that **Christian Bale** was that big when he made the original in 2000). Still, good for Paddy for taking his shot...even if it was from the red carpet of the Met Gala while holding a red clutch!

Lil Nas X, certainly both a fashion plate and a black dandy, did not attend. Of course, if you read this column, you know he’s suffering from something in the Bell’s Palsy family. Apparently his medical condition is not getting any better. He announced that he will drop out of the Outloud Music Festival in Los Angeles (part of WeHo Pride). “After my recent hospital visit, I—like all of you should—must prioritize my health and getting back to 100%. As it currently stands, I would not be able [to] perform that type of show my fans and community deserve. I am sorry! Even though I can’t be there, I hope you all show OUT for Pride. Now more than ever, we need to be seen.”

Didya know **Sandra Bernhard** had open heart surgery? She claims it was not nearly as critical as it sounds. “It was a planned surgery. It wasn’t that dramatic.” Sounds a little dramatic. While lying on the gurney, she looked up and said, “I know we’re just minutes away from being wheeled into the operating room, but I’m an actress. I’m a performer. Do I need to bring in a plastic surgeon?” They told her, “We’ll make it work; we’ll make it beautiful.” And so it was, as she showed off during her opening night at the Café Carlyle. The Café Carlyle? Who is she? **Bobby Short**? **Marilyn Maye**? Anyway, the show was reportedly a smash.

Watch how I combine Catholicism, the church, and queer singers. Every year, the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra presents a big, splashy musical in a semi-staged performance. This year, they are doing “Jesus Christ Superstar.” In the plumb role of Jesus Christ we

have...**Cynthia Erivo**? Well, after appearing in greenface, why not? Still, I don’t recall the Biblical passage about Jesus having a nose ring. Her Judas will be **Adam Lambert**! In a way, I find it all inspired casting. These shows typically sell out, so if you want tickets, you better go to HollywoodBowl.com.

The entertainment business makes strange bedfellows. Picture it—an all-star tribute to **Joan Rivers** taking place at the legendary Apollo Theatre in Harlem being shown on NBC. Forget what’s wrong with this picture—what’s right about it? When Missy was asked how the lineup was chosen, she said, “First of all, we took anyone who said yes.” Finally, a refreshing moment of candor (and ebb). “Joan Rivers—A Dead Funny All-Star Tribute” will air on May 13th on NBC—the network that blackballed her.

Speaking of strange bedfellows, let’s talk about **Barry Diller**. So, he’s gay. Anyone surprised? Hands? We’ll even tie it into our previous item—Barry was the head of FOX, the network that launched with Joan Rivers’ own late-night talk show. Barry was the man who hired her. He’s also the man who cancelled the show. He was also the man Joan blamed for her husband’s suicide. He also eventually became her boss again at QVC—with a far happier ending. And I’m sure Diller likes a happy ending! I have my own Barry story. It was at a Commitment to Life AIDS benefit at the Universal Amphitheatre. From the stage, Barry mentioned something positive about Albania. A phalanx of photographers surrounded him as he was walking past me. “I’m Albanian,” I blurted out. And he stopped in his tracks. We talked briefly. I don’t recall many details, but I recall him being quite charming.

Where was I? Oh yes, Diller wrote a book. “Who Knew”—no question mark needed. We’ve not read the book, only excerpts. Barry reveals he was cavorting with other boys since he was a teenager in West Hollywood. As his status rose, he came up with his own “personal bill of rights”. He planned to live in silence, but not pretend. He’d never try to convince people he was heterosexual, but would skirt personal questions. He would not delude anyone. Lastly, “I would never bring a man as a date to a heterosexual event—but I’d never bring a woman as a ‘beard,’ either.” He continues, “While there have been a good many men in my life, there has only ever been one woman.”

That brings us to **Miss von Fürstenberg**. Barry calls theirs a “love story”. He is adamant that he truly loves her. “There are many complex aspects of my relationship with Diane von Fürstenberg—romantic love and deep respect, companionship and world adventuring, then disappointment and separation, and finally marriage.” He admits it’s confusing. “I’m well aware that this part of my life has caused confusion and lots of speculation. A relationship that began with indifference, then exploded into a romance as natural to us as breathing, surprised us and everyone else.” Regarding his male relationships, Diane says, “It’s something I’ve never discussed with him. Because what is between him and me is so much more. It’s so much deeper.” She adds, “But, you know, I’m an odd cookie!”

How can I top that? With this week’s “Ask Billy” question. Kevin in San Diego writes, “I hear **Jude Law** shows all in ‘Eden’. True??”

True. And, to tie this in with the rest of the column, Jude has twice played the Pope—in “The Young Pope” (a series for HBO) and “The New Pope” (where he played the same character...in a coma). As to “Eden”, it’s a film from **Ron Howard** coming out in August. Since I have my ways, I can assure you that Jude looks as scrumptious as ever—and I don’t even mind his “enhancements”. He walks around shirtless a lot, showing off his impressive physique. And then, yes, he does indeed show all. I know you’ll want to see it, and what kinda host would I be to make you wait until August? Just head on over to BillyMasters.com.

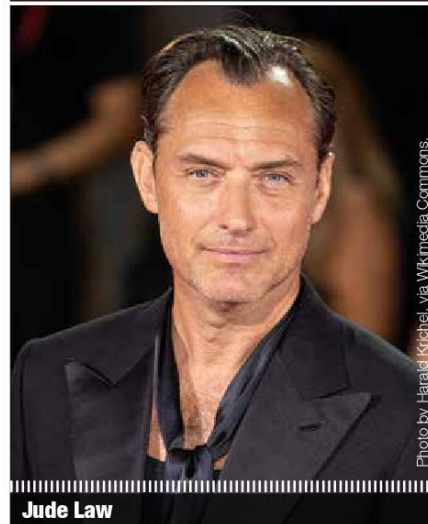
When we’re showcasing a nude Pope, it’s time to end yet another column. Now I’m hungry for a cookie! While I wait around to burn in hell, you can check out www.BillyMasters.com—the site that doesn’t break a single commandment. Except that one about coveting a neighbor...or an ass...or a neighbor’s ass! If you have a non-liturgical question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I’m cast as Mary Magdalene (it could happen)! Until next time, remember, one man’s filth is another man’s bible.



Walton Goggins



Joan Rivers



Jude Law

Dancing

Continued from page 5

Friday night and serves as their entertainment director, agrees that phones in nightclubs deter connections and social interaction. However, he doesn't believe that it's feasible to do anything about this.

"I can definitely see an argument if someone was in the closet, for example and they were there and that happened, I could see that being a problem. But also, it's 2025. How much can you do if you're not taking away people's phones?" he said, "The logistics of it sound messy. We have enough trouble policing people using their vapes in the club."

Chris Ewen, who DJs at the Cambridge club ManRay, agrees that banning phones is impractical; he hopes that it's unnecessary. When ManRay reopened in 2023 following 18 years of dormancy, Ewen and the other organizers were concerned about what an increasingly online world would mean for a club that frequently hosts goth and fetish-themed nights. He's been pleasantly surprised.

"There has been a lovely maturity about it," he said. "I mean, that could change at any time, but our experience so far at ManRay is we haven't needed to do a thing where you have to check your phones to come in, or put a sticker over the camera or anything like that. People seem to be very aware of the whole permission versus lack of permission thing, and they have tended so far to respect it."

He's also concerned that regulating phone use would "raise the stakes on the taboo," encouraging partygoers to break the rules.

Psychone attended a party with a phone-check in New York, and though he appreciated the chance to unplug, the process of giving his phone to strangers made him nervous. He ended up leaving his phone in the car instead.

"I think if venues could get away with not including phones, I think that would be great. I think it's unfortunately a little idealistic today," Psychone said.

Psychone has thought about putting posters up in Club Café, like they do at Feral, but he doesn't necessarily think it's worth it, especially at a club as big.

Hilderbrand, who wrote "The Bars Are Ours," supports phone use regulation, but he doesn't want them banned outright.

"For instance, at my neighborhood bar, if someone's running late and they want to text me, that's very useful to be able to communicate, which is different from a ban on photography and filming," he said.

This is all in service of protecting a uniquely important aspect of queer life. Gay clubs are more than just a place to get drunk and make out with strangers. For decades, they have been the "primary social institution of the queer community," as Hilderbrand says. They're a place to connect with like-minded people and to briefly forget about rising homophobia in the country. If patrons don't feel safe from being exposed at clubs — whether the protection comes from members of the community or owners — they aren't actually providing safe haven.

"If we want to keep our special place sacred to us, then we have to also be gatekeepers of the safety of the situation," Ewen said.



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