

Barney Frank, From Hospice, Warns Democrats Transgender Sports Debate Is Politically Costly

By Bay Windows Staff

Former Congressman Barney Frank, speaking from hospice care in Maine, is warning Democrats that debates over transgender athletes in women's sports have become politically damaging for the party.

In a new interview with NBC10 Boston's "At Issue," the 86-year-old Massachusetts Democrat said na-

tional Democrats failed to separate themselves from positions many voters viewed as too far outside the mainstream, allowing those positions to define the party in voters' minds.

Frank said he believes Democrats should focus more heavily on broadly supported protections — including healthcare access and



see **FRANK**, page 5 Screenshot via NBC10 Boston.

Swept Away is about us all



Christopher Chew as The Captain with ensemble. Photo courtesy of Nile Scott Studios.

By Rev. Irene Monroe
Contributing Writer

Swept Away—a one-act musical by Tony Award-winning playwright John Logan (*Red*, *Moulin Rouge!*) with music and lyrics by critically acclaimed American folk-rock band The Avett Brothers. It receives its first post-Broadway staging at SpeakEasy Stage Company, running April 24 through May 23.

Dark, gripping, and haunting, the production delivers a visceral theatrical experience that lingers well beyond the final note. It is, unmistakably, a must-see—one that confronts audiences with unsettling moral questions and compels an inward reckoning: what would you do under such circumstances?

The narrative centers on four whal-

see **SWEPT AWAY**, page 5



Changing Policy Through the Voices of People With LGBTQ+ Parents

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer



Photo courtesy of Meg York.

LGBTQ+ families have long been the subject of policy debates—but the voices of youth and adults with LGBTQ+ parents have not always been heard. COLAGE, the national organization dedicated to uniting and supporting people with LGBTQ+ parents, is ramping up its efforts to change that.

In January, COLAGE hired Chief Legal and Policy Officer Meg York, its first full-time policy attorney. York, whose background is in family law,

came to COLAGE after working as chief counsel at Family Equality, and is raising three children with her wife. "COLAGE brings something unique to policy spaces," she said in an interview. "The idea of centering people with LGBTQ parents shifts the entire conversation."

Anti-LGBTQ+ groups, she said, "are claiming that the kids aren't all right when the kids are, very clearly,

see **MOBIAN**, page 4

Families, Advocates Criticize Baystate Decision on Trans Youth Care

By Bay Windows Staff

Baystate Health continues to face criticism after ending gender-affirming hormone treatments and puberty blockers for patients younger than 18, a decision the western Massachusetts hospital system said was driven by concerns over possible federal funding losses.

According to reporting by WBUR, families of transgender youth said the decision left them scrambling to find new providers despite Massachusetts'

legal protections for gender-affirming care.

Baystate Health, the largest health care provider in western Massachusetts, announced earlier this year that it would continue mental health counseling for transgender youth but would stop prescribing medication-based gender-affirming treatment for minors. Patients were referred to other providers, including Northampton-based Transhealth.

see **BAYSTATE**, page 5



The gaping void of 'We don't want you here' Vote the scoundrels out

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

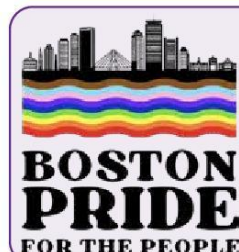
There are no garbage people. There are, however, people who thrive on spreading hatred and discord. Those of us who embrace equal opportunity for all in our diverse society hold within us the power to defeat the mad, malignant president who is do-

ing all he can to pull our nation apart.

I am recovering from a fall that fractured several ribs and broke my upper right arm. I mention this because one of the doctors who stopped in my hospital room asked me a few questions to test my cognitive ability.

I apparently aced the test, as Mr. Trump likes to say, though a cognitive test is not an IQ test. Hoping to earn extra points, I said, "I also know our government is led by a traitorous

see **ROSENDALL**, page 4



BOSTON PRIDE CELEBRATIONS

Festival & Parade

Saturday, June 6 at 12p.m.

Boston Pride For The People is excited to announce Pride Month celebration in Boston on June 6, 2026. The celebration will include a parade, a festival, and more! Go to bp4tp.org for more information.

SATURDAY, MAY 16

MASSACHUSETTS YOUTH PRIDE

BAGLY | City Hall Plaza, Boston The oldest youth-led, adult-supported LGBTQ+ Youth Pride in the country, featuring a march, festival, resource fair, and live stage show produced by LGBTQ+ youth. Free. Registration at bagly.org/myp.

see **BOSTON PRIDE**, page 2

Boston Pride

Continued from page 1

FRIDAY, JUNE 5

MFA FIRST FRIDAYS: PRIDE

6–9 PM | Museum of Fine Arts Boston | 465 Bar and Restaurant, MFA, 465 Huntington Ave., Boston | Pride-themed First Fridays evening with art making, Spotlight Talks, a drag performance by Coleslaw, and music by DJ Dayglow. 21+. Members free, nonmembers \$27 | mfa.org | instagram.com/mfaboston | facebook.com/mfaboston

PRIDE NIGHT — BOSTON POPS FEATURING ALEX NEWELL

7:30 PM Boston Symphony Orchestra / Boston Gay Men's Chorus | Symphony Hall, 301 Massachusetts Ave., Boston | Alex Newell joins the Boston Gay Men's Chorus for the Pops' third annual Pride Night celebration. bso.org

BOSTON DYKE MARCH

6:30 PM Boston Dyke March | Parkman Bandstand, Boston Common, Boston | Annual grassroots, non-commercial Dyke March. Mask required. ASL interpreted, wheelchair and stroller accessible. bostondykemarch.com

LESBIANNIGHTLIFE ROOFTOP PRIDE PARTY

7–11 PM | LesbianNightLife | Rooftop @ Revere Hotel, 200 Stuart St., Boston | Boston's premier LGBTQ+

women's Pride rooftop party. Three DJs, silent disco, cocktails, and skyline views | lesbiannightlife.com | instagram.com/lesbiannightlife

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

LESBIANNIGHTLIFE ESME BLOCK PARTY & PRIDE FEST

LesbianNightLife | New Location TBA, Boston | 29th anniversary of the largest LGBTQ+ women, non-binary and trans block party in the country. Bigger and better than ever in a new location for 2026 | lesbiannightlife.com | instagram.com/lesbiannightlife

RAINBOW REVOLUTIONARIES TOUR

Saturdays & Sundays in June starting June 6 | 10:45 AM | Freedom Trail Foundation | Departs Robert Gould Shaw and Massachusetts 54th Regiment Memorial, Boston Common | Boston's official Freedom Trail LGBTQ+ history tour, led by guides in 18th-century costume. Stops include the State House, Park Street Church, and George Middleton House, with stories of Elaine Noble, Charlotte Cushman, Baron von Steuben, and others. \$17 adults, \$15 seniors, \$8 kids | thefreedomtrail.org/tours/rainbow-revolutionaries

BOSTON PRIDE FOR THE PEOPLE — PARADE, FESTIVAL & BLOCK PARTY

11 AM–8 PM Boston Pride for the People | Copley Square to Boston Common, Boston New England's largest Pride event. Parade steps off at 11 AM from Copley Square through the South End and Back Bay to Boston Common. All-

ages festival noon–6 PM. Block party 2–8 PM. Free to attend. bostonprideforthepeople.org | info@bp4tp.org

ROAD OF RAINBOWS PRIDE 5K (6TH ANNUAL)

Time TBD Boston Theater Company | Brewer Fountain, Boston Common, Boston Inclusive LGBTQ+ 5K run/walk on Boston Common with post-race performances. Pay-what-you-can, including free. All genders welcome. bostontheater.org/ror | assistant@bostontheater.org

RISE — BOSTON GAY MEN'S CHORUS PRIDE CONCERT

Sat, June 6 | 8 PM & Sun, June 7 | 3 PM | Boston Gay Men's Chorus | Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory, 30 Gainsborough St., Boston | High-energy Pride concert honoring resilience, resistance, and radical joy. Featuring music by Pink, Madonna, Bob Dylan, Cyndi Lauper, and Lady Gaga. bgmc.org

SUNDAY, JUNE 7

LESBIANNIGHTLIFE JP BLOCK PARTY

LesbianNightLife | Jamaica Plain, Boston | LGBTQ+ community celebration with live music, DJ, vendors, and family-friendly activities in JP | lesbiannightlife.com | instagram.com/lesbiannightlife

NEW ENGLAND BEAR PRIDE BOSTON HARBOR CRUISE

2:30–6 PM | Mass Bears and Cubs / Boston Alliance

of Gay Sports | M/V Freedom, Mass Bay Lines, 60 Rowes Wharf, Boston | Three-hour Pride kickoff cruise of Boston Harbor with DJ, complimentary buffet, cash bar, and door prizes. The annual cruise has become a beloved Pride Month tradition | eventbrite.com (search New England Bear Pride 2026 Harbor Cruise) | facebook.com/MassBearsAndCubs

SUNDAY, JUNE 14

RISE — BOSTON GAY MEN'S CHORUS PRIDE CONCERT

2 PM | Groton Hill Music Center, Groton, MA | High-energy Pride concert honoring resilience, resistance, and radical joy. Featuring music by Pink, Madonna, Bob Dylan, Cyndi Lauper, and Lady Gaga. bgmc.org

TUESDAY, JUNE 16

PRIDE NIGHT AT FENWAY PARK — RED SOX VS. BLUE JAYS

7:10 PM Boston Red Sox / Fenway Health | Fenway Park, 4 Jersey St., Boston Annual LGBTQ+ Pride Night at Fenway. mlb.com/redsox

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1

BOSTON BLACK PRIDE 2026

Wed–Sun, July 1–5 | LesBiGay Urban Foundation | Various locations across Boston | Multi-day celebration of Black LGBTQ+ joy, culture, and community. Now in its 7th year, featuring live performances, parties, wellness events, and a signature Parade & Music & Arts Festival. The Music & Arts Festival is on Sun, July 5 | lesbigayurbanfoundation.org | instagram.com/bostonurbanpride | facebook.com/bostonurbanpride

MASSACHUSETTS PRIDE CELEBRATIONS ORGANIZED CHRONOLOGICALLY

THURSDAY, MAY 28

GLOUCESTER/ROCKPORT/ ESSEX/MANCHESTER-BY-THE-SEA

Cape Ann Pride Weekend | Various times Cape Ann Pride Coalition | Various venues, Cape Ann region Multi-day celebration with flag raisings, live music, and community events across the Cape Ann region. capeannpride.org

SUNDAY, MAY 31

BERKSHIRE REGION

Berkshire Pride 5K/Walk Berkshire Pride | Berkshire region Part of Berkshire Pride's 10th Anniversary "Every Day is Pride" season. berkshirepride.org

BRAINTREE PRIDE

10 AM | Braintree Pride | Watson Park Baseball Complex, Gordon Rd., Braintree Annual community Pride celebration on the South Shore | facebook.com/BraintreePride

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

HULL

Hull Pride | 3–10 PM Hull Pride | Hull Yacht Club, 5 Fitzpatrick Way, Hull Annual waterfront Pride celebration. Booty Vortex, Boston's funk and disco band, returns as entertainment. Note: same date as Boston Pride Parade. hullpride.net

LENOX

Lenox Pride (Inaugural) Berkshire Pride | Lenox Part of Berkshire Pride's 10th Anniversary "Every Day is Pride" season. berkshirepride.org

NEW BEDFORD

South Coast Pride | Noon–5 PM South Coast LGBTQ+ Network | Buttonwood Park, New Bedford Annual South Coast Pride festival with live entertainment, drag performances, music, food vendors, local artisans, games, and community organizations. sclgbtqnw.org

NEWBURYPORT

Newburyport Pride Parade & Festival | Arrive 11 AM, Parade noon Newburyport Pride | Bartlet Mall to downtown, Newburyport Parade departs

Bartlet Mall at noon; festival follows in downtown Newburyport. newburyportpride.com

SPRINGFIELD PRIDE

Noon | Springfield Pride Parade Organization | Springfield | Annual Western Massachusetts Pride parade and celebration | springfieldprideparade.org | facebook.com/SpringfieldPrideParadeOrganization

WATERTOWN PRIDE

Parade 10 AM, Festival 11:30 AM–4 PM | City of Watertown / Watertown Pride Advisory Committee | Moxley Field to Saltonstall Park, 149 Main St., Watertown | Parade gathers at Moxley Field at 10 AM and marches to Saltonstall Park. Festival features inspirational speakers, music with Carrie Ferguson Band and the Femmes, drag king Jean Sequins, Good Trouble Honk Band, circus aerial show, community tables, and food vendors. | watertownpride.com | instagram.com/watertownpride

FRIDAY, JUNE 7

PROVINCETOWN

Provincetown Pride (9th Annual) | Various times Provincetown Business Guild / Provincetown Pride Center | Town Hall & Commercial Street, Provincetown | Three-day celebration including Pride Market, Pride Rally, "Sashay to Tea" parade down Commercial Street, Queer Comedy Showcase, Tea Dances at the Boat Slip, and Feet Over Front Street 5K. Friday night Pride Ferry from Boston available via Bay State Cruise Co. | ptown.org | ptowntourism.com | instagram.com/visitptown

FALL RIVER PRIDE FESTIVAL

Noon–6 PM | Fall River Pride Committee / Church of the Holy Spirit | Gates of the City, Ponta Delgada Blvd., Fall River | Drag performances, live music, games and prizes, community resources, food trucks, and vendors. | fallriverpride.org | facebook.com/FallRiverPrideCo | instagram.com/fallriverprideco

FRIDAY, JUNE 12

NORTH ADAMS

North Adams Pride Night Berkshire Pride | North Adams Part of Berkshire Pride's 10th Anniversary

"Every Day is Pride" season. berkshirepride.org

SATURDAY, JUNE 13

GREENFIELD — FRANKLIN COUNTY PRIDE

Parade 12 PM | Franklin County Pride | Greenfield Middle School to Energy Park, festival on Miles Street, Greenfield | 9th annual parade and festival serving Franklin County and the Pioneer Valley. Parade kicks off at the middle school at noon and ends at Energy Park, where the festival continues on Miles Street with vendors and performances | franklincountypride.org | facebook.com/franklincountypride | instagram.com/franklincountypride

LEE

Lee Pride (2nd Annual) Berkshire Pride | Downtown Lee — Lee Farmers Market, First Congregational Church, Lee Library, Devonfield Inn, and Starving Artist Café Interfaith Pride Prayer Breakfast, Pride Market at the Lee Farmers Market, a library exhibit, live afternoon concert at the Devonfield Inn, family-friendly Drag Bingo, and an adults-only drag show and dance party at the Starving Artist Café. berkshirepride.org

LOWELL

Greater Lowell Pride | Flag raising noon; Festival 1–4 PM Greater Lowell Health Alliance | City Hall & festival location TBD, Lowell Annual flag raising and full-day festival serving the Greater Lowell region. Moved from June 6 to avoid conflict with Boston Pride. greaterlowellpride.org

TAUNTON

South Coast Pride | Noon–5 PM South Coast LGBTQ+ Network | Hopewell Park, Taunton Annual South Coast Pride festival with live entertainment, drag performances, food vendors, and community organizations. sclgbtqnw.org

SUNDAY, JUNE 14

CAMBRIDGE LGBTQ PRIDE WALK AT MOUNT AUBURN CEMETERY

1–2:30 PM | Friends of Mount Auburn with Queer History Boston | Mount Auburn Cemetery, 580 Mt. Auburn St., Cambridge | Docent-led walk by historian Robin Hazard Ray exploring the resting places of Senator Charles Sumner, actress

Charlotte Cushman, poet Amy Lowell, painter George Hawley Hollowell, and other LGBTQ+ figures from Boston's past | mountauburn.org | queerhistoryboston.org

WALTHAM

Waltham Pride | Noon–4 PM | Waltham Common, 610 Main St., Waltham Fifth annual festival featuring musical acts, drag performances, speeches, food, and family programming. Note: The City of Waltham's events page lists June 7 — verify at walthampride.org, which lists June 14. walthampride.org

SATURDAY, JUNE 20

PITTSFIELD

Pride on the Common Parade and Festival (10th Anniversary) Berkshire Pride | Park Square to Pittsfield Common Park, Pittsfield Flagship 10th anniversary event stepping off at Park Square. berkshirepride.org

SATURDAY, JUNE 27

HOLYOKE

Holyoke Pride Fest | Noon–6 PM Holyoke Pride | Veterans Park, Dwight and Maple Streets, Holyoke Annual outdoor Pride festival, part of a month-long series of events. Date shifted from June 21 (2025) to June 27 this year. holyokepride.org

QUINCY

Quincy Pride | Noon–5 PM Quincy Pride | Pageant Field, 1 Merrymount Pkwy., Quincy Annual South Shore Pride festival. quincypride.com

SALEM

North Shore Pride Parade & Festival | Time TBD North Shore Pride Inc. | Salem Common, Salem Annual parade and festival at Salem Common serving the entire North Shore LGBTQ+ community. northshorepride.org

SUNDAY, JUNE 28

PLYMOUTH

Plymouth Pride | 11 AM–5 PM Plymouth Pride Inc. | Nelson Park, Plymouth Annual South Shore Pride festival. plymouthprideinc.com

see MASSACHUSETTS PRIDE, page 7

Vatican sending new signals of openness but limitations in outreach to LGBTQ+ Catholics

By Nicole Winfield
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — The Vatican is sending new signals about how it intends to minister to LGBTQ+ Catholics in the Pope Leo XIV era, with signs of openness and limitations after Pope Francis ushered in a notable welcome during his 12-year pontificate.

Catholic LGBTQ+ advocates cheered this week when a Vatican working group released a report featuring the testimony of two gay, married Catholics who spoke openly about their sexuality, faith and how the Catholic Church's negative teaching on homosexuality had hurt them.

Additionally, Leo made clear during a recent airborne news conference that he believed the church's teachings on social justice, equality and freedom were far more important than its teaching on sexual morality, suggesting he doesn't intend to prioritize the issue.

At that same news conference, though, Leo indicated he will go no further than Francis on the contentious matter of same-sex blessings. The Vatican has recently renewed its opposition to any local efforts to deviate from the Holy See stance.

For the Rev. James Martin, an American Jesuit who has spearheaded the church's outreach to the LGBTQ+ community in the U.S., the developments signal strong continuity with Francis.

"If the Catholic Church has begun to listen to LGBTQ Catholics as part of its methodology, the church has already moved forward in a significant way," he wrote recently.

But the signals have prompted criticism from conservatives, who have stressed official Catholic teaching — unchanged during even Francis' pontificate — that says homosexual activity is "intrinsically disordered."

A synod document featuring searing testimony

The Vatican working group report summarized the work of experts studying controversial topics that emerged after Francis' yearslong reform effort. The report has no binding value and is merely a synthesis of deliberations. It's not clear what, if anything, Leo will do with it.

The testimony of the gay men, contained in annexes published on the Vatican's synod website, featured moving accounts of how one, from Portugal, came to terms with his homosexuality and married his husband. The man also recounted how he sometimes struggled with his faith because of insensitive remarks from a Catholic spiritual director and forced "conversion therapy," the scientifically discredited practice of using therapy to "convert" LGBTQ+ people to heterosexuality or traditional gender expectations.

The other testimony, from an American, criticized the therapy he went through and counseling he received from a Catholic pastoral group, Courage, that seeks to help people with same-sex attraction live chastely.

"My sexuality isn't a perversion, disorder, or cross; it's a gift from God," the person wrote.

Courage, in a statement Friday, decried the negative depiction of its work, saying it has never been involved in "reparative therapy."

"Courage has suffered calumny and detrac-

tion before, but usually from secular outlets," the group said. "It is a great sadness and an additional wound to our members to have this false and unjust depiction in a Vatican document."

Martin said the publication marked the first time that an official Vatican report "has included such detailed stories from LGBTQ Catholics. As such, it marks a significant step forward in the church's relationship with the LGBTQ community."

Bishop Joseph Strickland, whom Francis removed as bishop of Tyler, Texas, said the report was "deeply alarming" and contradicted church teaching about sexuality, sin, marriage and morality. In a post on his personal website entitled "An Emergency in the Church," Strickland said the church's teaching on homosexuality didn't come from prejudice but from God.

"To suggest that the sin does not consist in the same-sex relationship itself is not merely confusing language. It is a direct assault upon Catholic moral doctrine and upon the words of Scripture itself," he wrote.

The German church guidelines

The issue of LGBTQ+ outreach is coming to a head in Germany, where Catholic bishops have issued guidelines for priests on performing same-sex blessings that seemingly go beyond what Francis' Vatican decreed in 2023.

That year, the Vatican's doctrine office issued a declaration, known by its Latin title "Fiducia Supplicans," that allowed priests to offer spontaneous, nonliturgical blessings to same-sex couples, provided such blessings aren't confused with the rites and rituals of a wedding. Church teaching holds that marriage is a lifelong union between a man and woman.

The declaration prompted an unprecedented, continentwide dissent from African bishops and other conservatives, prompting the Vatican to clarify that such blessings must be brief, "10 or 15 seconds," and aren't a blessing of the union per se but the people in it.

In April 2025, German bishops and an influential lay organization published guidelines on implementing the declaration.

While stressing the spontaneous, nonliturgical nature of the blessing, the guidelines say they are for the relationship as opposed to individuals, and provide criteria for a proper celebration. The guidelines say, for example, there should be appropriate liturgical readings, "care in the preparation" of the event, and that people invited should offer "acclamation, prayer and song."

Leo revealed last month, while traveling home from Africa, that the Vatican had told the Germans that it doesn't agree with their proposals. This week, the 2024 letter in which the Holy See articulated its position was put online.

The letter, signed by doctrine chief Cardinal Victor Manuel Fernández, said the guidelines' reference to acclamation resembled that of marriage and "in this sense effectively legitimizes the status of these couples, contrary to what is stated" in the Vatican's 2023 declaration.

Fernández's letter complained that the German guidelines' mention of the location, aesthetic and music in a blessing suggested a liturgical ceremony that "contradicts" what the

see VATICAN, page 7

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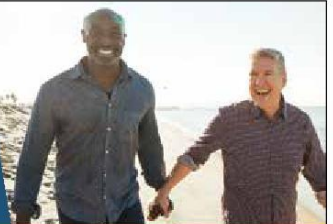
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Milford: Cornerstone at Milford*
Stoughton: Brookmeadow at Cobb Corner*
Westfield: Armbrook Village*

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Hampton: Cornerstone at Hampton*

RHODE ISLAND

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Mombian

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all right." COLAGE's policy work seeks "to put that lived experience in front of lawmakers." And it is COLAGERS—the organization's general term for anyone with one or more LGBTQ+ parents—who are leading the way. "Our policy work with COLAGE comes from the COLAGERS themselves," York said. "It's not somebody else's ideas about what's best for people, but it's really their lived reality, transformed into law and policy."

COLAGE (colage.org), founded in 1990, is not new to the policy arena. Most notably, it partnered with Family Equality, whose focus is on supporting LGBTQ+ parents, to compile COLAGERS' experiences for a "Voices of Children" brief in both the Windsor (2013) and Obergefell (2015) U.S. Supreme Court marriage equality cases. It is impossible not to hear echoes of the brief in the rulings, which emphasized the positive impact of marriage equality on children.

Now, however, COLAGE is energizing its policy work through what it calls the "Queerspawn Agenda." The agenda has three main pillars: parentage reform; safe, accessible, and transparent family formation; and safe schools for children in LGBTQ+ families.

In the parentage arena, York said, "Our goal is to update parentage law across the country so that there are comprehensive protections for kids with LGBTQ parents." She explained, "Parentage is really the legal foundation of family security, particularly for kids with LGBTQ parents, and particularly if they're born through assisted reproduction." This security "is critical to children's well-being and affords children access to a whole host of benefits."

Only about 15 states have comprehensive, modernized parentage legislation, however. Most often, this has been based upon the 2017 Uniform

Parentage Act (UPA 2017), a model law developed by the bipartisan Uniform Laws Commission. Among other things, UPA 2017 creates clear and equitable paths to legal parentage not only for LGBTQ+ families but also others formed via assisted reproduction, including surrogacy. "What's good for LGBTQ+ families is good for all families," York affirmed.

COLAGE has actively worked on parentage laws in several states, most recently in Delaware, whose legislature passed a UPA 2017-based parentage reform bill on May 5. There and elsewhere, COLAGE members shared personal testimony with legislators about how outdated laws harmed their families.

On the family formation front, York said, COLAGE seeks to uphold "the ability to access the ways people form families," including by donor conception. It also wants to make sure "that donor conceived individuals have the protections and supports that they need," such as "access to [donor] information that they may or may not choose to seek out."

Much of COLAGE's work is in collaboration with other LGBTQ+, family building, and reproductive rights organizations, which each "bring slightly different perspectives into the room," she said. COLAGE has been involved, for example, in conversations around legislative proposals to regulate donor conception. "Many of these efforts are driven by late-discovery donor-conceived individuals whose parents were not forthcoming about how they were conceived," York added, noting that that is typically not the case for COLAGERS. And no legislation can require parents to be truthful to their children about being donor conceived, she said. Nevertheless, even some donor-conceived COLAGERS "would also like to see increased regulation and access to certain information from their donors."

At the same time, York cautioned, "We have to be careful that in attempting to address issues

identified by some members of the DCP [donor conceived people] community, that we're not exacerbating risks or harms for COLAGERS or LGBTQ+ family building." She explained, "Some of these efforts could risk negatively impacting family formation options, shoring up biogenetic essentialism, increasing stigma for children who don't share genetics with a parent, and possibly undermining the security of families formed through assisted reproduction," particularly in states without updated parentage laws. "This area of law and regulation requires careful consideration and a balancing of interests because it touches so much more than the [donor conception] industry," she said. COLAGE's job, therefore, is "to bring folks together, talk about the different perspectives, and then advocate in a way that addresses as many of the needs and desires as possible."

Finally, COLAGE is also working to combat "Don't Say Gay/Trans" legislation and other anti-LGBTQ+ laws and policies related to schools. "Often times when we talk about kids in school, the focus tends to be on LGBTQ youth," York observed. She wants a broader approach; kids with LGBTQ+ parents are, she said, "a forgotten demographic in the advocacy space. COLAGE is trying to work to make sure that those spaces are welcoming and supportive to COLAGERS as well."

In all three areas of the Queerspawn Agenda, "People who grew up in families like ours are telling lawmakers exactly what works and what doesn't. And that's a voice that really needs to be heard," York asserted. "Our hope is to use COLAGE voices to shift the narrative and improve the law for all families."

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 2,000+ LGBTQ+ family books.

Rosendall

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imbecile."

I actually think we should be careful in using words like traitor and terrorist, though our 47th president's usefulness to Vladimir Putin and his murderous penchant for bombing small fishing boats in the Caribbean (which he accuses of drug running while offering no evidence) might reasonably bring those terms into play.

If you are of the MAGA persuasion, you may simply assume that anyone Trump bombs must deserve it, just as his administration declared that American citizens shot to death by ICE agents in our city streets were domestic terrorists.

How can Trump's diehard supporters continue cheering him on as he takes away their freedoms and healthcare? The answer is that he shares their hatreds. He has a gift for appealing to people's lowest impulses, and they reward him for it.

Just as the Supreme Court's gutting of Article 2 of the Voting Rights Act set off another round of mid-decade gerrymandering of congressional seats by Republicans in southern states, the epidemic of white Christian nationalism has many racists screaming to people of color, "We don't want you here! Go back to your own country!"

When the targets of this hatefulness reply that they are already in their own country, the bigots scoff.

What convinces members of one shrinking demographic that this country belongs exclusively to them? It is akin to the attitude expressed by the late Sen. Hayakawa about the Panama Canal: "We stole it fair and square." It is also about cult worship. As their Dear Leader helps himself, they can enjoy it vicariously despite their own declining living standards.

The people of color being erased will not sit quietly. Cruelty and willful blindness plant seeds for a hard reckoning to come.

In contrast, an example of planting positive seeds was seen recently when former president Obama and New York City Mayor Mamdani read to preschoolers and led a sing-along at a Bronx childcare center. In the way he listens, leads and relates with people, Mamdani embodies a refutation of Islamophobic slanders. When we connect across our differences, we battle the Jim Crow mindset being pushed by supremacists who seek power by dividing us over scary "others."

Voice actor Jesse Stewart of Dallas, who is a thoughtful Facebook contributor, writes, "Why follow the rules if the people writing them don't? When ... bad behavior is rewarded, the social contract is broken."

There can be no greatness in a country where entire segments of the population are disenfranchised, where peaceful protest is labeled domestic terrorism.

Those trafficking in that cynical lie and seeking a return to Jim Crow need to be defeated electorally and held accountable for their betrayal of our nation's founding creed of equality. We also need civic renewal in which we rededicate ourselves to meeting the challenges and opportunities of diversity instead of surrendering to white Christian nationalism.

Actor John Fugelsang says of right-wing Christians, "They like to fight for Jesus. They don't like to listen to him.... His actual teachings are very inconvenient to the kind of America authoritarians want."

Those of us, Christian or otherwise, who agree with Christ that we should feed the hungry and welcome the stranger need to stand up to the bullies.

One of the ironies of Trump's political success is that he treats his own supporters like garbage. We cannot continue waiting for them to wake up to the fact that they are being suckered. Neither can we wait for perfect alternatives to present themselves before doing our civic duty and voting the scoundrels out.

People often say they are not responsible for the sins of their ancestors. Fine. Then let's stop repeating them.

Richard Rosendall is a writer and activist who can be reached at rrosendall@me.com.

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PO BOX E14,
Boston, MA 02127

PUBLISHERS:

Jeff Coakley
JCoakley@BayWindows.com
Sue O'Connell
Sue.BayWindows@gmail.com

EDITORS:

Jeff Coakley
JCoakley@BayWindows.com
Sue O'Connell
Sue.BayWindows@gmail.com

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS:

Judith Lebling
Billy Masters
Richard J. Rosendall
Dana Rudolph
Rev. Irene Monroe
Jules Becker

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR:

letters.baywindows@gmail.com

NEWS TIPS:

news.baywindows@gmail.com

CALENDAR LISTINGS:

news.baywindows@gmail.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

announcements.baywindows@gmail.com

ADVERTISING:

Display Advertising

sales@baywindows.com

CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING:

classifiedads@baywindows.com

EDITORIAL DESIGN MANAGER:
Julie Walker Palmer

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Frank

Continued from page 1

legal recognition for transgender people — rather than debates he described as politically divisive.

The longtime congressman, who represented Massachusetts for more than three decades and helped shape major financial reforms including Dodd-Frank, was the first member of Congress to voluntarily come out as gay while serving in office.

Frank acknowledged his comments may anger some LGBTQ+ activists but dismissed concerns about his legacy, saying: "When I'm dead, I'm dead, is my basic view."

The interview comes ahead of the release of Frank's new book, "The Hard Path to Unity: Why We Must Reform the Left to Rescue Democracy."

Watch the full story now on NBC10 Boston.

Note: Bay Windows Editor Sue O'Connell is a political commentator for NBC10 Boston and part of the "At Issue" team.

Swept Away

Continued from page 1

ers—identified by their roles as Captain, Mate, Little Brother, and Big Brother—who are shipwrecked off the coast of New Bedford, Massachusetts in 1888. After sixteen harrowing days adrift in a lifeboat without provisions and with no rain or rescue in sight, the men's humanity begins to unravel.

What unfolds is a stark examination of how desperate human behavior fractures when confronted with unbearable hunger, psychological deterioration from isolation, and moral collapse when adrift on an open sea against unrelenting environmental pressures. The production examines how quickly the boundaries of civility collapse when survival is at stake.

Director Jeremy Johnson, a veteran of the Boston theater scene for over 25 years, underscores the work's moral architecture: "The whole point is to get Mate to the moment at the end when he needs to 'fess up' and face what he's done," Johnson told *The Boston Globe*. Mate's conscience is haunted by three ghosts, his shipmates, who take him into a flashback nightmare of his past actions. Burdened by the truth of his objectionable behavior to survive the shipwreck, Mate wrestles with self-forgiveness.

"At some point, we all reflect on the choices we've made, the people we once were, and who we have become."

The audience is left with the question of whether we have the right to judge Mate given his harsh reality of survival and his need for

moral absolution. Under Johnson's direction, this moment of reckoning becomes the emotional and ethical fulcrum of the production.

Swept Away draws inspiration from the infamous 1884 shipwreck of the yacht *Mignonette*, in which four crew members, stranded for over twenty days off the coast of Africa, resorted to extreme and morally fraught measures to survive, including cannibalism. That historical shadow looms large over the musical, lending it both gravity and an unsettling sense of inevitability.

The eleven-member cast—comprising male and nonbinary actors—infuses the production with a palpable emotional intensity, their soul-stirring harmonies serving as a driving force behind the play's mounting dramatic tension. *Swept Away*'s stage design is sparse yet evocative. The set is anchored by a skeletal framework evoking the wreckage and instability of being stranded at sea. The choreography is raw and demanding, underscoring the harshness of whaling life and the emotional and moral fortitude it demands.

I enjoyed *Swept Away* because it engages a universal theme that remains surprisingly underexplored. Johnson recognizes this gap, noting a palpable appetite for the story's return. "There's a hunger for this story," he observes, "and an eagerness to see it realized again—I'm excited to watch audiences encounter it anew."

"*Swept Away*" runs through May 23 at the SpeakEasy Stage Company in the Virginia Wimberly Theater in the Calderwood Pavilion, 527 Tremont Street, Boston.

Tickets start at \$15. 617-933-8600, www.speakeasystage.com.

Baystate

Continued from page 1

In statements reported by Western Mass News, Baystate Health cited "the evolving regulatory landscape" and concerns that federal policy changes could jeopardize "hundreds of millions of dollars" in Medicare and Medicaid funding. The hospital system said nearly 70% of its patients rely on those programs.

The decision follows policy directives and proposed federal actions by the Trump administration aimed at restricting federal support for hospitals and providers offering gender-affirming medical care to minors.

Massachusetts Attorney General Andrea Joy Campbell joined a multistate lawsuit challenging the federal actions, arguing the administration cannot unlawfully restrict access to transgender health care.

Families interviewed by WBUR and New England Public Media described fear, confusion and uncertainty after learning their children's care would be discontinued. Some parents said they faced long waitlists and limited options for transferring care.

According to reporting by GBH News, providers and advocates warned the move could create a broader chilling effect among hospitals and pediatric providers concerned about potential federal retaliation. GBH reported that several Massachusetts providers, including Fenway Health and Outer Cape Health Services, have also scaled back some gender-affirming care services for minors in recent months.

Transhealth, an independent nonprofit provider in Northampton, told GBH News it plans to continue offering gender-affirming care for minors and is preparing for increased demand as larger hospital systems reevaluate services.



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billy masters



“Congressman, I will let you describe why you went into Tim Cain’s ass today.”

Politico Donna Brazile to Rep. Dan Crenshaw on “Real Time”. Crenshaw took offense to the “phrasing” and quipped, “He’s the last ass I would go into.”

Photo by Gage Skidmore, via Wikimedia Commons.

Where was I? Ah, yes — my quickie trip to the Left Coast (as a friend used to say). I was back in my sumptuous Beverly Hills adjacent abode for the wedding of gay porn legend **Kurt Young** to former West Hollywood mayor **John Duran**. I’m sure my faithful fans are probably thinking “Didn’t you marry Kurt Young back in 2004?” Yes, but it’s a long and complicated story, not unlike the film “Chinatown”. The three of us discussed that wedding on “Billy Masters LIVE”, which you can see on our website. It really boils down to two things — Kurt would do anything for a gift bag, and I’d do anything for cake! Kurt and John’s reception took place at The Chapel, part of The Abbey (which is where our marriage took place — Kurt quipped, “All of my weddings take place here!”). My companion for the event was bon vivant **Bruce Vilanch**, proving forevermore that we are not, in fact, the same person. It was a lovely day, and I was honored that John and Kurt included me!

During the wedding, Bruce shared two stories with me, but prefaced them by saying, “You can’t report this”. So I didn’t — and two days later, they were all over the news. Scooped again!! The first is that **Bette Midler**, **Kathy Najimy** and **Sarah Jessica Parker** have signed a deal for “Hocus Pocus 3”. And, unlike the last film which went direct to Disney+, this one is planning to have a theatrical release — likely coming out around Halloween 2027.

The other story Bruce shared was that “Celebrity Autobiography” is opening on Broadway on May 18th. Like the previous incarnations, it will feature a revolving cast of luminaries — including such stalwarts as **Sherri Shepherd**, **Kathy Griffin**, **Mario Cantone**, **Jackie Hoffman**, **Andrea Martin**, and **Vilanch** himself. I hear the producers are trying to convince the Divine Miss M to participate — perhaps as soon as opening night. Stay tuned.

While out west, I also got to see another friend perform — **Susanna Hoffs**. The once-and-forever Bangle did an intimate concert at Largo at the Coronet Theatre and was in fantastic form — with onstage assistance by **Fred Armisen**. Hoffs debuted some new material which she is working on and revealed she is doing her own take on The Beatles’ “Help” album. She is also working on either a musical version of her novel, “This Bird Has Flown”. And, in answering my direct question, she does plan to make public some of her unreleased recordings, including her entire 1994 album for Columbia. Busy, busy.

Kathy Griffin has announced that she will be doing a residency in Palm Springs. Now, you know how I don’t like people using the word “residency” lightly — so I am calling this residency-adjacent. “Can You Handle This Heat? The Kathy Griffin Palm Springs Residency” will take place at the newly renovated Plaza Theatre in Palm Springs next year on January 31st, February 26th, and March 26th. It’s being billed as Kathy’s “first-ever residency”. How quickly people forget her weekly residency at the Laugh Factory in Hollywood back in 2019. Every Monday in April, Kathy walked on stage in her pajamas at 9:45PM. She set a kitchen timer for 60 minutes. She’d stop whatever she was saying when the timer went off. The next week, she’d pick up where she left off.

One residency is announced, and another is cancelled. **Dolly Parton** just revealed that her upcoming Las Vegas residency at The Colosseum at Caesars Palace has been cancelled because of health concerns. “It’s gonna take me a little while before I’m up to stage performance level because some of the meds and treatments make me a little swimmy-headed, as my grandma

used to say. And, of course, I can’t be dizzy carrying around banjos, guitars, and such on 5-inch heels — and you know I’m gonna be wearing them. Not to mention all those heavy rhinestone outfits, the big hair, and my big...uh...personality. Lord, THOSE, uh, THAT, would make anybody swimmy-headed.” Dolly says she’s still working on her Broadway musical, “Dolly: A True Original Musical” and hopes to turn up at the opening of her museum and hotel in Nashville. So far, **Freida Parton** has “No comment” on Dolly’s health!

The Met Gala took place last week, and it was more notable for who boycotted it rather than who showed up (but, suffice it to say, **Cher**, **Madonna**, and **Stevie Nicks** did NOT pose together). Many people skipped the event due to the involvement of **Jeff Bezos**. People like **Meryl Streep**, **Zendaya**, **Taraji P. Henson**, and **Bella Hadid** declined their invitations. **Billy Porter** skipped it, but not because of a boycott — because he wasn’t invited. “I don’t go to places where I’m not welcome,” said Porter. Or invited.

Since we mentioned the Met Gala and Meryl, let me say something very brief about “The Devil Wears Prada 2”. What a disappointment. The biggest problem? There’s no script. Sure, there’s an idea of a script. Perhaps even a concept of a script. But no actual script. At least not one worthy of the actors...or the characters. Yes, I have gone on record being against long, meandering exposition, but SOME exposition is always welcomed. Frankly, the only scenes that work are carbon copies of what worked in the first film. Tucci and Hathaway raiding the closet, Meryl and Hathaway in the car, etc. That said, it was fantastic spending time with these beloved characters and seeing them interact. The film’s ending gave a tantalizing glimpse into what a movie about Emily would be. I’d see that!

The Tony nominations were just announced. I hope I’m not being too predictable when I admit I was elated by the omission of **Lea Michele**. She wants it so badly she can taste it. Well, maybe that’s how she stays so slim. She’s on a steady diet of snubs! Congrats to **June Squibb** who made history as the oldest acting nominee (she’s 96).

The big news on Broadway continues to be “Oh, Mary!”. And they proved me wrong. Apparently a woman can be successful in the role of Mary Todd Lincoln — if that woman is **Maya Rudolph**. With the “SNL” vet in the leading role, the play broke its own record and brought in \$1.5 million at the box office. Now that she’s opened the door, perhaps other “SNL” alums will get a shot — like the always underestimated **Cheri Oteri**!

By the by, “Oh, Mary!” has announced the cities for a national tour. It kicks off in Hartford, CT on September 19th and is slated to hit 16 other cities into 2027. No word on casting...yet.

In some positive political news, the administration of El Presidente has agreed to restore the Pride flag at the Stonewall National Monument. As you’ll recall, it was unceremoniously removed back in February since it did not represent the administration’s “official sentiments”. People flew their own flags and launched a legal battle against the National Park Service. Last week, a settlement was proposed that would allow the Pride flag to be flown alongside the US flag — unless there’s a maintenance issue or any other concern.

The Boston Red Sox have announced they are sponsoring

see **BILLY MASTERS** page 7



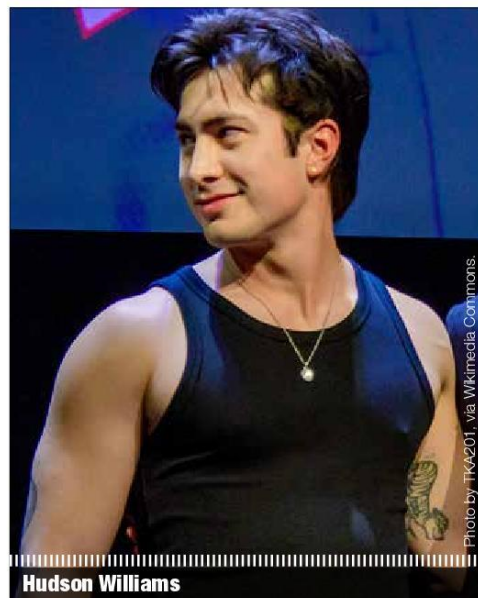
Dolly Parton

Photo via Dolly Parton, Facebook.



Billy Porter

Photo via billyporter.com.



Hudson Williams

Photo by TK4201, via Wikimedia Commons.

Massachusetts Pride

Continued from page 2

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Vatican

Continued from page 3

Vatican had allowed.

The letter didn't veto the German guidelines outright but offered Fernández's "observations."

LGBTQ+ advocates welcome Leo's measured approach

Leo met Thursday with German Cardinal Reinhard Marx, who — despite Fernández's letter — recently recommended that priests in his archdiocese use the German guidelines as a basis for their pastoral care.

Cardinal Pietro Parolin said Wednesday that talk of sanctions against German priests who use the guidelines was "premature" and said dialogue with German bishops was ongoing.

The hope is "never to have to resort to sanctions, that problems can be resolved peacefully, as should be the case in the church," Parolin said.

Martin said the Vatican had been clear that

the Vatican's 2023 declaration limited blessing of same-sex couples only under certain circumstances.

"But the synod has also made it clear that it is inviting the church to listen, in a new way, to the experiences of LGBTQ Catholics. So, to me, there is no contradiction," he told The Associated Press. "Both 'Fiducia' and the synod report are steps forward in the church's ministry to LGBTQ people."

Francis DeBernardo, executive director of New Ways Ministry, which advocates for LGBTQ Catholics, praised Leo's comments on church teaching about sexual morality.

Returning from Africa, Leo was asked about Marx's adoption of the German guidelines and how he intended to preserve the unity of the church over the divisive issue of same-sex blessings.

"It is very important to understand that the unity or division of the Church should not revolve around sexual matters," Leo said. "I believe

there are much greater, more important issues, such as justice, equality, freedom of men and women, freedom of religion, that would all take priority before that particular issue."

DeBernardo said it was "good to hear from the pope that he is making a decisive turn away from the church's obsession with sexual matters."

He also welcomed Leo's "measured" comments about the German same-sex guidelines.

"He did not condemn or even criticize German church leaders. He simply said there is disagreement, and that this is not a cause for disunity," DeBernardo said. "Both the new moral emphasis on social issues instead of sexuality, and the fostering of a more collegial church are good news for LGBTQ Catholics."

Geir Moulson contributed from Berlin.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support through the AP's collaboration with The Conversation US, with funding from Lilly Endowment Inc. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Billy Masters

Continued from page 6

a "Heated Rivalry" Night. The Sox have often featured Boston Bruins at games, so a baseball/hockey relationship is nothing new. On August 31st, Fenway Park will be filled with **Ilya Rozanov and Shane Hollander** Red Sox jerseys. They'll even sell a special baseball cap that says "I'm coming to the cottage Fenway". Red Sox VP **David Baggs** (who happens to be gay) said, "If the 'Heated Rivalry Night', 'Pride Night', or other themed nights that cel-

ebate the LGBTQ community make fans feel more welcomed at Fenway and other venues, then that is a win."

This leads to our "Ask Billy" question, from Paul in Dallas: *"I know everyone says Hudson Williams is straight, but whenever he's around Connor Storrie, they always have their hands all over each other. What's the truth?"*

You're right — they are very touchy-feely. But not everyone who is touchy-feely is dating — or, dare I say, fucking. Yes, they even shared intimate moments at the Met Gala. Hudson tried to put his jacket on Connor, only to be told "his arms can't fit into it". Later, they did

some bathroom selfies. So, what is the truth? Hudson says, "I was always kind of adamant that no matter what people think or want to infer, like, I'm always going to just physically express my love." Connor lamented, "If I have my hand on his leg as we're sitting down doing a press thing because he's my best buddy and I love him, and we have that level of comfort, it's just interesting that that instantly gets turned into, 'They're more than friends.'" You can see some of these public displays of affection on BillyMasters.com.

When there's such a thing as being too affectionate, it's definitely time to end yet another

column. Ironically, this is how those rumors of my marriage to Kurt Young got started. We are naturally very affectionate with each other. OK, so there was a minister, and champagne, and even a ring...just not in a place immediately visible. But, as they say, sometimes a kiss is just a kiss. And sometimes these things turn up on BillyMasters.com — the site that always turns the other cheek (so to speak). Should you have more questions, send them along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I go to Hudson and Connor's wedding! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

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