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DA expands office due to white supremacist actions in Boston

BOSTON (AP) — A district attorney in Massachusetts announced Monday he's adding two positions to prosecute civil rights cases because he's concerned about organized white supremacist actions in Boston this year and anticipates more unrest during upcoming elections.

The district attorney for Suffolk County, which includes Boston, announced the addition of civil rights prosecutors for district and superior court two days after three men were arrested at a rally in Boston.

District Attorney Kevin Hayden, photo via www.suffolkdistrictattorney.com

District Attorney Kevin Hayden said it was a gathering of the group known as NSC-131, or the Nationalist Social Club. The group protested in the diverse Jamaica Plain neighborhood, outside a historic home that had just hosted a children's drag

see **DA,** *page 7*

Pressure on Senate GOP after same-sex marriage passes House

By Lisa Mascaro
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate unexpectedly launched a new push Wednesday to protect same-sex marriage in federal law after a surprising number of Republicans helped pass landmark legislation in the House. Some GOP senators are already signaling support.

The legislation started as an election-season political effort to confront the new Supreme Court majority after the court overturned abortion access in Roe v. Wade, raising concerns that other rights were at risk. But suddenly it has a shot at becoming law. Pressure is mounting on Republicans to drop their longstanding opposition and join in a bipartisan moment for gay rights.

"This legislation was so important," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer said as he opened the chamber Wednesday.

The Democratic leader marveled over the House's 267-157 tally, with 47 Republicans — almost one-fifth of the GOP lawmakers — voting for the

see **MARRIAGE,** *page 7*

UN health agency chief declares monkeypox a global emergency

Photo via www.who.int

By Maria Cheng
AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP)— The expanding monkeypox outbreak in more than 70 countries is an "extraordinary" situation that qualifies as a global emergency, the World Health Organization chief said Saturday, a declaration that could spur further investment in treating the once-rare disease and worsen the scramble for scarce vaccines.

A global emergency is WHO's highest level of alert but the designation does not necessarily mean a disease is particularly transmissible or lethal. Similar declarations were made for the Zika virus in 2016 in Latin America and the ongoing effort to eradicate polio, in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic and the 2014 Ebola outbreak in West Africa.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus made the decision on calling monkeypox a global emergency despite a lack of consensus among experts on the U.N. health agency's emergency committee, saying he acted as "a tiebreaker." It was the first time a U.N. health agency chief has unilaterally made such a decision without an expert recommendation.

"We have an outbreak that has spread around the world rapidly through new modes of transmission, about which we understand too little," Tedros said. "I know this has not been an easy or straightforward process and that there are divergent views."

WHO's emergencies chief, Dr. Michael Ryan, said the director-general declared monkeypox a global emergency to ensure that the world takes the current outbreaks seriously.

Although monkeypox has been established in parts of central and west Africa for decades, it was not known to spark large outbreaks beyond the continent or to spread widely among people until May, when authorities detected dozens of epidemics in Europe, North America and elsewhere.

Last month, WHO's expert committee said the monkeypox outbreak did not yet amount to an international emergency, but the panel convened this week to reevaluate the situation.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 16,000 cases of monkeypox have

see **GLOBAL EMERGENCY,** *page 4*

Monkeypox virus could become entrenched as new STD in the US

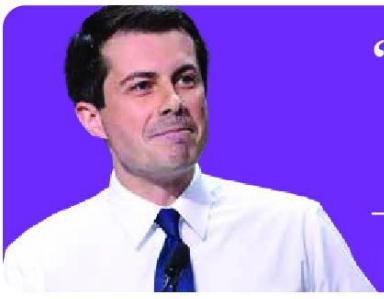
By Mike Stobbe
AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP)— The spread of monkeypox in the U.S. could represent the dawn of a new sexually transmitted disease, though some health officials say the virus that causes pimple-like bumps might yet be contained before it gets firmly established.

Experts don't agree on the likely path of the disease, with some fearing that it is becoming so widespread that it is on the verge of becoming an entrenched STD— like gonorrhea, herpes and HIV.

But no one's really sure, and some say testing and vaccines can

see **STD,** *page 4*



"First of all, I'm glad to have a president who can ride a bicycle."

—U.S. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg's response to Rep. Troy Nehls' quip that President Biden "falls off bicycles".

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

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We're Here, We're Queer, and We Are Family

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

It's a tough time to be an LGBTQ parent in the United States. Between legislation that threatens our ability to form and protect our families, attacks on books and media that reflect them, and concerns that impact all parents, like school shootings and pandemics, we may feel stressed and overwhelmed. Without denying those ills or our need to address them (which I have covered before and will again), I want to focus here on a few positive things to keep in mind.

There are a lot of us. As many as 6 million American children and adults (some grown) have an LGBTQ parent, and between 2 million and 3.7 million children under age 18 have one, according to the latest analyses from UCLA's Williams Institute. Of these, 191,000 children are being raised by two same-sex parents, meaning that the majority are being raised by single LGBTQ parents or by different-sex couples where one or both parents are bisexual or transgender.

We have a long history. There have been LGBTQ parents arguably going back to Sappho (7th-6th century BCE) and Alexander the Great (4th century BCE), even though they might not have used the same terminology. We hear of out LGBTQ parents from around the time of World War II, mostly in the context of cases that denied them child custody after divorce from different-sex, cisgender spouses. The first known discussion groups on lesbian motherhood (or any queer parenthood) were held by the pioneering San Francisco lesbian organization Daughters of Bilitis in 1956. By the 1970s, LGBTQ parents began winning some of the custody cases, and out LGBTQ people also began intentionally starting families. Don't ever let anyone tell you we're a new or untested "social experiment."

Our children are thriving. There is "an overwhelming scholarly consensus, based on over three decades of peer-reviewed research, that having a gay or lesbian parent does not harm children," according to Cornell University's What We Know Project. There is less data on bisexual and transgender parents, but what there is supports the same conclusion. This is not to say our children are or should be perfect—and the same goes for us as parents—but it is not our queerness that leads to imperfections.

Representation is increasing. LGBTQ-inclusive children's books have exploded in number since about 2017 (though some existed long before that), among both mainstream and independent publishers. Based on my tracking of upcoming books, this shows no sign of slowing down. Representation is also increasing on children's television. Shows for preschoolers from the venerable "Sesame Street" (HBO and PBS) to newer offerings like "Ridley Jones" (Netflix), "Madagascar: A Little Wild" (Hulu and Peacock), "Rugrats" (Paramount +), and more have given us one-time or ongoing LGBTQ characters. For slightly older children, the representation is even stronger, with queer-inclusive shows like "Dead End: Paranormal Park" (Netflix), "The Owl House" (Disney), "The Proud Family" (Disney), and "Craig of the Creek" (Cartoon Network), not to mention the now-canceled but queerly beloved "Steven Universe" (Cartoon Network). Yes, books and media are facing increasing bans and challenges, and we shouldn't minimize the negative impact of that. But the content is there, the breadth of it across the LGBTQ spectrum is increasing, and it will become harder to ban it all.

We have allies. Just a few recent examples: U.S. Representative Jerry Nadler (D-NY), a long-time ally, last week reintroduced the Respect for Marriage Act, which quickly passed the House with bipartisan support and awaits a Senate vote. The bill would ensure that even if the U.S. Supreme Court overturns the nationwide right to marriage equality, the federal government would still recognize all marriages valid when performed; states would recognize valid out-of-state marriages regardless of the spouses' sex, race, ethnicity, or national origin; and the Defense of Marriage Act, which remains on the books despite being defunct since 2015, would be repealed. On a local level, straight, cisgender librarians, teachers, and community members are joining LGBTQ ones in opposition to bans of LGBTQ-inclusive books. Straight, cis people have also partnered with us to pass legislation in several states that ensures all children have equal access to the security of legal parentage, no matter the circumstances of their birth or the marital status of their parents. And people of all identities are speaking out in support of assisted reproductive technologies that could be under threat as some states consider legislation to define life as beginning at conception.

LGBTQ families are not going anywhere. We LGBTQ parents fought for our children even before Stonewall. We formed networks and organizations for protection and support in the 1970s, some of which evolved into today's major LGBTQ organizations such as Family Equality and the National Center for Lesbian Rights. As many as 3.8 million LGBTQ millennials are considering starting or growing their families, according to a 2019 study from Family Equality. LGBTQ parents are now visible in every area of public life, from schoolteachers and firefighters to the White House Press Secretary (Karine Jean-Pierre), a Cabinet secretary (Pete Buttigieg), and an assistant secretary (Rachel Levine). Our children, six million strong, are growing up or grown and making their own marks in the world. Some have children (and even grandchildren) of their own.

Yes, times are difficult right now and may become more so. Yet we are part of a community with a proven history of survival and resilience. We're here, we're queer, and we are family. That's reason enough to have hope.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory, with a searchable database of 1000+ LGBTQ family books, media, and more.

guestopinion

GLAD Commends House Passage of "Right to Contraception Act"

Submitted by GLAD

On July 21, the US House passed by a bipartisan vote of 228-195 the "Right to Contraception Act," legislation that explicitly codifies the right to use contraceptives in federal law and gives health care providers the right to prescribe "any device or medication used to prevent pregnancy" to patients. The bill also allows the federal and state government, patients, and health care providers to bring civil suits against those alleged to have violated the law.

Lawmakers passed the bill in the aftermath of the Supreme Court's Dobbs ruling overturning the Constitutional right to abortion, and in which Justice Clarence Thomas's separate concurrence invited the Court to revisit previous Supreme Court precedent mandating access to birth control as wrongly decided.

Thomas also suggested that previous rulings in favor LGBTQ rights should also be revisited in light of Dobbs. In response, the House passed the "Respect for Marriage Act," earlier this week, which repeals previous federal laws struck down by the Supreme Court. That bill also codifies current law that federal government and state officials must provide respect to couples whose marriages are lawfully celebrated without regard to sex, race, ethnicity, or national origin of the married persons.

Mary Bonauto, GLBTQ Legal Advocates & Defenders' (GLAD) Civil Rights Project Director, issued the following statement on the House passage of the Respect for Marriage Act:

"The bipartisan passage of the 'Right to Contraception Act' is a crucial step to ensure that those who need it can freely access reproductive health care such as birth control," said Bonauto. "The choice to use contraception is a personal one and the government has no interest in interfering in that decision. That is and should remain long-settled law. But as the Dobbs ruling has created widespread fear that such fundamental issues may again be up for debate, we are grateful that the House is proactively working to protect fundamental American freedoms.

"We hope that the Congress continues using its constitutional powers to protect other important rights on which Americans rely, including by passing legislation to protect voting rights and our democracy, to ensure availability of reproductive and medically necessary gender-related health care, and to prevent discrimination.

"As Dobbs demonstrates, our basic liberties and rights, such as privacy, intimacy, bodily autonomy, and to form families and raise our children are concerns of Americans more broadly. GLAD will continue to support all efforts to preserve those bedrock freedoms."

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CROSSING GUARDS

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Qualifications: Ability to perform under varying weather conditions. Ability to supervise children and follow safety policies.

For a more complete list of employment opportunities and job descriptions, and to apply for any of the above positions, applicants should visit: www.governmentjobs.com/careers/andoverma

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Mass. makes monkeypox vax available at more sites

In Boston, Springfield, Provincetown, Randolph, Lawrence, Framingham, Worcester and New Bedford.

BOSTON (AP)—The monkeypox vaccine is now available at 11 sites around Massachusetts, state public health officials said Monday.

There had been more than 1,800 cases of monkeypox reported in the U.S. as of Friday, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 51 of which were in Massachusetts. New York, California and Illinois had the most cases.

Nearly all are in men and the vast majority had same-sex encounters, according to the CDC.

The vaccine, when properly administered before or soon after exposure, can help protect against illness, the state Department of Public Health said. The Jynneos vaccine available in Massachusetts, requires two shots, 28 days apart for maximum effectiveness. People are considered fully vaccinated about two weeks after their second shot.

Photo by Mufid Majnun, via Unsplash

The vaccine, available to people who live or work in Massachusetts who also meet the CDC's eligibility criteria, is being administered at three sites in Boston, two in Springfield, as well as in Provincetown, Randolph, Lawrence, Framingham, Worcester and New Bedford.

Global Emergency

Continued from page 1

been reported in 74 countries since about May. To date, monkeypox deaths have only been reported in Africa, where a more dangerous version of the virus is spreading, mainly in Nigeria and Congo.

In Africa, monkeypox mainly spreads to people by infected wild animals like rodents in limited outbreaks that typically have not crossed borders. In Europe, North America and elsewhere, however, monkeypox is spreading among people with no links to animals or recent travel to Africa.

WHO's top monkeypox expert, Dr. Rosamund Lewis, said this week that 99% of all the monkeypox cases beyond Africa were in men and that of those, 98% involved men who have sex with men. Experts suspect the monkeypox outbreaks in Europe and North America were spread via sex at two raves in Belgium and Spain.

"Although I am declaring a public health emergency of international concern for the moment, this is an outbreak that is concentrated among men who have sex with men, especially those with multiple sexual partners," Tedros said. "That means that this is an outbreak that can be stopped with the right strategies."

Britain recently downgraded its assessment of monkeypox after seeing no signs of widespread transmission beyond men who are gay, bisexual or have sex with other men and noting the disease does not spread easily or cause severe illness.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said it was "supportive" of WHO's emergency declaration and hoped it would galvanize international action to stamp out the outbreaks. The U.S. has reported more than 2,800 monkeypox cases and sent more than 370,000 vaccine doses to U.S. states reporting cases.

Some experts had questioned whether such a declaration would help, arguing the disease isn't severe enough to warrant the attention and that rich countries battling monkeypox already have the funds to do so. Most people recover without needing medical attention, although the lesions may be painful.

Michael Head, a senior research fellow in global health at Southampton University, said WHO's emergency declaration could help donors like the World Bank make funds available to stop the outbreaks both in the West and in Africa.

In the U.S., some experts have speculated whether monkeypox might be on the verge of becoming an entrenched sexually transmitted disease in the country, like gonorrhea, herpes and HIV.

"The bottom line is we've seen a shift in the epidemiology of monkeypox where there's now widespread, unexpected transmission," said Dr. Albert Ko, a professor of public health and epidemiology at Yale University. "There are some genetic mutations in the virus that suggest why that may be happening, but we do need a globally-coordinated response to get it under control."

Ko called for testing to be immediately scaled up, saying there are significant gaps in surveillance.

"The cases we are seeing are just the tip of the iceberg," he said. "The window has probably closed for us to quickly stop the outbreaks in Europe and the U.S., but it's not too late to stop monkeypox from causing huge damage to poorer countries without the resources to handle it."

WHO's Tedros called for the world to "act together in solidarity" regarding the distribution of treatments, tests and vaccines. for monkeypox. The U.N. agency has previously said it's working to create a vaccine-sharing mechanism for the most-affected countries, but offered few details of how it might work. Unlike the numerous companies that made COVID-19 vaccines, there is only one maker for the vaccine used against monkeypox, Denmark's Bavarian Nordic.

Dr. Placide Mbala, a virologist who directs the global health department at Congo's Institute of National Biomedical Research, said he hoped any global efforts to stop monkeypox would be equitable. Although countries including Britain, Canada, Germany and the U.S. have ordered millions of monkeypox vaccine doses, none have gone to Africa.

"The solution needs to be global," Mbala said, adding that any vaccines sent to Africa would be used to target those at highest risk, like hunters in rural areas.

"Vaccination in the West might help stop the outbreak there, but there will still be cases in Africa," he said. "Unless the problem is solved here, the risk to the rest of the world will remain."

—

Jamey Keaten in Geneva and Mike Stobbe in New York contributed to this report.

STD

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still stop the outbreak from taking root.

So far, more than 2,800 U.S. cases have been reported as part of an international outbreak that emerged two months ago. About 99% have been men who reported having sex with other men, health officials say.

Health officials are not sure how fast the virus has spread. They have only limited information about people who have been diagnosed, and they don't know how many infected people might be spreading it unknowingly.

They also don't know how well vaccines and treatments are working. One impediment: Federal health officials do not have the authority to collect and connect data on who has been infected and who has been vaccinated.

With such huge question marks, predictions about how big the U.S. outbreak will get this summer vary widely, from 13,000 to perhaps more than 10 times that number.

Dr. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said the government's response is growing stronger every day and vaccine supplies will soon surge.

"I think we still have an opportunity to contain this," Walensky told The Associated Press.

Monkeypox is endemic in parts of Africa, where people have been infected through bites from rodents or small animals. It does not usually spread easily among people.

But this year more than 15,000 cases have been reported in countries that historically don't see the disease. In the U.S. and Europe, the vast majority of infections have happened in men who have sex with men, though health officials have stressed that anyone can catch the virus.

It spreads mainly through skin-to-skin contact, but it can also be transmitted through linens used by someone with monkeypox. Although it's been moving through the population like a sexually transmitted disease, officials have been watching for other types of spread that could expand the outbreak. There have been several cases like that: Officials on Friday said they were aware of two children with monkeypox in the U.S., and at least eight women.

Symptoms include fever, body aches, chills, fatigue and the bumps on parts of the body. The illness has been relatively mild in many men, and no one has died in the U.S. But people can be contagious for weeks, and the lesions can be extremely painful.

When monkeypox emerged, there was reason to believe that public health officials could control it.

The tell-tale bumps should have made infections easy to identify. And because the virus spreads through close personal contact, officials thought they could reliably trace its spread by interviewing infected people and asking who they had been intimate with.

It didn't turn out to be that easy.

With monkeypox so rare in the U.S., many infected men— and their doctors— may have attributed their rashes to some other cause.

Contact tracing was often stymied by infected men who said they did not know the names of all the people they had sex with. Some reported hav-

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STD

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ing multiple sexual interactions with strangers.

It didn't help that local health departments, already burdened with COVID-19 and scores of other diseases, now had to find the resources to do intensive contact-tracing work on monkeypox, too.

Indeed, some local health officials have given up expecting much from contact tracing.

There was another reason to be optimistic: The U.S. government already had a vaccine. The two-dose regimen called Jynneos was licensed in the U.S. in 2019 and recommended last year as a tool against monkeypox.

When the outbreak was first identified in May, U.S. officials had only about 2,000 doses available. The government distributed them but limited the shots to people who were identified through public health investigations as being recently exposed to the virus.

Late last month, as more doses became available, the CDC began recommending that shots be offered to those who realize on their own that they could have been infected.

Demand has exceeded supply, with clinics in some cities rapidly running out of vaccine doses and health officials across the country saying said they don't have enough.

That's changing, Walensky said. As of this week, the government has distributed more than 191,000 doses, and it has 160,000 more ready to send. As many as 780,000 doses will become available as early as next week.

Once current demand is satisfied, the government will look at expanding vaccination efforts.

The CDC believes that 1.5 million U.S. men are considered at high risk for the infection.

Testing has also expanded. More than 70,000 people can be tested each week, far more than current demand, Walensky said. The government has also embarked on a campaign to educate doctors and gay and bisexual men about the disease, she added.

Donal Bisanzio, a researcher at RTI International, believes U.S. health officials will be able to contain the outbreak before it becomes endemic.

But he also said that won't be the end of it. New bursts of cases will probably emerge as Americans become infected by people in other countries where monkeypox keeps circulating.

Walensky agrees that such a scenario is likely. "If it's not contained all over the world, we are always at risk of having flare-ups" from travelers, she said.

Photo via Pixabay

Shawn Kiernan, of the Fairfax County Health Department in Virginia, noted that so far the outbreak is concentrated in one group of people— men who have sex with men. Spread of the virus into heterosexual people would be a "tipping point" that may occur before it's widely recognized, said Kiernan, chief of the department's communicable disease section.

Spillover into heterosexuals is just a matter of time, said Dr. Edward Hook III, emeritus professor of infectious diseases at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

If monkeypox becomes an endemic sexually transmitted disease, it will be yet another challenge for health departments and doctors already struggling to keep up with existing STDs.

Such work has long been underfunded and understaffed, and a lot of it was simply put on hold during the pandemic. Kiernan said HIV and syphilis were prioritized, but work on common infections like chlamydia and gonorrhea amounted to "counting cases and that's about it."

For years, gonorrhea, chlamydia and syphilis cases have been rising.

"By and large," Hook said, doctors "do a crummy job of taking sexual histories, of inquiring about and acknowledging their patients are sexual beings."

—

Associated Press writer Janie Har in San Francisco contributed to this report.

—

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BAY WINDOWS

billy masters

Continued from page 1

Anyone can sue over anything. There is no guilt or innocence associated with a suit —other than it being an annoyance. But with famous people, there's another game that goes on. If a famous person misbehaves, the victim will often say, "I'll sue" —which often results in a payoff. But some celebs play a game of chicken and say, "Go ahead" —because they know most people won't bother. If a suit is filed, it can go one of two ways —the celeb may feely cocky enough to let it go to trial, or they may up the ante and pay to have the complaint withdrawn without explanation. Make no mistake —a withdrawn case does not mean one is innocent. And that's all I'm gonna say.

In light of the Supreme Court overturning Roe v. Wade, the House of Representatives took steps to codify same-sex marriage by federal law —something I suspect we'll see happen with many issues. The vote for the "Respect for Marriage Act" overwhelmingly went our way. And it gives one hope when you note that 47 Republicans joined their 220 Democratic colleagues to preserve the ruling. However, one cannot ignore that 157 Republicans voted against it. Many say it has no chance of passing the Senate, but stranger things have happened.

In a story I thought we'd heard the last of, US Marshals are searching for a man who abducted **Lady Gaga's** dogs and shot her hot gay dog walker, **Ryan Fischer**. **James Howard Jackson** was one of the three people charged with the abducting and shooting. And yet, he was released from prison in April due to a "clerical error". Fischer, who is no longer in Gaga's employ, spoke out on the subject. "I ask for Mr. Jackson to turn himself over to the authorities so resolution to the crime committed against me runs its course, whatever the courts determine that outcome to be."

In other old news, we hear that **Armie Hammer** is broke and trying to sell timeshares in the Cayman Islands! The employment opportunity is a way for the disgraced actor (who really is quite talented) to support his stay near where his two children live with his ex-wife. After denying that Hammer was working as a Caymans concierge, his lawyer says he can neither confirm nor deny that he's selling timeshares. What we do know is that Hammer recently flew back to LA, as he was seen in Venice looking no worse for wear. Rumors abound that he's enlisted the aid of **Robert Downey, Jr.** to help rehabilitate his image. Well, if anyone would know...

Last week, **Rosie O'Donnell and Kathy Griffin** joined forces to raise money for "Friendly House", a women's addiction treatment center in LA. It was Griffin's first time performing standup since her treatment for lung cancer, and she was welcomed back with a standing ovation. But the night also marked the first public appearance of O'Donnell with her girlfriend, **Aimee Hauer**, who is a massage therapist.

Since we're doling out good news, sexy **Matt Dallas** and his equally hunky hubby **Blue Hamilton** just made an announcement —they've adopted a daughter. She came into their lives in a serendipitous way. The couple chaperoned a field trip that their son Crow was on. They noticed how well he got along with a classmate, Rosa. Fast forward, a social worker called to see if they might be interested in adopting a girl. They thought, "If it was a little girl like Rosa...we would be over the moon." Turns out, it WAS Rosa! Bing, bang, boom —instant family!

In one of the most curious collaborations ever, Spanish auteur **Pedro Almodóvar** is set to make his long-awaited first English-language film —"Strange Way of Life" —about two aging gunslingers who have an "intimate relationship". One of those cowboys will be played by **Ethan Hawke**, while the other will be Pedro Pascal. Almodóvar calls this film "my answer to 'Brokeback Mountain'." God willing, something actually happens in this 30-minute flick. Filming begins in August.

ABC has announced that their annual live musical telecast will be "Beauty and the Beast", which will coincide with the animated classic's 30th anniversary —and since ABC is owned by Disney, it's a match made in heaven. While all of the casting has not been announced, the network will continue to court youngsters by having Belle played by **H.E.R.** We're told this will be a hybrid of live action and animation —similar to 2019's "Little Mermaid LIVE". "Beast" will air on December 15th, so mark your calendars.

The Kennedy Center Honors are one of my favorite events of the year, although it really has lost some luster with the lack of participation from the Kennedy family. Even seeing that Schlossberg woman ambling out like she was in an old Western made my heart beat a bit faster. Happily, this year I at least have a recipient to root for. The great **Gladys Knight** will finally be honored. She'll be joined by **Bono, The Edge, George Clooney, Amy Grant, and Tania León**. The event takes place on December 4th, and will air on CBS a few weeks later.

At San Diego International Comic-Con, a new series was unveiled that looks promising. The producer behind "The Vampire Diaries" bring us "Vampire Academy". I hope I'm not giving anything away when I tell you it is about an academy that trains vampires! The details of that instruction remain to be seen, but being hot is certainly high on the curriculum. We've seen photos of some of the cast in action, and **Kieron Moore** grabbed my attention —which is always a good place to start. You'll be grabbing yourself when you see him on BillyMasters.com.

The Tennessee Williams estate has given permission for the first off-Broadway production of "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof". It is being produced by Ruth Stage and runs through August 14th at The Theater at St. Clements in NYC (RuthStage.org). If we only had the sexy **Matt de Rogatis** to look forward to as Brick, that would be cause enough to celebrate. But we also have the sexiest Big Daddy that ever was (paired with the amazing **Alison Fraser** as Big Mama). **Christian Le Blanc** —known to many as Michael Baldwin on "The Young and the Restless" —will be the patriarch. While Big Daddy is often portrayed as a doddering, paunchy, ancient man, Le Blanc's shirtless pics prove there's more than one way to skin a cat...and you'll see a whole lotta skin on BillyMasters.com.

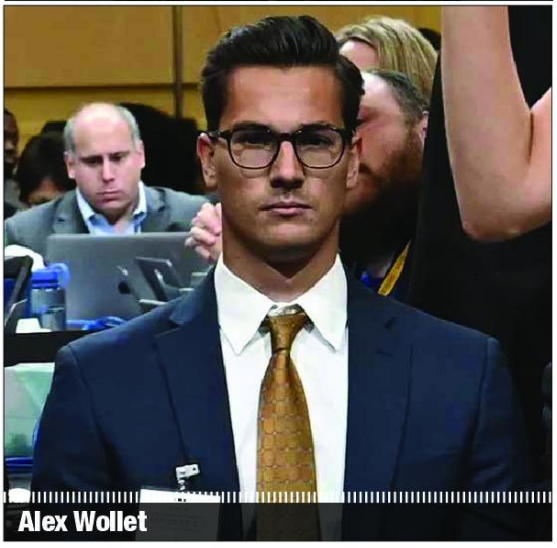
Speaking of hotties, our "Ask Billy" question comes from Thomas in Chicago: *"Did you see that hot guy at the January 6th hearings? He was sitting behind **Matthew Pottinger**, and everyone is trying to figure out who he is."*

That would be **Alex Wollet**. He's 23 years old and described as a medical student who is doing a fellowship at the National Institutes of Health. More than one person on social media described him as Clark Kent —more to the point, an exceptionally hot Clark Kent (no offense to any Clark Kents past or present). We're told that Alex is dating witness Sarah Matthews, who was sitting next to Mr. Pottinger. This might explain the "Witness" ID which was clipped to Wollet's lapel. You can see what all the fuss is about on BillyMasters.com.

When we're swooning over a witness for the prosecution, it's definitely time to end yet another column. I had no idea the January 6th hearings could be so riveting. I wonder what they'll do for season 2! If there's anything of note, it'll turn up on www.BillyMasters.com —the site that has its finger on more than the pulse of its subjects! If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before I ask Alex, "Wanna kiss me, ducky?". Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

Armie Hammer

Gladys Knight



Alex Wollet

DA

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queen story hour.

"It's clear to me that Massachusetts and Boston have become target destinations for groups that spread hate," he said in a statement.

The Boston Police Department said Saturday that three men were arrested for disturbing the peace in Jamaica Plain, a diverse neighborhood of Boston.

A spokesperson for Suffolk District Attorney Kevin Hayden said he was told one of the three men arrested is affiliated with the group known as NSC 131 or the Nationalist Social Club.

Hayden said in a statement that "the presence of white supremacists at a Jamaica Plain book reading" is a "disgrace and a warning." Hayden noted that another group of white supremacists, members of the Patriot Front, marched through downtown Boston march earlier this month.

"It's clear to me that Massachusetts and Boston have become target destinations for groups that spread hate," he said in a statement.

The Anti-Defamation League says NSC-131 is a New England-based neo-Nazi group.

Hayden said he's adding staff and renaming the office's civil rights team because there have been four organized white supremacist actions in Boston this year, a neo-Nazi group protest at the New England Holocaust Memorial in Boston last year, and recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions that have roiled the nation, with the possibility of more to come.

The possibility of "societal strife" during the U.S. House and Senate races this fall and the 2024 presidential election, as well as statistics showing increases in hate crimes across the nation, were also factors, he added.

The High-Risk Victims Unit, which handles civil rights cases, hate crimes, and crimes against elders and people with disabilities, will now be called the Civil Rights/High-Risk Victims Unit. Hayden said adding two new prosecutors will help better coordinate and prosecute felony and misdemeanor civil rights and hate crime cases.

The four incidents in Boston that Hayden cited were a neo-Nazi protest at Brigham and Women's Hospital in February, an NSC-131 gathering at the St. Patrick's Day parade in South Boston in March, a Patriot Front march on July 2, and the NSC-131 protest in Jamaica Plain on Saturday.

Marriage

Continued from page 1

bill late Tuesday.

"I want to bring this bill to the floor," Schumer said, "and we're working to get the necessary Senate Republican support to ensure it would pass."

Political odds are still long for the legislation, the Respect for Marriage Act, which would enshrine same-sex and interracial marriages as protected under federal law. Conservatives, including House GOP leaders, largely opposed the bill, and the vast majority of Republicans voted against it.

But in a sign of shifting political attitudes and a need for an election-year win, some Republicans are signaling there may be an opening. Few Republicans spoke directly against gay marriage during Tuesday's floor debate in the House. And Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell was notably silent when asked about the bill, saying he would take a look if it comes to the Senate.

"I'm going to delay announcing anything on that issue," McConnell said, adding he would wait to see if Schumer brings it forward.

President Joe Biden wants Congress to send him the bill to sign as soon as possible.

"This is something that's personal to the president," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre told reporters traveling with the president.

Biden is "a proud champion of the right for people to marry whom they love and is grateful to see bipartisan support for that right," she said. "He believes it is non-negotiable and that the Senate should act swiftly to get this to the president's desk. He wants to sign it, so we need this legislation and we urge Congress to move as quickly as possible."

So far, the legislation has just two Senate Republican co-sponsors, Susan Collins of Maine and Rob Portman of Ohio. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Thom Tillis of North Carolina are among others closely watched for possible support.

In all 10 Republican senators would need to join with all Democrats to reach the 60 vote threshold to overcome a GOP filibuster.

"We're seeing progress on this, and I'll take progress," Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., the bill's chief sponsor, told reporters at the Capitol.

The No. 2 Republican, Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, was doubtful Tuesday, calling the proposed legislation little more than a political message.

Social issues including same-sex marriage and abortion have sprinted to the top of the congressional agenda this summer in reaction to the Supreme Court's action overturning Roe v. Wade, a stunning ruling that ended the nearly 50-year-old constitutional right to abortion access. It set off alarms that other rights conservatives have targeted could be next.

While Justice Samuel Alito, writing for the majority, insisted the Roe v. Wade ruling pertained only to abortion access, it demonstrated the new conservative muscle with three Trump-era justices tipping the court's balance. A concurring opinion by Justice Clarence Thomas, who has gained stature in the new majority, raised questions about gay marriage and other rights.

"We take Justice Thomas — and the extremist movement behind him — at their word," said Speaker Nancy Pelosi during the House debate. "This is what they intend to do."

Both Pelosi and Schumer criticized Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, who said over the weekend that the Supreme Court's 2015 Obergefell vs. Hodges decision upholding gay marriage was "clearly wrong."

The Respect for Marriage Act was rushed to the House floor in an election year with polling showing a majority of Americans favor preserving rights to marry, regardless of sex, gender, race or ethnicity, a long-building shift in modern mores toward inclusion.

Some vocal leaders in the Republican Party, including Cruz and Sen. Josh Hawley of Missouri, both potential presidential candidates, have indicated likely opposition to the legislation.

The Respect for Marriage Act would repeal the Clinton-era Defense of Marriage Act, which put into federal law the definition of marriage as a heterosexual union between a man and woman. That 1996 law was largely overshadowed by subsequent court rulings, including Obergefell vs. Hodges in 2015, legalizing gay marriage nationwide.

Associated Press writers Farnoush Amiri, Mary Clare Jalonick and Darlene Superville in Washington and Nicholas Riccardi in Denver contributed to this report.

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