United Methodist delegates reject recognizing gay marriage

By DAVID CRARY and JIM SALTER

ST. LOUIS (AP) — The United Methodist Church, America's second-largest Protestant denomination, faces a likely surge in defections and acts of defiance after delegates at a crucial conference voted Tuesday to strengthen the faith's divisive bans on same-sex marriage and ordination of LGBT clergy.

Emotions were high throughout the third and final day of the UMC's meeting. Some supporters of greater LGBT inclusion were in tears, while others vented their anger when, midway through the session, delegates defeated a proposal that would have let regional and local church bodies decide for themselves on gay-friendly policies.

“Devastation,” was how former Methodist pastor Rebecca Wilson of Detroit described her feelings. “As someone who left because I’m gay, I’m waiting for the church I love to stop bringing more hate.”

Oscars 2019: Queer stories are front and center

The 91st Annual Academy Awards were held Sunday evening, live from the Dolby Theater in Los Angeles. Queer stories were front and center in the winners and on stage at the ceremony.

One of the biggest highlights of the night was bi singer and actress Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper, who received a standing ovation for their performance of the hit “Shallow” from A Star is Born, with Gaga playing the piano during the number. The song went on to win Original Song, with Gaga giving a moving acceptance speech. Gaga is only the second nominee ever to be nominated both for song and in an acting category in the same year.

“From Billy Porter rocking the carpet, to Lady Gaga’s powerful performance on stage, queer people, stories, and characters were front and center at the Oscars this evening,” said GLAAD President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis.

In an exciting surprise, Olivia Col...

Obituary

Sharon Bottoms Mattes

Lost Her Custody Battle but Helped Raise Visibility for Same-Sex Parents

By Dana Rudolph

Sharon Mattes, known as Sharon Bottoms when she fought to overcome anti-LGBTQ bias in a legal battle for custody of her son in the 1990s, died on January 21 at age 48. Her case—in which her own mother claimed Sharon was unfit to raise a child because she was in a relationship with another woman—helped bring discrimination against LGBTQ parents into mainstream consciousness.

Sharon, a supermarket cashier, had met her soon-to-be partner April Wade, a deli manager, in 1992. She had a one-year-old son from a previous marriage to a man whom she had divorced before the boy was born. In 1993, according to court documents, she told her mother, Kay Bottoms, that she was pregnant with another woman.

Could the Smollett incident affect perception of hate crimes?

by Rev. Irene Monroe contributing writer

Fox TV drama “Empire” actor Jussie Smollett plays on the show the gay character Jamal Lyon. In real life, Smollett is an African American gay male. Smollett has been charged with concocting an elaborate racist and homophobic assault against him. Smollett’s case will affect public perception of hate crimes, especially impacting people of color and LGBTQ communities.

“Jussie has essentially set back the progression of both black folk and the LGBTQ community all while playing right into the hands of MAGA,” one online comment stated.

First hearing the story, Smollett...
After several more hours of debate, the conservatives’ proposal, called the Traditional Plan, was approved by a vote of 438-384. Opponents unsuccessfully sought to weaken the plan with hostile amendments or to prolong the debate past a mandatory adjournment time set to accommodate a monster truck rally in the arena. One delegate even requested an investigation into the possibility that “vote buying” was taking place at the conference.

The Traditional Plan’s success was due to an alliance of conservatives from the U.S. and overseas. About 43 percent of the delegates were from abroad, mostly from Africa, and overwhelmingly supported the LGBT bans.

If the bans were eased, “the church in Africa would cease to exist,” said the Rev. Jerry Kulah of Liberia. “We can’t do anything but to support the Traditional Plan — it is the biblical plan.”

The deep split within the church was evident in several fiery speeches opposing the Traditional Plan.

“If we bring this virus into our church, it will bring illness to us all,” said the Rev. Thomas Berlin of Herndon, Virginia. He predicted many Methodist churchgoers and some regional bodies would leave the church, while others would “stay and fight,” performing same-sex weddings even if it meant punishment.

Many supporters of the more liberal plan stood in support as Berlin spoke. Some wore rainbow-motif garments or sat behind rainbow banners. After the vote, a small group of protesters carried a cross to the stage at the conference and sat around it. Another group of about 200 people staged a peaceful sitdown protest while about two dozen police officers watched.

The Rev. Allen Ewing-Merrill, a pastor from Portland, Maine, pledged defiance of the Traditional Plan, tweeting: “I will not participate in your bigotry, sin & violence.”

An association of Methodist theological schools warned that if the Traditional Plan passes, the church “will lose an entire generation of leaders in America.”

Formed in a merger in 1968, the United Methodist Church claims about 12.6 million members worldwide, including nearly 7 million in the United States.

While other mainline Protestant denominations, such as the Episcopal and Presbyterian (U.S.A.) churches, have embraced gay-friendly practices, the Methodist church still bans them, though acts of defiance by pro-LGBT clergy have multiplied. Many have performed same-sex weddings; others have come out as gay or lesbian from the pulpit of their churches.

Enforcement of the bans has been inconsistent; the Traditional Plan aspires to beef up discipline against those engaged in defiance.

The Rev. Tim Bagwell, 64, pastor at a UMC church in Macon, Georgia, had opposed the Traditional Plan and called the outcome “deeply painful.” But he said his church will stay with UMC until at least 2020, when the next major conference is scheduled. He’s hopeful new delegates will be elected and change course to a more inclusive church.

“I am deeply sad,” he said. “The Methodist church has always been mainstream, reaching out to people. This sends a different tone ... one of exclusion, not inclusion.”

The Rev. Scott Hagan, 45, a pastor from Bonaire, Georgia, supported the Traditional Plan, saying the liberals’ alternative would have sent a mixed message.

“To have each church — possibly in the same town — offering a different perspective and practice would surely be confusing to the public that comes to the church looking for guidance,” Hagan said.

Crary reported from New York.
that she didn’t want the boy to spend time at Kay’s house, because Kay’s live-in boyfriend had repeatedly sexually abused Sharon when she was a teen. Kay responded by filing a lawsuit for custody of the boy, claiming Sharon was unfit because of her relationship with April. Kay also asked her boyfriend to move out during the court dispute, at the advice of her lawyer.

A Virginia juvenile court granted custody to Kay. Sharon could visit two days a week, but not in the presence of April. During a subsequent Virginia County Circuit Court hearing, Kay testified that the boy “shouldn’t be raised by lesbians” and would be mentally and physically harmed because of the women’s relationship. Sharon told the court that she and April sometimes kissed and hugged in front of the boy, but never had sex in front of him. She was nevertheless forced to describe on the stand what she and April did in their bedroom. This included oral sex, which was illegal under state law at the time, even if consensual. The judge ruled against Sharon, writing that her behavior was “illegal” and “immoral” and “renders her an unfit parent.”

Sharon’s case aligned with the burgeoning visibility of other same-sex parents during what Newsweek in 1990 had dubbed a “gayby boom.” The same year that Kay Bottoms filed her case, Massachusetts and Vermont became the first states that allowed same-sex couples to adopt jointly statewide. The previous year, controversy and headlines had arisen over the children’s books Heather Has Two Mommies and Daddy’s Roommate, among the first to show queer parents. A group campaigning to allow anti-gay discrimination in Oregon used them as examples of “the militant homosexual agenda.” In New York City, both books were part of a proposed “Rainbow Curriculum” to teach respect for all types of families, but were removed in the face of opposition.

Sharon’s story thus captured public attention more than previous custody cases involving LGBTQ parents (which had in fact been occurring for several decades). It made headlines in major news outlets across the country and around the world and inspired the 1996 ABC television movie Two Mothers for Zachary, starring Valerie Bertinelli and Vanessa Redgrave.

In 1994, the Virginia Court of Appeals overturned the lower court ruling, but the next year the Virginia Supreme Court reversed that decision, giving permanent custody to Kay Bottoms. The court did say that a same-sex relationship alone was not grounds for denying custody and remanded the case back to the trial court. There, Judge William Boice continued to deny Sharon custody, saying that in cooperating with the film, “Tyler was made the poster boy for a cause he could not and did not enlist.”

The next year, Sharon said it would be best for her son if she stopped the custody fight. She continued to challenge the restriction on visiting without April, but in 1999, the Virginia Court of Appeals upheld that as well.

Sharon’s case was one of “The Court Cases That Changed Our World” wrote Diane Anderson-Minshall at the Advocate in 2012. “The ruling galvanized gay activists—many of them lesbian moms like Sharon—who held stroll-ins (rallies with empty baby strollers) and protests in Virginia and outside the state.” Sharon wasn’t the first LGBTQ parent to seek custody of a child, but as Anderson-Minshall wrote, “Sharon’s case resonated, though, because of the ordinariness of Sharon and Wade, two working-class women who wanted the American dream more than they sought headlines and activist mantles.”

In 2010, Sharon married Bill Mattes, according to her Facebook page, and they ran the River Ridge Kennels, in Richlands, N.C. Her obituary at the Jones Funeral Home in Richlands notes that she is survived by Mattes, two sons, two daughters, a grandson, and a brother.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a GLAAD Media Award-winning blog and resource directory for LGBTQ parents.
Salt Lake police investigating attack on gay man in video

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Investigators say they have identified a man they believe may be linked to a potential hate crime in Salt Lake City.

Salt Lake police said in a tweet Monday the man was "cooperating fully" with an investigation of an attack on a gay man that was caught on video.

The video, shot on a downtown Salt Lake sidewalk early Sunday, shows a man approaching Sal T rejo and asking him if he’s gay. After T rejo confirms he’s gay, the approaching man is shown throwing a punch.

T rejo wrote on Facebook he started filming the man after he shouted anti-gay comments before the attack.

Salt Lake Police Sgt. Brandon Shearer confirmed Monday that the case is being investigated as a possible hate crime.

Indiana hate crimes bill advances despite conservative foes

By TOM DAVIES
Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A bill aimed at removing Indiana from the list of just five states without a hate crimes law cleared a legislative committee Monday, but not without the continued opposition of conservative groups that have stymied similar proposals for the last several years.

The Senate Public Policy Committee voted 9-1 to advance the bill to the full Senate after hearing nearly three hours of public testimony from opponents and supporters. The bill would specifically allow judges to impose additional penalties against those convicted of committing crimes fueled by biases regarding traits such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and age.

The debate in the Republican-dominated Legislature comes in the wake of a controversy over a 2015 Indiana law that critics said allowed gay people to be discriminated against. The law was later changed, but only after a national backlash and threats of a boycott.

This year’s push for a state hate crimes law has been backed by the backing of Republican Gov. Eric Holcomb, who has said the state is "long overdue" to adopt such a law following the spray-painting of a swastika outside a suburban Indianapolis synagogue last summer.

An overwhelming majority of states have hate crimes laws, which vary to some degree but generally allow for stiffer sentences to be given to people who are convicted of crimes motivated by hatred or bias. Only Indiana, Georgia, South Carolina, Wyoming and Arkansas do not.

Among the some 40 bill supporters who spoke before the committee were executives of business groups, corporations and universities, along with leaders of Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Sikh and Hindu congregations. Hispanic college students, a transgender woman and the mother of a transgender woman all talked about threatening situations in urging adoption of a state hate crimes law.

Pierre Atlas said he and another members of Congregation Shaarey Tefilla in Carmel were victims of last summer’s swastika vandalism that had what he called a "sinister motive" that made it a hate crime.

"It is an attack on that entire group, not just the individual," Atlas said. "It is intended to terrorize and intimidate that entire group."

Repeated efforts for an Indiana law have failed amid a groundswell of support. Smollett said he was assailed by two men outside of Subway in the wee hours of the morning that he had a groundswell of support. Smollett said he was assailed by two men outside of Subway in the wee hours of the morning that he had a groundswell of support. Smollett said he was assailed by two men outside of Subway in the wee hours of the morning that he had a groundswell of support. Smollett said he was assailed by two men outside of Subway in the wee hours of the morning that he had a groundswell of support.

Despite the many inconsistencies and gaping holes in Smollett’s story, there are communities of people of color and LGBTQs to come forth in the future with their reports of hate crimes buy too easily into the notion that "one bad apple spoils the whole bunch." Such a belief, in and of itself, is biased, suggesting people of color and LGBTQs are a monolith, and all perpetrators hoaxes.

When whites call cops on black people for being "black," each case is handled individually, although the police might have suspicion for the real nature of the call.

In the court of opinion, Smollett is guilty. However, if in the court of law, Smollett is found guilty, he does not fully grasp the magnitude of both his lie and crime. His actions dishonor black activist and journalist Ida B. Wells’s Anti-Lynching Campaign that took afoot in the 1890s. This year will be the eightieth anniversary of Billy Holiday’s recording of “Strange Fruit,” a protest song against lynching.

The belief that Smollett’s actions make it bad for people of color and LGBTQs to come forth in the future with their reports of hate crimes buy too easily into the notion that "one bad apple spoils the whole bunch.” Such a belief, in and of itself, is biased, suggesting people of color and LGBTQs are a monolith, and all perpetrators hoaxes.

When whites call cops on black people for being "black," each case is handled individually, although the police might have suspicion for the real nature of the call. In the court of opinion, Smollett is guilty. However, if in the court of law, Smollett is found guilty, he does not fully grasp the magnitude of both his lie and crime. His actions dishonor black activist and journalist Ida B. Wells’s Anti-Lynching Campaign that took afoot in the 1890s. This year will be the eightieth anniversary of Billy Holiday’s recording of “Strange Fruit,” a protest song against lynching. And, just last year, the National Lynching Memorial opened to remember and honor the lives of men and women who were victims. Sadly, in 2019, the Senate is still trying to pass legislation to make lynching a federal hate crime.

Smollett may well have sucked us all. However, to not take each report of a hate crime seriously, because of his fraudulent actions, would be a crime, too.
Another One Bites the Dust
by Judah Leblang | www.JudahLeblang.com

I don’t particularly like the month of February in New England, with its snowy days, dark nights, and bitter winds—but at least it goes fast. There’s Valentine’s Day mid-month, that holiday I do not celebrate as I have no one to enjoy it with, and then on the 27th, my birthday. As I age and the years pile up like the snowdrifts we (mostly) haven’t gotten this winter, I reflect on my single status.

As I age and the years pile up like the snowdrifts we (mostly) haven’t gotten this winter, I reflect on my single status—27th birthday. I don’t particularly like the month of February in New England, with its snowy days, dark nights, and bitter winds—but at least it goes fast. There’s Valentine’s Day mid-month, that holiday I do not celebrate as I have no one to enjoy it with, and then on the 27th, my birthday. As I age and the years pile up like the snowdrifts  we (mostly) haven’t gotten this winter, I reflect on my single status.

I’ve had to look at my own agency, my own piece of this (lack of) relationship puzzle. The truth was, and still often is, that I’m a bit like Groucho Marx, who claimed he wasn’t interested in joining any club that would have him as a member. Today, looking back from the perch of my early sixties, I can pinpoint several times when I was the one pursued, an object of desire. (Names have been changed to protect the innocent). Randy was a decade older than me, living with HIV and an AIDS diagnosis and taking a new cocktail in 1998, with blood work that fluctuated up and down. He was “falling in love with me,” which freaked me out and led me to run away, overwhelmed as I was with my own life and a career that wasn’t working out. Chase came along seven years later—handsome, domestic, he cooked for me, and talked about romantic getaways we could take together. He even had a small apartment in Paris. But the spark, the elusive chemistry wasn’t there. Chase didn’t getaways we could take together. He even had a small apartment in Paris. But the spark, the elusive chemistry wasn’t there. Chase didn’t getaways we could take together. He even had a small apartment in Paris. But the spark, the elusive chemistry wasn’t there. Chase didn’t getaways we could take together. He even had a small apartment in Paris. But the spark, the elusive chemistry wasn’t there. Chase didn’t getaways we could take together. He even had a small apartment in Paris. But the spark, the elusive chemistry wasn’t there. Chase didn’t getaways we could take together. He even had a small apartment in Paris. But the spark, the elusive chemistry wasn’t there. Chase didn’t getaways we could take together. He even had a small apartment in Paris. But the spark, the elusive chemistry wasn’t there. Chase didn’t.
Another Oscars go down in history as...well, the word that springs to mind is "uneventful". You know you're in trouble when it took a quip about the female menstrual cycle to grab the attention of this very sexually active gay man. Speaking of being grabbed, I couldn't help but notice that none of the four winners for "Bohemian Rhapsody" thanked the person responsible for those wins. So I'll say it—thank you, Bryan Singer.

An Oscar highlight was the performance by Queen. And even I learned something. Did you know that Adam Lambert was in "Bohemian Rhapsody"? He’s the guy who hooked up with Freddie Mercury in the truck stop restroom. Since he’s now lead singer of the band, it’s like he had sex with himself—probably not the first time.

It seems each year notable people are inevitably omitted from the "In Memoriam" segment, and this year was no different. Egregiously absent was Carol Channing, who was also an Oscar nominee! And, where was Kaye Ballard? Oh, the humanity! I can understand skipping Sondra Locke—they probably wanna stay on Clint’s good side!

Let me give some advice to all singers out there. When the note is flat, you know what doesn’t help cover it up? Holding it longer and screaming. And, for heaven’s sake, learn the lyrics. It’s pretty obvious who is hugging the TelePrompter for words and who is actually connecting with the song and the audience.

In the month leading up to the Oscars, there was lots of talk about how the Academy could trim the festivities. One of the most controversial considerations was to give out certain awards during commercials. Another plan was to ditch performances of most nominated songs and allow only two—Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper warbling "Shallow" (from "A Star Is Born") and Kendrick Lamar singing "All the Stars" (from "Black Panther"). Now, I think I’ve made it clear I am not a Lady Gaga devotee. Not that I have any-

Timing was not on Gaga’s side with her engagement to fiancé Christian Carino imploding days before the Academy Awards. However, they seem to still be on speaking terms. When they ran into each other at CAA’s pre-Oscars soirée, they said a quick hello. FYI, her Oscar date was longtime manager, Bobby Campbell.

I suspect we’ll be talking about Jussie Smollett for weeks/months to come. And the story keeps getting worse. Now that the details have taken over mainstream media, I almost don’t feel the need to enumerate every twist and turn. Suffice it to say, he did it. There, I said it. I hate to say it, but that’s that. Once the grand jury sent the case to trial, I knew there was obviously some sort of proof we didn’t know about. And, of course, has come out. Like what, you may ask? First, there’s the text message to one of the brothers sent three days before the attack saying, “Might need your help on the low. You around to meet up and talk face to face?” Perhaps more damning is the personal check for $3,500 which he wrote to the brothers. Doesn’t he watch "Dateline"? You never write a personal check! By the by, his text message history also showed that since the spring of 2018, Jussie was getting MDMA from the brothers—not that there’s anything wrong with that. And, while not germane to this case, it does tickle me every time the media refers to the "Subway restaurant”—like it’s got a Michelin rating!

FOX, which had initially stood behind Jussie, is now declining all comment. While "Empire" had insisted they would not alter their planned trajectory for the show, they are now writing Smollett out of the last two episodes of the season. Once again, I reiterate that someone is innocent until proven guilty—even though I’ve already said that I believe he did it. And I will be shocked if the proof doesn’t bear that out. What will happen next? I cannot imagine Jussie wants this to go to trial, so I suspect some sort of plea deal is being floated to the DA. If that doesn’t work, he may simply plead guilty. How will he go on after that? More to the point, will he.

After Jussie’s "attack", there was some speculation that it was a drug or sexual hookup gone wrong (and after seeing those pics of the brothers on BillyMasters.com, I can picture that). But there is a case in the news which is a gay hookup and a drug situation gone wrong. This is regarding KTLA’s Chris Burrous. At the end of last year, the anchor was found unresponsive in a Glendale motel. Turns out, the married father had hooked up with a guy through Grindr (they’d played together before) and met at the motel. Allegedly, Burrous got there first, set up the room with what is called "DJ-style lighting," and had S&M toys—including a leather mask he was wearing. Otherwise, he was nude when his playmate arrived. Reportedly, the 43-year-old newsman had inserted a rock of crystal meth in his ass, gave his partner some GHB, and was using poppers. Later, he inserted a second rock you-know-where. Then...well, let’s just say his paramour turned him into a human puppet. Unbeknownst to the partner, Burrous had at some point vomited in his mask.

see MASTERS, page 11
Oscars

Continued from page 1

man won the Actress in a Leading Role award for her portrayal of the queer Queen Anne in GLAAD Media Award-nominee The Favourite. In her speech she thanked, “Emma and Rachel, the two loveliest women in the world to fall in love with.”

Mahershala Ali took home Actor in a Supporting Role for portraying the queer classical pianist, Dr. Don Shirley. His speech honored the life and work of Shirley, saying, “I was trying to capture Dr. Shirley’s essence, which was a reflection of the person he was and the life that he lived.” Green Book also took home Best Picture, the most coveted award of the night, as well as Best Original Screenplay.

Rami Malek won Best Actor in a Leading Role for his portrayal of queer icon Freddie Mercury in biopic Bohemian Rhapsody. In a press statement about removing the film from contention for the GLAAD Media Awards, GLAAD noted: “Bohemian Rhapsody brought the story of LGBTQ icon Freddie Mercury to audiences around the world, many of whom never saw an out and proud lead character in a film or saw the impact of HIV and AIDS in fair and accurate ways. The impact of the film is undeniable. We believe, however, that we must send a clear and unequivocal message to LGBTQ youth and all survivors of sexual assault that GLAAD and our community will stand with survivors and will not be silent when it comes to protecting them from those who would do them harm.” The film also won the Sound Mixing, Sound Editing, and Film Editing awards.

Regina King took home the award in Best Supporting Actress for If Beale Streets Could Talk, adapted from the novel by infamous gay writer and activist James Baldwin. King’s speech started with her thanking Baldwin.

Our double nominee Marc Shaiman accompanied Bette Midler on the piano during the performance of the nominated song, “Where the Lost Things Go” from Mary Poppins Returns.

There were multiple LGBTQ presenters throughout the night. Queer actress Sarah Paulson presented the nominees in Achievement in Visual Effects, our bi actress Tessa Thompson presented the award for Best Original Score, and queer actress Amanda Steinberg along with Congressman John Lewis presented the nominee Green Book.

On the red carpet, GLAAD’s President and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis was photographed sporting a GLAAD ‘together’ pin and a pantsuit designed by August Getty.

Another red carpet highlight was Pose’s Billy Porter walking in a Christian Siriano velvet tuxedo gown. Porter was one of the hosts of ABC’s red carpet coverage, and his outfit was one of the most talked about looks of the night. Other LGBTQ red carpet standouts include Shangela, Adam Lambert, and Lady Gaga.

The opening number was a musical performance by out singer Adam Lambert performing a Queen medley with the band. The “In Memoriam” segment included tribute to legendary gay producer Craig Zadan and classic Hollywood actor Tab Hunter.
Church rally draws more than 200 after LGBTQ sign vandalized

TOWSON, Md. (AP)—The Baltimore County executive has agreed to meet with a coalition of community activists and people of faith in the next 30 days to discuss further actions after a church sign promoting support for LGBTQ people was vandalized.

The Baltimore Sun reports County Executive Johnny Olszewski Jr. attended a rally Sunday at Maryland Presbyterian Church in Towson with his 3-year-old daughter, Daria, and more than 200 other people. The church’s sign was vandalized more than a week ago.

During the rally, the church’s leader, the Rev. David Norse Thomas, asked the county executive to attend the meeting with community activists.

The crowd applauded when Olszewski agreed. The county executive says it’s important “to show clearly and loudly that hate has no place in Baltimore County.”


Anniversary of Stonewall uprising celebrated in Juneau

By BEN HOKENSTATT

Capitol City Weekly

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP)—The Stonewall Inn is a National Monument, but Lin Davis said what happened there almost 50 years ago isn’t necessarily widely known outside of the LGBTQ community.

“That’s part of the reason Davis, an out and proud lesbian, read her poem “Stonewall 50 When We Come To It,” at a celebration of the 50th anniversary of Stonewall held Saturday at McPherson Hall.

“I was handing out flyers (for the event), and it seemed a lot of people didn’t really know about it,” Davis said. “We ran into many people who didn’t know what Stonewall was. As a lesbian, it just is in my blood to get this history out because there’s so many people who didn’t know about Stonewall.”

Davis said since this year marks the 50th anniversary of the event, Juneau’s Stonewall 50 Project is making efforts to commemorate Stonewall with events throughout the year.

Roughly 100 people gathered for an evening of food, song, drag and dance for Saturday’s event.

“That’s a big part of the project to get the word out,” said Taylor Shae, Stonewall 50 Project coordinator. “We want to raise awareness.”

“Do something,” the cry that started the Stonewall provided a call to action and theme for the event.

Maureen Longworth, Davis’ wife and coordinator of the Stonewall 50 Project, made a simple case for why it’s important to remember Stonewall and continue to be driven toward action:

“Because we don’t have equal rights in our state,” Longworth said. “We don’t have equal protection.”

Transgender ban leads to uncertainty in Juneau

A tapestry of bigots, a terrorist group and a modern day crusade to ban the “wrong” people from Juneau is playing out.

The Juneau Empire reports that a Del. Eric Porterfield’s comments to be inappropriate.

“The goal is to spread the virtues of the Juneau and Anchorage ordinances throughout the state,” Josephson said over speakerphone.

Twenty-one states and Washington D.C. have already adopted such laws.

Last year, Josephson sponsored such a bill that gained some support but failed to advance to the House Rules Committee, and similar bills were sponsored in the past by former State Rep. Beth Kerttula.

This year, Josephson said he will be resuming the cause but was not overly optimistic of the odds of such legislation passing.

“It’s tough sledding out there,” Josephson said. However, he said it’s important for members of the LGBTQ community and allies to continue to talk about the issues that matter to them, and there is value in maintaining a dialogue.

That message matched the words that started Stonewall and the night’s theme.

“Keep talking about it,” Longworth said. “Keep doing something.”

Arkansas asked to reconsider ruling on LGBT rights measure

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP)—An Arkansas city and LGBT rights advocates are asking the state Supreme Court to reconsider its ruling that blocked the city from enacting an ordinance banning discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

The filings say the lower court hasn’t ruled on whether the 2015 law is constitutional. Attorney General Leslie Rutledge said she’s reviewing the petition and would take appropriate action.

Police officers to receive nearly $4M in harassment lawsuit

PRINCETON, N.J. (AP)—Seven current and former police officers will receive nearly $4 million from a New Jersey town to settle a sexual harassment and discrimination lawsuit.

NJ.com reports the officers claimed then-chief David Dudeck was “abusive and created a hostile work environment” at the Princeton Police Department.

The officers filed their suit in September 2013, shortly after Dudeck was forced to leave the department.

Two gay female officers alleged Dudeck used anti-gay slurs, and male officers said he would ask them about their sex lives and give explicit details about his own.

The suit alleged that the officers suffered pain and humiliation as well as diminished work duties.

The Princeton Police Department and town officials did not return requests for comment.

Information from: NJ Advance Media

Ministerial group denounces delegate’s anti-gay remarks

BLUEFIELD, W.Va. (AP)—A ministerial group and a former delegate of Mercer County, West Virginia, have denounced disparaging remarks about the gay community made by the current county delegate.

The Bluefield Daily Telegraph reported Thursday that the Bluefield Ministerial Association and former Republican Del. Marty Gearheart believe Del. Eric Porterfield’s comments to be inappropriate.

Porterfield was criticized last week for calling the LGBTQ community socialists, discriminating bigots, a terrorist group and a modern day version of the Ku Klux Klan.

Association member the Rev. Chad Slater says “Scripture is clear that all people are made in the image of God,” which he says includes the LGTBQ community. Gearheart says Porterfield’s comment limit his ability to do his job, which in turn makes the county’s voice.

The newspaper says Porterfield couldn’t be reached for comment.


4 men charged in beating of gay couple in Texas

AUSTIN, Texas (AP)—Police say they have charged four men with aggravated assault after a gay couple was beaten in Texas.

Frank Macias, his brother Miguel Macias, Quinn O’Connor and Kolby Monell were in jail Wednesday in Travis County. They each were charged Tuesday with two counts of aggravated assault, a second-degree felony, for the Jan. 19 attack in Austin. Their bonds were set at $150,000.

Each record lists no attorneys for them.

Prosecutors could seek a hate-crime enhancement from a jury, which would elevate the charges to first-degree felonies.

Travis County District Attorney Margaret Moore says she believes a strong case exists that Spencer Deehring and Tristan Perry were targeted because they are gay.

Authorities say Deehring told them that he and Perry were holding hands when a man made a derogatory comment as he passed them. Deehring said after he and Perry responded, up to five men attacked them using homophobic slurs.

Transgender teen fights to have sex changed on transcript

By BEN FINLEY

Associated Press

NORFOLK, Va. (AP)—A school board in Virginia that was willing to defend its transgender-bathroom policy all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court may finally give up the fight.

The Gloucester County School Board will hold a public hearing Tuesday. It will discuss the possibility of allowing transgender students to use restrooms that correspond with their gender identity.

The meeting comes just months before a trial is set to begin over the board’s current bathroom policy. Former student Gavin Grimm has been suing the board since 2015 for banning him from using boys restrooms.

Grimm is also expanding his case. A federal judge ruled Thursday that Grimm can sue the school board over its refusal to change the gender listed on his high school transcript. The record still lists him as female.

Kansas library will keep 3 challenged books in kids section

ANDOVER, Kan. (AP)—A Kansas public library has rejected a request to move three children’s books with LGBT characters out of the children’s section.

The Andover Public Library board of directors voted Wednesday to keep children’s books “George,” “Lily and Dunkin” and “I am Jazz” in the juvenile section. All the books included characters that are transgender.

Andover resident Marc Laffen had asked the board to move the books to the adult section because of their content. In her written challenge to the books, Laffen argued the books were part of a “sexual revolution agenda, indoctrination of children.”

The Wichita Eagle reports there were little discussion before Wednesday’s vote. About 55 people attended a January meeting to discuss the issue.

Now I watch the changes in my own body, some subtle and some not, and know that my tight pecs and lean muscle are going, going, gone, along with those missed opportunities for relationship. Because that’s the ‘thing’ about aging—one comes to realize that time is finite, limited, a non-renewable resource, like fossil fuels, and that there are only so many second and third chances each of us get in a lifetime.

Today, as I face 62, I’m determined not to waste the ones I have left.

Judah Leblang is a writer, teacher and storyteller in Boston. Find out more at judahleblang.com

Judah
Continued from page 5

Letters Policy

Bay Windows welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and accompanied by a mailing address and phone number. Because of space limitations, letters should not be more than 200 words.

e-mail: letters.baywindows@gmail.com | fax: 617.464.7286

CLASSIFIEDS

CLASSIFIED RATES

Weekly: $8 for the first line, $3 for each additional line.
22 Characters per Line.
All ads appear in print and online.
All ads must be prepaid.

Deadline: Mondays at 3pm

PLACE YOUR AD:
classifiedads@baywindows.com
617-464-7280*
*Available Monday - Thursday; 10am - 3pm.

Wills, Trusts, Health Care Proxies, Probate, Prenuptials

Create Protection for you and your loved ones

One of the only Estate Planning firms focused on the unique needs of LGBT couples, individuals and families

KRAFT LAW OFFICES
60 State Street, Suite 700
Boston, MA 02109
(617) 573-0010
rick@kraftlawboston.com

Bay Windows welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and accompanied by a mailing address and phone number. Because of space limitations, letters should not be more than 200 words.
Japanese same-sex couples sue for equal marital rights

By MARI YAMAGUCHI
Associated Press

TOKYO (AP)—Thirteen gay couples filed Japan’s first lawsuit challenging the country’s rejection of same-sex marriage Thursday, arguing the denial violates their constitutional right to equality.

Six couples holding banners saying “Marriage For All Japan” walked into Tokyo District Court to file their cases against the government, with similar cases filed by three couples in Osaka, one couple in Nagoya and three couples in Sapporo.

Plaintiff Kenji Aiba, standing next to his partner Ken Kozumii, told reporters he would “fight this war together with sexual minorities all around Japan.”

Aiba and Kozumi have held onto a marriage certificate they signed at their wedding party in 2013, anticipating Japan would emulate other advanced nations and legalize same-sex unions.

That day has yet to come, and legally they are just friends even though they’ve lived as a married couple for more than five years. So they decided to act rather than waiting.

“Right now we are both in good health and able to work, but what if either of us has an accident or becomes ill? We are not allowed to be each other’s heir, or to be each other’s guarantors for medical treatment, or to make it easier for them to rent apartments together, among other things, but they are not legally binding,” Aiba said in a recent interview with his partner Aiba, 40. “Progress in Japan has been too slow.”

Ten Japanese municipalities have enacted “partnership” ordinances for same-sex couples to make it easier for them to rent apartments together, among other things, but they are not legally binding.

In a society where pressure for conformity is strong, many gay couples hide their sexuality, fearing prejudice at home, school or work. The obstacles are even higher for transgender people in the highly gender-specific society. The Supreme Court last month upheld a law that effectively requires transgender people to be sterilized before they can have their gender changed on official documents.

The LGBTQ equal rights movement has lagged behind in Japan because people who are silently not conforming to conventional notions of sexuality have been so marginalized that the issue hasn’t been considered a human rights problem, experts say.

“Many people don’t even think of a possibility that their neighbors, colleagues or classmates may be sexual minorities,” said Mizaho Fukushima, a lawyer-turned-lawmaker and an expert on gender and human rights issues. “And the pressure to follow a conservative family model, in which heterosexual couples are supposed to marry and have children, is still strong.”

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and his ultra-conservative supporters have campaigned to re-store a patristical society based on heterosexual marriages. The government has restored moral education class at schools to teach children family values and good deeds.

“Whether to allow same-sex marriage is an issue that affects the foundation of how families should be in Japan, which requires an extremely careful examination,” Abe said in a statement last year.

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party has repeatedly come under fire for making remarks deemed discriminating against LGBTQ people. In January, party veteran Katsuei Hirawaka said “a nation would collapse” if everyone became LGBTQ. Last year, another ruling lawmaker, Mio Sugita, was condemned after saying in a magazine that the government shouldn’t use tax money for the rights of LGBTQ individuals because they are “not productive.”

But while the law and many lawmakers lag behind, public acceptance of sexual diversity and same-sex marriage has grown in Japan. According to an October, 2018 survey by the advertising agency Dentsu, more than 70 percent of the 6,229 respondents aged 20-59 said they support legalizing same-sex marriage.

Some companies have adopted policies to extend employee benefits to their same-sex partners. A few women’s universities have announced they will start accepting male-to-female transgender applicants, and some schools are allowing both boys and girls to choose between trousers and skirts. Increasingly, genderless public toilets are becoming available for “everyone.”

Aiba said he feels a bit “scared” to go public and is worried about possible repercussions. But he and Kozumi decided to act on behalf of all their peers who are too afraid of coming out because of discrimination and prejudice that they still face.”

“It will be our dream comes true if our marriage certificate is accepted one day,” Aiba said. “We want to make that happen.”

Pressures for change are mounting. Japan’s refusal to issue spouse visas to partners of same-sex couples legally married overseas is a growing problem, forcing them to temporarily live separately. A group of lawmakers is lobbying the Justice Ministry to consider a special visa for them.

In August, The American Chamber of Commerce in Japan, and its counterparts from Canada, Britain, Ireland, Australia and New Zealand, called for legalizing same sex marriages, saying Japan “loses out because talented LGBTQ people choose elsewhere to work.

The primary goal of the lawsuit filed Thursday is to win marital equality for same-sex couples. But transgender people are also hoping for such a change, which would eliminate the need for anyone to be sterilized just so they can get married.

Follow Mari Yamaguchi on Twitter at https://twitter.com/marayamaguchi

see WORLD, page 11
Gay Muslim comic gone from Instagram after Indonesia warning

By STEPHEN WRIGHT
Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—An Instagram account that published comic strips depicting the struggles of gay Muslims in Indonesia has disappeared from the site following a frenzy of moral outrage online in the world’s biggest Muslim nation.

The Ministry of Communications said Wednesday that the account under the username Alpatuni was pornographic, which violated the law on information and electronic transactions.

The social media company is regularly in the crosshairs of regulators, rights groups and the public as it unsuccessfully tries to balance what CEO Mark Zuckerberg has called “giving people a voice” and demands for censorship of content that is perceived as threatening public morality.

In 2017, it briefly and partially blocked the Telegram messaging app because of its failure to remove groups linked to violent jihad.

The communications ministry said it appreciated that members of the community reported the gay Muslim account, which “accelerated” its removal.

Some Indonesian netizens in turn congratulated the ministry. On Twitter, Fahmi Alfiansi Pane, a policy analyst at the Indonesian parliament, thanked officials for “acting decisively” to protect public morality but also told The Associated Press he had never seen the comics.

Local media, quoting the communications minister, reported the ministry would block Instagram in Indonesia if the Alpatuni account wasn’t removed.

The government frequently threatens to block Western social media and internet companies for content deemed illegal but has never taken such measures, possibly fearful of a public backlash due to the huge popularity of the services with Indonesians.

In 2017, it briefly and partially blocked the Telegram messaging app because of its failure to remove groups linked to violent jihad.

Bay Windows | February 28, 2019 | Page 11
Dreams reflected.

On X1, it’s pride all year, only with Xfinity.™ There’s power in seeing yourself on screen, and that’s why Xfinity created a first-of-its-kind community endorsed LGBTQ Film & TV Collection. With Xfinity On Demand, you have access to thousands of TV shows and movies at home and on-the-go. Simply say, “LGBTQ” into the X1 Voice Remote to easily immerse yourself in an awesome, diverse collection of content that reflects all of you. Simple. Easy. Awesome.

Find yourself at xfinity.com/LGBTQ

Restrictions apply. Not available in all areas. No celebrity endorsement implied. ©2018 Comcast. All rights reserved.