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A Queer Mom in a Knit Cap

Thinking of Renee Good

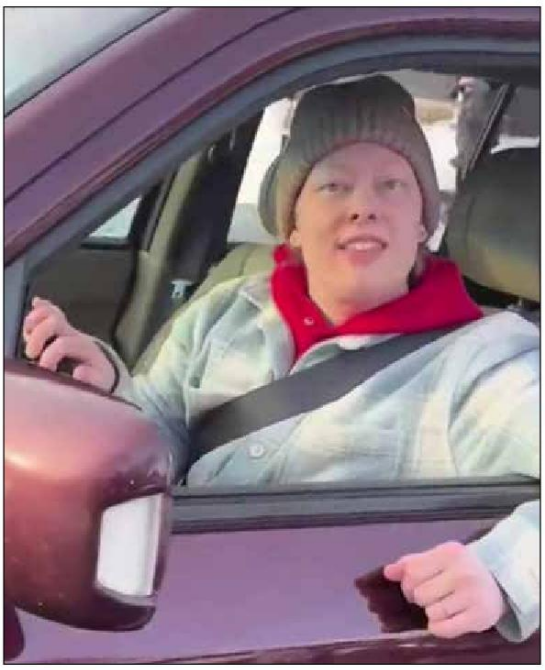
by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

In tragedy and grief, sometimes the smallest details sear themselves in our minds. I can't stop thinking about Renee Good's knit cap.

Two days after an ICE officer fatally shot Good on January 7, a video was released of his cell phone footage, showing Good in her SUV right before her death. She was dressed in a hoodie, plaid shirt-jacket, and knit cap. It's an outfit that a not-insignificant portion of the country's queer women (and some cishet ones, too) wear at this time of year. I have such garb myself, and I'd gotten my own spouse a knit cap for the holidays. The outfit is common enough that it wasn't a huge coincidence—but somehow, the very ordinariness of Good's attire, and the similarity to our own, struck me like a gut punch. Or maybe I'm thinking of her cap so I don't have to think about her child's stuffed animals spilling out of the glove box, next to the bloody airbag.

I began to wonder, too, how much Good's androgynous, queer-coded outfit, and that of her similarly clad and more masculine-presenting wife,

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 5*



Renee Good. Photo by Jonathan Ross - Alpha News. Public Domain, via Wikimedia Commons.

Federal Investigation Targets New England Schools Over Trans Athletes

Five regional school districts face Title IX inquiries as Trump administration escalates scrutiny of sports participation policies

By Bay Windows Staff

The US Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights has launched investigations into 18 educational institutions nationwide, including five school districts in New England, over policies allowing transgender students to participate in sports based on gender identity, according to a department announcement.

The New England targets include Foxborough Public Schools in Massachusetts; Champlain Valley School District in Hinesburg, Vermont; Waterbury Public Schools in Connecticut; and two regional districts in Maine based in Waterboro and Newport, the Boston Globe reported.

The department said it received complaints alleging the entities vio-

see **DOE,** *page 2*

Boston Woman Sues Liberty Hotel for $10 Million Over Bathroom Incident

Lawsuit alleges hotel crafted defamatory story to cover up discrimination after security guard ejected woman mistaken for a man

By Bay Windows Staff

A Boston woman who was ejected from a women's bathroom at the Liberty Hotel last May has filed a lawsuit seeking damages exceeding $10 million, alleging the hotel defamed her and her partner to cover up discriminatory treatment, Boston.com reported.

Ansley Baker and her partner, Elizabeth Victor, filed the complaint Thursday in Suffolk Superior Court, naming the hotel and several of its employees and executives as defen-

see **LIBERTY,** *page 3*

Trans Athletes' Rights in Balance as High Court Considers State Sports Ban

By Lisa Keen
Keen News Service

The current bans on transgender females playing in female sports competitions at the high school and college levels are based on the biological differences between males and females. Many states —and parents— fear their biological girls could be hurt by transgender females who have (in many cases) already developed greater heights, speed, and muscle strength than cisgender females.

But what about trans-females who have taken puberty blockers at an early age and have not developed physical traits that give them an advantage over other female athletes? What about more scholarly pursuits, where many girls vastly outperform boys? Should states ban girls from classes trying to bring boys up-to-speed academically. Should competitive chess teams be separated into boys and girls. What if a cisgender boy wanted to compete in track on a girls' team because he was a poor athlete and did

see **SPORTS,** *page 4*

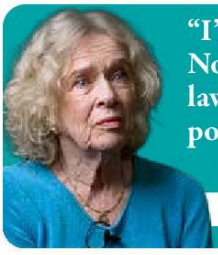
NEW ENGLAND BRIEFS

Transgender Worker Sues NH Employer Over Health Coverage Exclusion

GLAD Law is representing Lillian Bernier in a lawsuit against her employer Turbocam, Inc. over the company's complete exclusion of coverage for gender transition medical care, according to the organization's website.

Bernier has worked nights as a machinist at the Barrington, New Hampshire manufacturing plant since 2019 and pays into the com-

see **NE BRIEFS,** *page 2*



"I'm Norwegian. We give a Nobel Prize to somebody who deserves it. And suddenly that Nobel Prize is going to somebody else...That's why I'm happy specifically now that we have laws that say that if you misuse the Nobel Prize, we take it away from you. Somebody in power in the United States may be disappointed. He will lose it...I am happy."

—Liv Ullmann during her acceptance speech for Lifetime Achievement at the European Film Awards. Great—now we're gonna invade Norway, too!

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

Photo by Nasjonalbiblioteket, via Wikimedia Commons.

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DOE

Continued from page 1

lated Title IX, the federal law prohibiting sex-based discrimination in educational programs and activities. According to the department's January 14 press release, the investigations examine whether these institutions "maintain policies or practices that discriminate on the basis of sex by permitting students to participate in sports based on their 'gender identity,' not biological sex."

"In the same week that the Supreme Court hears oral arguments on the future of Title IX, OCR is aggressively pursuing allegations of discrimination against women and girls by entities which reportedly allow males to compete in women's sports," Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights Kimberly Richey said in the announcement. "We will leave no stone unturned in these investigations to uphold women's right to equal access in education programs."

The timing proved notable, coming one day after the US Supreme Court heard oral arguments in cases considering whether states can bar transgender athletes from girls' and women's sports teams, according to the Globe's reporting. A majority of justices appeared inclined to allow such restrictions during those arguments.

These investigations stem from President Trump's executive order signed in February 2025, which authorized federal agencies to withhold funding from entities allowing transgender athletes to compete in girls' and women's sports.

Adam Bunting, superintendent of Vermont's Champlain Valley School District, told his community that the district was targeted for following Vermont state policy permitting students to participate in sports and access facilities according to their gender identity, the Globe reported.

Bunting indicated the district, located south of Burlington, plans to submit an official response while remaining committed to supporting all students. In his email to community members, he quoted a sign from his office: "You are just the child we hoped would show up. So welcome. We are glad you are here."

Amy Berdos, superintendent of Foxborough Public Schools, said in a statement that her district follows state law and guidance prohibiting discrimination against student-athletes based on gender identity, according to the Globe. Stephen Marquis, superintendent of the regional district in Waterboro, Maine, similarly stated his district complies with state and federal laws and provides a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students.

The federal investigations represent the latest development in ongoing national debates about transgender youth participation in school athletics, an issue that has become a focal point of both legal challenges and policy changes across numerous states.

NE Briefs

Continued from page 1

pany's health plan but faces a blanket exclusion for gender transition care. Turbocam argues it should be exempt from equal treatment laws based on the owner's religious beliefs, though the company covers same-sex spousal benefits and IVF treatment despite the owner's stated religious objections to both, GLAD Law noted.

"I'm just asking for fair coverage and to be treated the same as my coworkers," Bernier stated on GLAD's website.

The federal district court denied Turbocam's motion to dismiss in June 2024, allowing the case to proceed. In August 2025, the US Department of Justice filed a statement supporting Turbocam's position. GLAD Law filed a motion for summary judgment in October 2025 asking the court to rule in Bernier's favor without a full trial.

VT Proposes Gender-Affirming Care Trust Fund

Vermont lawmakers introduced House Bill H. 576 on January 6 to create a state-funded mechanism sustaining gender-affirming health care amid federal funding pressures, according to the Vermont House Journal.

Sponsored by Representatives Daisy Berbeco of Winooski, Tiffany Bluemle of Burlington, and Troy Headrick of Burlington, the legislation would establish the Affirming Health Care Trust Fund to address care gaps created by hospitals discontinuing services due to federal threats. The fund would finance patient costs, establish new clinics, and cover provider insurance while prohibiting disclosure of patient data to federal authorities.

If enacted, the fund would activate immediately with an oversight board convening by August 1, 2026.

NH Republicans Revive Education Restriction Bills

Despite Governor Kelly Ayotte's June veto and ongoing federal court blocks, New Hampshire Republican legislators introduced revised versions of bills restricting LGBTQ-inclusion in education, New Hampshire Public Radio reported January 5.

Senator Tim Lang of Sanbornton sponsored a revised "book ban" bill requiring schools to notify parents how to challenge materials deemed harmful. The new version drops a list of banned materials and retains only procedural requirements for parental challenges. "It's not a ban bill at all," Lang told NHPR. "It's just a procedural bill."

At least three other Republican-backed bills are near repeats from prior years, including proposals to separate locker rooms and bathrooms in schools by biological sex. Ayotte and former Governor Chris Sununu vetoed prior versions. Federal courts have temporarily blocked New Hampshire laws restricting teaching on race and gender. Despite ongoing litigation, lawmakers refiled similar bills, including one named for conservative activist Charlie Kirk that would prohibit racial and LGBTQ discussions in schools and allow lawsuits against school districts and employees who violate the law.

NATIONAL LGBTQ+ NEWS BRIEFS

Virginia Governor Sworn In, Signs Anti-Discrimination Order

Abigail Spanberger was sworn in as Virginia's 75th governor on January 17, becoming the first woman to hold the office, the Washington Blade reported. LGBTQ groups Virginia Pride and Diversity Richmond participated in the inaugural parade, carrying a Progress Pride flag.

Following the ceremony, Spanberger signed 10 executive orders, including one prohibiting discrimination against state employees based on sexual orientation and gender identity, according to the Blade. On the same day, the Virginia Senate voted 26-13 to approve a resolution that would repeal the state's constitutional amendment defining marriage as between a man and a woman. The resolution requires passage by two successive legislatures before it can be placed on the ballot for voter approval.

HRC Survey Shows Changes in LGBTQ Community

The Human Rights Campaign Foundation released findings from its Annual LGBTQ+ Community Survey on January 15. The survey of nearly 15,000 U.S. adults found:

- 49% of LGBTQ adults report being "less out" in at least some aspects of their lives compared to one year ago
- 51.1% report being less visible than a year ago
- LGBTQ adults are nearly twice as likely as non-LGBTQ adults to report their financial situation worsened over the past 12 months
- Two-thirds of transgender and nonbinary adults reported difficulty accessing healthcare due to administration policies
- 39.1% of workers reported at least one DEI-related change at their workplace

According to MSNBC, HRC also released a messaging playbook for pro-equality campaigns ahead of the 2026 midterm elections.

Trump Administration Policy Actions

The Trump administration ended rape protections for transgender inmates in Immigration and Customs Enforcement facilities and federal prisons on January 16, Pink News reported. The administration continues enforcement of executive orders affecting LGBTQ individuals, including policies on gender definitions and military service.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio stated on January 17 that efforts addressing sexual violence and women's rights have "little to nothing to show for it," according to LGBTQ Nation.

Trevor Project Receives $45 Million Donation

MacKenzie Scott donated $45 million to The Trevor Project on January 12, the largest single donation in the suicide prevention organization's 27-year history, CBS News reported. The organization estimates it lost approximately $25 million in federal funding after the administration terminated the LGBTQ youth component of the 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline last year, according to The Trevor Project.

Liberty

Continued from page 1

dants, according to the January 16 report.

The lawsuit comes months after the Liberty Hotel agreed to settle a related complaint with the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination. That November 2025 settlement included updated nondiscrimination policies, anti-discrimination training, and a $10,000 charitable donation to an LGBTQ+ nonprofit, Boston.com reported.

Baker and Victor were attending a Kentucky Derby watch party at the hotel on May 3, 2025, when the incident occurred. According to the lawsuit, when Baker entered a bathroom stall, a male security guard walked in and began banging on the door, accusing Baker of being a man and demanding she leave.

The women allege they were denied bathroom access "because of what Ms. Baker looks like and because they are in a lesbian relationship," the complaint states. When they showed Baker's driver's license indicating she is female, the guard threw them out of the hotel, according to Boston.com.

The lawsuit alleges the hotel "panicked" when the couple complained about the experience on social media and that executives "agreed to craft a defamatory statement, knowing it was false, suggesting that Ms. Baker and Ms. Victor were kicked out of the Liberty Hotel because they had been engaging in obscene conduct in a stall."

"The intent of the statement was to humiliate, intimidate, and defame Ms. Baker and Ms. Victor in retaliation for their complaint," the suit states, according to the report.

The hotel later walked back its initial comments, announcing it had suspended the guard and ordered mandatory retraining for staff.

Baker and Victor are suing the hotel for discrimination, retaliation, civil conspiracy, and defamation.

In a statement to Boston.com, General Manager Mark Fischer said the Liberty Hotel has apologized to Baker and Victor "several times" and spent months working with the state's discrimination commission "to address what occurred and strengthen its practices."

"We've been candid that we can do better, as it has been and remains that all guests should feel welcome at the Liberty Hotel," Fischer said. "We recognize that they have a right to bring a lawsuit, but we unequivocally deny discriminating or retaliating against them in any way."

However, a lawyer for Baker and Victor told Boston.com the women are still trying to determine who made the false claims against them and why, despite the hotel's apology and MCAD settlement.

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Distinguishing criticism from bigotry

Netanyahu needs an intervention

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

Dear reader, we must be able to criticize the government of Israel. It is a thorny subject fraught with the weight of history, but the Netanyahu government's treatment of Palestinians cannot be immune to protest.

First of all—and I don't know a gentle way to say this—Israel cannot be held above the law because of the Shoah. That is a desecration. You cannot decently say "Never again, never forget" about one genocide while excusing another.

Right-wing Israeli fanatics have taken Zionism, which was about Jews living in their indigenous homeland, and pushed it into something monstrous. Large numbers of Israelis have protested Benjamin Netanyahu's corruption and the atrocities by the Israel Defense Forces, but are dismissed by the war cabinet, which deliberately poisons any chance of a two-state solution.

We must distinguish between antisemitism and opposition to this ugly brand of Zionism. One cannot reasonably equate criticism of slaughter, destruction and ethnic cleansing with bigotry. The videos of state-sanctioned violence are soul-crushing.

One noxious claim is that Palestinians "are not a real people." Setting aside the finer anthropological points of whether Palestinians qualify as "a people," they are human beings and have ties to the land as Jewish people do.

Some Zionists have said, "There are no innocents in Gaza." That is a justification for slaughtering children. Those who repeat it should pause and consider the import of what they are defending.

As I oppose the murder of Israeli children, so I oppose the murder of Palestinian children. How in the name of heaven can that be a controversial statement?

The behavior of Israeli settlers in the West Bank is disturbing as well. Gleefully destroying people's houses and plowing up their olive groves while declaring that "God gave us this land" is blasphemy.

If you criticize Stephen Miller for saying America should have Greenland, how can Israel's accelerated West Bank annexation be beyond criticism?

Yes, Hamas is a terrorist organization. But responding to one atrocity with another only sets up generation upon generation of revenge-taking. Another problem is the blatant double standards whereby anything Israel does is considered justified while Palestinians are treated as having no right of territorial sovereignty or self-defense at all.

Author Don Goldstein reports there were acts of terror on both sides in the American Revolution. The definition of terrorism gets slippery, as we see with Trump's habit of calling protesters terrorists while letting his brutal ICE agents off the hook.

People have a right to self-defense. That does not mean they should be able to do anything they please. There is a reason we have rules of war. But the United States is trashing all of that for its own imperial expansion. We are backing the Netanyahu government. As long as that is the case, we have blood on our hands.

Pope Leo says Palestinians have the right to live in peace on their own land. He supports a two-state solution and decries violence against Palestinian civilians in the West Bank and Gaza. He calls for dialogue over force. He is right despite the bleak current prospects.

I agree with the arrest warrant issued by the International Criminal Court against Netanyahu in November 2024 on charges that include starvation as a method of warfare and intentionally directing an attack against civilians. As of this writing, no similar warrant has been issued by ICC against Trump, though he has earned that more than a Nobel Peace Prize.

Someone on Facebook whose profile pic says "Stand With Israel" recently claimed that a board member of an LGBTQ organization is a registered agent of Qatar. That country's policies toward queer folk are horrible. But this attempt to smear an organization because of outside activity by one of its board members strikes me as a variant of Pinkwashing, in which Israel's comparatively pro-queer policies are used to excuse its colonialism.

I leave the accuser nameless because I do not want to give oxygen to that approach to advocacy. We are at risk of drowning in hate and destruction. I can only hope wiser voices like Pope Leo's are heeded.

Public opinion is shifting against American complicity in the crimes by Netanyahu's government. Yet openly gay New York Rep. Ritchie Torres, like many other Democrats, echoes that government's talking points. I don't know if this will change. The least I can do is to raise my voice against our ally's barbarous treatment of the Palestinian people. My pangs of conscience over staying silent would be worse than being called names.

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

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Sports

Continued from page 1

not have a chance to make the boys team?

These are some of the questions that were tossed around during the three-plus-hour-long oral argument before the U.S. Supreme Court this morning (Tuesday, January 13). At the conclusion, there seemed to be at least a fighting chance that the court will send both cases back to the lower courts to develop a more thorough factual record.

Several justices said they considered the record unclear or underdeveloped. They did not think Congress had clearly defined the word "sex" in 1972 when it passed Title IX of the Education Amendments Act. In that legislation, it said, "No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance...." Nearly all secondary schools and about 90 percent of colleges and universities receive federal funding for various purposes.

Two years later, Congress added an amendment introduced by Senator Jacob Javits that allowed for "reasonable provisions" in the context of "particular sports." And in 2020, the U.S. Supreme Court held, in Bostock v. Clayton County, that "on the basis of sex" in Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, includes gender identity and sexual orientation.

The consequences of a ruling in the cases before the court today could have far-reaching consequences.

The two cases, discussed separately before the court, involved two transgender female athletes: a teenager in West Virginia and a college student in Idaho. The teenager, whose name, Becky Pepper-Jackson, has been widely reported, is 15. She started taking puberty blocking medications in elementary school and has never gone through the bodily changes that males go through during puberty. Thus, her attorneys argue, she does not have any biological advantage over cisgender females. The college student, 24-year-old Lindsay Hecox, began experiencing gender dysphoria in elementary school but did not begin to take drugs to suppress testosterone until her first year in college. The state of Idaho passed a blanket ban against trans-female athletes in school just as she was preparing to try out for her school's soccer and track-and-field teams.

The three hours of arguments produced many memorable quotes. Idaho Solicitor General Alan Hurst told the court, "Sex is what matters in sports."

Later, the attorney arguing for Hecox noted that in 1967, the Supreme Court ruled in Boutilier v. US that, although the 1952 Immigration and Nationality Act was used to deport a Canadian gay man, the Act did not mention homosexuality at all. The law said the U.S. could deport anyone "afflicted with psychopathic personality." But the Supreme Court ruled that "Congress used the phrase 'psychopathic personality' not in the clinical sense, but to effectuate its purpose to exclude from entry all homosexuals and other sex perverts."

"Not our finest hour," quipped Justice Neil Gorsuch.

The ACLU and Lambda Legal brought the lawsuits challenging the bans. They said the bans, which exist in half the states, violate the Equal Protection Clause in the U.S. Constitution and Title IX under the federal Education Amendments of 1972. Title IX prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex at schools that receive any federal funding.

The ACLU says the Supreme Court could deliver a ruling that goes beyond sports and implicates the rights of transgender people in other arenas.

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Continued from page 1

had to do with the ICE officer's actions. If Good had been dressed and coifed as she was in another photo that is circulating, with a strapless dress, flowing hair, and makeup, would he have shot her? If she had been with a man and not a woman, would he have shot her? Is her death in part another awful consequence of the administration's insistence that there are only two genders, creating hostility to those who blur those boundaries even sometimes? We may never know the answers for certain, but we should consider the questions.

It is important to recognize, of course, that the shooting of Good, a White woman, is only one of many by ICE officers, and that most, if not all, of the other shootings (and deaths in ICE detention) have been of people of color, particularly Latine people. (See The Guardian, 1/4/2026, and NBC News, 1/16/2026.) That makes Good's death no less a tragedy, and if it is what finally galvanizes the country against ICE's overreach, so be it—but we should be just as outraged at ICE's ongoing assaults on people of color, who remain the focus of the organization's activities. We must work to end injustice everywhere, whether it is aimed at those who reflect our own identities or at those from whom we differ. We still all share a common humanity.

It is hard to find hope in a time like this, but I am trying. I have been heartened by the $1.5 million raised through a GoFundMe campaign for the Good family—and by the fact that the organizers have now ended the campaign, wanting any additional money to go elsewhere. They said on the campaign's webpage that they will place the funds in a trust for the family, but "If you're looking to donate, we encourage you to support others in need."

I am inspired by the people who have turned out in Minneapolis and elsewhere to peacefully protest Good's shooting and ICE's other extreme and harmful actions. They are risking their own safety in order to protect others.

I have also been heartened by the six Minnesota federal prosecutors who resigned in protest after Justice Department officials tried to get them to open a criminal investigation of Good's widow, Becca Good, "for ties to activist groups"; to not investigate the ICE agent who shot Renee Good; and to exclude state police from their work, as NPR has reported (1/14/2026). We need more people to show such integrity.

Most of all, though, I am finding hope in Becca Good's statement, shared with Minnesota Public Radio (MPR) two days after the shooting. Becca said that "kindness radiated" from her wife, and that "Renee was a Christian who knew that all religions teach the same essential truth: we are here to love each other, care for each other, and keep each other safe and whole." She painted a picture of the two of them in their car with their 6-year-old son as they traveled to Minnesota to make their home, and the joy and community they had begun to experience there. On Wednesday, they "stopped to support our neighbors," Becca said. That's when Renee was killed.

Becca wrote of the three children Renee left behind, noting that their 6-year-old "already lost his father" (Renee's second husband, who died in 2023). Renee also has a 12- and a 15-year-old from a previous marriage, living with other family. Becca explained: "I am now left to raise our son and to continue teaching him, as Renee believed, that there are people building a better world for him. That the people who did this had fear and anger in their hearts, and we need to show them a better way."

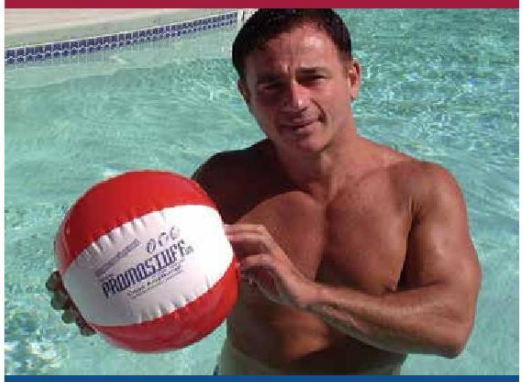
I am inspired by the people who have turned out in Minneapolis and elsewhere to peacefully protest Good's shooting and ICE's other extreme and harmful actions.

Becca then shows her own deep kindness by saying, "We honor her memory by living her values: rejecting hate and choosing compassion, turning away from fear and pursuing peace, refusing division and knowing we must come together to build a world where we all come home safe to the people we love."

Those words should be emblazoned on our hearts as we move forward. Let's put on our knit caps, warmth against the cold and ice, and get to work.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a two-time GLAAD Media Award-winning blog for LGBTQ parents, plus a searchable database of 1,900+ LGBTQ family books.

HOT IDEAS



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You may recognize model **Christian Hogue** as the face (and body) of Davidoff Cool Water. But he sure wasn't showing model behavior back in August at a Nashville dog park. According to witnesses, he grabbed a guy from behind—something that has happened to me in parks on numerous occasions. Hogue claims he retaliated after the other guy punched his dog. However, that guy says he simply grabbed Hogue's dog by the collar to stop it from attacking his dog. While no witnesses confirm either scenario, they all saw Hogue put the other guy in a headlock. The "victim" claims that Christian restricted his breathing—which I believe is the whole point of a headlock. But it's the model's mugshot causing a stir. Know your angles, I always say. He's due back in court this week.

By the by, Christian was arrested again just days before Christmas. Why? He was driving while using his cell phone. Hasn't he ever heard of bluetooth? As **Judge Judy** would say, this guy sounds like a real winner!

Speaking of hot guys, **Gus Kenworthy** is hoping to compete in the 2026 Winter Olympics in Milan. Since we in the gay community always talk about him, we forget that he's an underdog on the world stage. After an acceptable showing at the US Grand Prix in Aspen (he finished 8th), he is in contention to compete for Team Great Britain. Because of dual citizenship, he has also competed for the US and won a silver medal in the 2014 Sochi Olympics. In addition to straddling two countries, here's something else you may not know—his legal name is Augustus!

François Arnaud has had a heady few weeks. While promoting "Heated Rivalry", he was surprised to meet a superfan backstage at "CBS Mornings"—**Oprah Winfrey**! "Are you enjoying all the heat?" asked O. "I'm riding the wave." Oprah smiled and said, "That's exactly what I was going to say—ride the wave and stay completely present in all of it. Just ride it. It's fantastic. I'm so happy for you. And the fact that it's coming at a time in your life when you're really able to accept it." François agreed, saying, "Totally. I think if it happened to me at 25, I'd be dead now. But now I can handle it. I know who I am." "You know who you are. 'Cause if you don't know who you are, you fall off." Arnaud assured her, "I won't fall off." PHEW!

On "CBS Mornings", François said that prior to going into production with Crave in Canada, "Heated Rivalry" had a deal with a "big streamer" in the US. But they had a list of notes for **Jacob Tierney**, the series creator—including "no kissing until episode five". Jacob's response? "Well, that's not what we're doing." After they showed a clip of Scott and Kip in a locked embrace, Arnaud made the following observation: "I think Kip needs to stop working out, 'cause he's a smoothie boy. He shouldn't have that body and shouldn't look better than the hockey players." You can see the entire interview on BillyMasters.com.

While in NYC, Arnaud was spotted on several occasions with co-star **Connor Storrie**, adding credence to rumors that the two are dating. They were even photographed together at JFK where they caught a flight to LAX.

The "Heated Rivalry" effect keeps gaining momentum. Everyone is talking about last week's "Saturday Night Live" parody (yes, we'll post it). Even the NHL has weighed in on the series. **Commissioner Gary Bettman** says that he binged it in one night. "It's a wonderful story. The content—particularly for young people—may be a little spicy, so you have to balance that out." I suspect young people are the ones least taken aback by the "spice". While no NHL player has yet come out, it's in the air. In 2021, Canadian **Luke Prokop** was under contract with an NHL team, although he ended up with an AHL team (I say as if I know the difference). Perhaps that was all for the best—the NHL team was the Nashville Predators! And while much was made of **Jesse Kortuem** coming out due to the series, he too never played with an NHL team. Just a matter of time.

From a new show to one celebrating its 50th anniversary. On January 14, 1976, "The Bionic Woman" premiered. Fun fact—**Lindsay Wagner** almost didn't take the initial guest starring role on "The Six Million Dollar Man". However, it was her sister Randi's favorite series, so she took it. And the rest is history.

On the day this column drops, **Dolly Parton** will turn 80! A number of her colleagues planned a celebration at the Grand Ole Opry over the weekend. But Dolly cancelled. "I just wanted to say how much it means to me that you're all coming together again this year to celebrate my big ol' birthday with some of my songs. Some of my favorite memories happened right here onstage at the Grand Ole Opry, and I wish I could be there in person, but I'll be sending you all my love, for sure. So, you have the best night ever." Does anyone have Dolly in their 2026 pool?

Didya know **Joel Kim Booster** rang out the old year by getting married? On December 30th, Booster tied the knot with **John Michael Sudsina** at the Exploratorium science museum in San Francisco. Reports indicate that there were 167 guests, including Booster's pals **Bowen Yang** and **Matt Rogers**. Photos can be found on our website.

Luke Evans will helm a Broadway revival of "The Rocky Horror Show" starting March 26. When asked about getting cast as Frank-n-Furter, he said, "I always wanted to do Broadway, I just didn't think I would be in stilettos and fishnets." Funny, that's how I always picture him. He's excited for the challenge and said his take would be "different and unique". The show's director will be **Sam Pinkleton**, who won the Tony for directing "Oh, Mary!"

Speaking of "Oh, Mary!", someone new is slipping into Mary's crinoline—perhaps the oldest Mary of all. Starting on February 3rd, **John Cameron Mitchell** will play the First Lady for a 12-week run. Can the creator of "Hedwig" bring a little "je ne sais quoi" to the role? My money's on him.

Another off-Broadway sensation is headed to the Great White Way. "Titanique" made a splash when it opened in 2020. Now the show is headed to the Main Stem, and it's kept some of its kooky, original cast, including **Frankie Grande**, who will reprise his role as Victor Garber. He'll be joined by **Jim Parsons** as Rose's mother and dynamic diva **Deborah Cox** as the Unsinkable Molly Brown. The show begins previews on March 26th at the St. James Theatre for a strictly 12-week run.

The hit of Provincetown last summer was "Golden Mean Girls"—a mashup of "Golden Girls" and "Mean Girls" from **Jamie Morris**, the mastermind behind "Mommie Queerest". Now it's hitting the road. First stop—Boston's Club Cafe for one night only, on February 7th. Not only will Jamie return as Blanche, but he'll be joined by the entire original cast. Grab your tickets at ClubCafe.com. Tell 'em Billy sent you.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from Walt in San Francisco. *"Did you see 'The Housemaid'? Who is that stud playing the husband?"*

Not only did I see "The Housemaid", I went to a cinema and PAID! Here's the kicker—I had a screener of it at home. What can I say? Bad movies work better in a crowd. And I was right—it was bad. But there was no crowd for a film starring **Amanda Seyfried** and **Sydney Sweeney**. Thank God for **Brandon Sklenar**—a guy who is indeed gay porn star hot. If you look for info about him online, here is the first thing you'll read: "Brandon Tyler Feakins, known professionally as Brandon Sklenar, is an American actor known for his versatility and dedication to his craft." I dunno about all that—but he definitely has a dedication to his body. In fact, I am ready to kneel before the altar of that body...and perhaps on top of it! You can check out most of it (including an ass that won't quit) on BillyMasters.com.

When someone is changing their name from Feakins to Sklenar, we've definitely come to the end of yet another column. I mean, neither really roll off the tongue. But upon further research, I learned Sklenar is his mother's maiden name. See? Who else digs this deep? Just part of the riches to be found on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that always goes deeper. If you need me to go more in depth, just send a note to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Gus straddles anything else. So, until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

Photo by Adam Rippon, via Wikimedia Commons.

Gus Kenworthy

Photo by Knight photo & celebrity photos.com, via Wikimedia Commons.

Dolly Parton

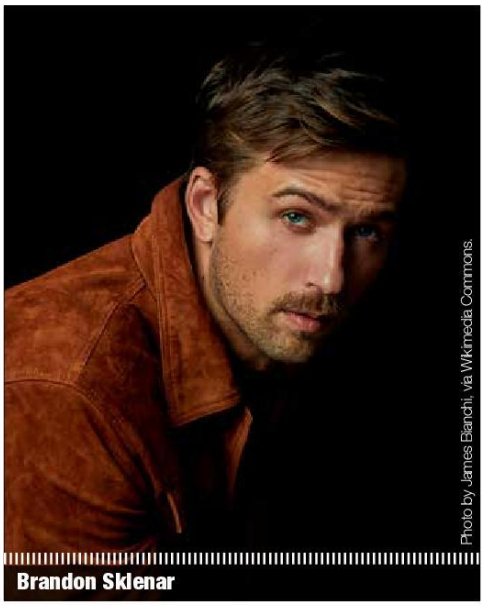

Photo by James Bianchi, via Wikimedia Commons.

Brandon Sklenar

Old North Illuminated Presents "Queer & Trans Early America in Print" with Historian Jen Manion

Digital Speaker Series Continues on Wednesday, February 11, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

BOSTON – Join Old North Illuminated for a compelling online conversation with historian Jen Manion exploring queer and trans histories from early America as they appeared in print. Set for Wednesday, February 11, from 7 to 8:30 p.m., Manion will explore how people understood and talked about gender identity and sexuality before modern terms like "transgender" or "homosexual" existed. Using newspapers, magazines, and children's literature from early America, they will share stories of queer pioneers—including female husbands, sailors, children, and prisoners—and discuss what these accounts reveal about everyday life and identity in the past. The talk will also look at how queer and trans people were portrayed in historical media and why these stories still matter today. The program is part of Old North Illuminated's ongoing commitment to public history and community dialogue. This virtual event is accessible with a donation of any amount to support Old North Illuminated, the nonprofit that stewards Old North Church Historic Site. The 2026 Speaker Series is brought to you in part by HUB Town Tours. To register, please visit: https://www.oldnorth.com/events.

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