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BAY WINDOWS

Serving New England's LGBTQ Communities

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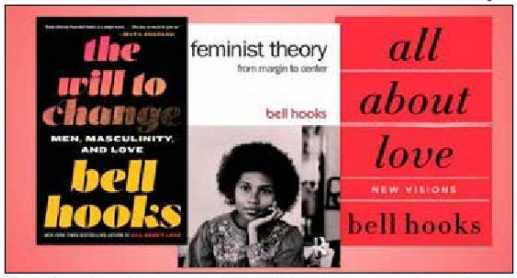
LGBTQ HISTORY MONTH

bell hooks: A Voice of Love, Activism and Intersectionality



A selection of bell hooks' works: "The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love," "Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center," and "All About Love."

Victoria A. Brownworth

When bell hooks died on December 15, 2021, it was a gut-punch. There was no time when bell hooks' extraordinary writing and feminist and lesbian theorizing was not part of the queer community. There was no time when the community imagined that hooks' voice would not always be in the forefront of our collective consciousness on intersection-

see **BELL HOOKS,** *page 4*

MA LGBTQ Leaders: Portraits of Pride

Photo via Portraits of Pride/Facebook.

In Boston Common and Sea Port Exhibits

Portraits of Pride is an LGBTQ Exhibition that presents two photography installations, shot by world-renowned photographer John Huet, of Boston's local LGBTQ leaders from a variety of backgrounds and industries.

The Boston Common installation features 22 portraits LGBTQ Leaders. Each portrait is printed 8 feet tall offering Bostonians and vis-

see **PORTRAITS,** *page 4*

DECISION 2022

MA LGBTQ Candidates On the Nov. 8th Ballot

Julian Cyr (D)
- Massachusetts State Senate
- Cape & Islands District

Maura Healey (D)
- Massachusetts Governor

Natalie Higgins (D)
- Massachusetts House of Representatives
- Worcester 4 District

Sam Montaño (D)
- Massachusetts House of Representatives
- Suffolk 15

Jack Patrick Lewis (D)
- Massachusetts House of Representatives
- 7th Middlesex

Sarah Peake (D)
- Massachusetts House of Representatives
- 4th Barnstable District

Adam Scanlon (D)
- Massachusetts House of Representatives
- 14tg Bristol Dustruct

Jeffrey Sossa-Paquette (R)
- U.S. House Massachusetts District 2

Science Gets Queer

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

It's a great time to love both queer families and STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). Not one but two queer scientists, both parents, won Nobel Prizes this year. Coincidentally, there has also been a recent surge in LGBTQ-inclusive children's books with STEM themes, which could help future Nobel laureates envision their dreams.

Carolyn Bertozzi, a professor at Stanford University, won this year's Nobel Prize in Chemistry on October 5. She shared the prize with Morten Meldal of the

Something Great by Jeanette Bradley book cover.

University of Copenhagen and

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 7*

MassEquality to Host Banned Book Fair & Drag Queen Story Hour

Submitted by MassEquality

MassEquality will host a Drag Queen Story Hour & Banned Book Fair on Saturday, October 22nd 2022 in Copley Square. The event will run from 12PM-3PM, during which time attendees will have the opportunity to purchase books from local bookstores, check out books and resources from the Boston Public Library, learn about resources for LGBTQ+ families and youth in Massachusetts, and of course, listen to a selection of stories theatrically read by featured drag queens.

This event comes in response to the spike in hateful attacks against drag queen story hours happening across the Commonwealth, and the rising volume of cries for LGBTQ+ inclusive and race-conscious books to be banned from school libraries.

Over the last couple of years, MassEquality has been monitoring and fighting back against violent and hateful attacks against drag queen story hours, and misinformed campaigns to have LGBTQ+ books

see **MASS EQUALITY,** *page 2*

"I can't tell you how many times I have heard that young queer kids used to do the Wonder Woman spin when they were closeted. Whether you're out and proud now or you're still living with a secret identity, you are a superhero in my eyes. Happy National Coming Out Day."

— Lynda Carter, aka "Wonder Woman".

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

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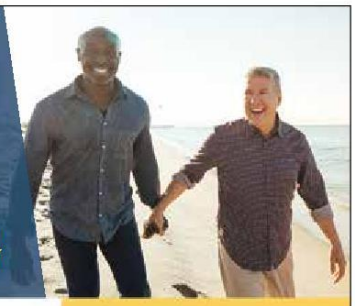

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Compass On The Bay, South Boston*
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Cornerstone at Hampton, Hampton, NH*
Cornerstone at Milford, Milford*
Farmington Station, Farmington CT*
Forestdale Park, Malden*
Goddard House, Brookline*
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Mass Equality

Continued from page 1

and curricula banned from our public schools. A loud minority of conservative folks believe they have the right to impose their misguided religious and cultural beliefs on the rest of us, and it has gotten out of hand. They claim to be concerned parents looking out for the best interest of their children, when in reality children are the real victims of their campaign against the LGBTQ+ community. They hide behind the argument of parental concern in a thinly veiled attempt to attack and erase trans and nonbinary people as well as other members of the LGBTQ+ community, and will continue to spread harm and violence given any opportunity.

"LGBTQ+ people have been under attack across the Commonwealth and across the nation," said MassEquality Executive Director, Tanya Neslusan. "It's important for people of all ages to understand that being a member of the LGBTQ Community isn't scary or bad, we're all just people. And it's especially important that children who are exploring their own identities or feeling different in any way to know that it's okay to be different and that you are special and loved for being who you are."

"You are not protecting children by banning LGBTQIA+ materials and shielding them from gay culture. You are hurting them! Inclusive materials are about nothing more than protecting LGBTQIA+ children and giving them a safe space; it ensures that they know they are normal, loved, and accepted." Eric Chassey/ Bianca Knight

MassEquality's Banned Book Fair & Drag Queen Story Hour is free to attend and open to the public. MassEquality invites families with children of all ages to join in this celebration of diversity and creative self-expression. We will have representatives from All She Wrote Books, Brookline Booksmith, Trident Booksellers Greater Boston PFlag, GLSEN and the Massachusetts Commission on LGBTQ Youth, children's games and entertainment and free books!

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Poltergeist or patriot? You decide.

These days it can be hard to tell the difference

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

Republican candidate Herschel Walker, during the Georgia US Senate debate on October 14, showed off an honorary deputy sheriff badge he had received, as if that made him a real law enforcement officer. Actor George Takei had the best response: "In fairness to Herschel Walker, I sometimes pull out my Star Fleet badge to get past security at Star Trek conferences."

It is October of an even-numbered year, which means an election is approaching in addition to Halloween. Both occasions inspire trickery; but Republicans denying the 2020 election results have me far more spooked than a child disguised as Daenerys Targaryen, Mother of Dragons.

Halloween derives from the ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, in which people dressed in costumes to ward off ghosts and ensure a successful harvest. From a modern perspective, that seems like a dubious approach to agriculture. On the other hand, a little whistling past the graveyard is harmless enough—unless, say, you're setting up a gallows on the east lawn of the Capitol to hang elected officials you've demonized.

Most of us realize that strange noises inside your walls are likelier to be from a raccoon than the ghost of an axe murderer that your real estate agent neglected to warn you about. You might reasonably be scared if you were alone in your room and saw someone next to you in the mirror. But there is a greater chance of aliens from space lurking among us than ghosts, and frankly they would make more reliable members of Congress than people who look at Democrats and see Satan-worshipping, cannibalistic pedophiles.

Imagine a Trump voter in a small boat a couple miles offshore on a moonlit night. It's a pleasant evening and she thinks of taking a swim. Then she remembers megalodons and the legendary Kraken, and decides to stay in the boat.

Oh, please. There is much greater risk from an otherwise friendly modern-day shark taking a test bite, or an orca inadvertently knocking the poor MAGA minion unconscious with a swat of a fin. It's better to have someone else along, because if worse comes to worst she only has to outswim her companion, not the monster. Never mind the fact that she is much more endangered by a microscopic coronavirus, which Republicans are less willing to be inoculated against.

A friend of mine from El Salvador once accompanied me on a nighttime visit to Rock Creek Church Cemetery, where many political figures are buried. The main gates were closed and padlocked, but the pedestrian gate was still open. My friend said that in his culture they were afraid of going to cemeteries at night. I told him not to worry, that it had been years since the last report of someone being grabbed from below ground by the undead. (I am very helpful in this way.) He was a lovely fellow and I was hoping he would cling to me for comfort. I did not, however, intend anything satanic, unlike what Christian mom Jamie Gooch of Texas warns will happen to anyone who watches Disney's "Hocus Pocus 2."

It quickly became evident that my friend was no more inclined to make love with me on the graves of Henry and Clover Adams or Alice Roosevelt Longworth than in any other place. Since then, author Gore Vidal was buried in the same graveyard. He once saw Henry Kissinger closely examining Auguste Rodin's sculpture The Gates of Hell, and quipped that Kissinger was apartment hunting.

One person's hell is another's heaven. We tend to be scared by the unfamiliar, or by people and things we've been taught to fear. The cult of know-nothingism exploits this impulse, causing occasional surges as at present with the increase in book banning. Personally, I am more scared of a weak and unprincipled politician like Kevin McCarthy becoming Speaker of the House.

Here are a few questions to ask people who appear susceptible to such manipulations: Are you aware that the banned books are a few clicks away on the mobile phones to which you and your teenagers are addicted? Do you think your kids will be less likely to go behind your back to read books that you've treated like dangerous pornography? And will they be likelier to take your advice after you've shown that you don't trust them with "All Boys Aren't Blue"?

In the long run, we can only prepare our children for the world, not protect them from it. We do that best by helping them develop informed minds and habits of cooperation. A spirit of wonder is more empowering than a culture of fear.

Richard J. Rosendall is a writer and activist at rrosendall@me.com.

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bell hooks

Continued from page 1

ality and queer theory and praxis.

Intersectionality has become a political and cultural buzzword recently, yet few have read the intersectional essays of hooks or Kimberlé Crenshaw, who invented that concept and wrote (and continues to write, in the case of Dr. Crenshaw) about it exhaustively and, as Audre Lorde would say, deliberately. Intersectionality describes and explores how race, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity and class might intersect with one another and overlap.

The extraordinary breadth of hooks' writing and the thematic structures of her books, essays, and poetry all build on each other. She writes so much of love, so compellingly of emotional and romantic commitment and what it means, that it was stunning when hooks revealed she spent the last two decades of her life unpartnered and celibate.

In an interview for Shondaland in 2017, hooks told Abigail Bereola, "I don't have a partner. I've been celibate for 17 years. I would love to have a partner, but I don't think my life is less meaningful. I always tell people my life is a pie and there's a slice of the pie that's missing, but there's so much pie left over—do I really want to spend my time looking at that empty piece and judging myself by that?"

In that same interview, hooks delves deeply into one of her pivotal topics: self love and what it means for women to love themselves and recognize that they are worthy of commitment and that they do not deserve violence or other oppressive acts in a relationship.

As hooks told ESSENCE magazine in another interview, "I think the revolution needs to be one of self-esteem because I feel we are all assaulted on all sides… I think Black people need to take self-esteem seriously."

In the era of white MAGA GOP grievance, the fear of losing the prioritization of whiteness and cis-het maleness has subsumed much of our political discourse, which makes hooks' work more crucial than ever and her recent death all the more painful a loss.

Born Gloria Jean Watkins on September 25, 1952, hooks began using her maternal great-grandmother's name as her pen name in 1976. She lowercased her name to signify that she wanted people to focus on her books, not "who I am," as she explained in a talk at Rollins College in 2013.

Over the four decades of her writing, hooks wrote continually about Black women, about feminism, about the oppressive nature of patriarchy, and about how Black men had embraced that even as they decried white imperialism. In her 1981 feminist classic, "Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism," hooks deconstructed a panoply of issues from slavery to the devaluation of Black women and Black womanhood.

She wrote declaratively that "No other group in America has so had their identity socialized out of existence as have Black women... When Black people are talked about the focus tends to be on Black men; and when women are talked about the focus tends to be on white women."

She wrote, "A devaluation of Black womanhood occurred as a result of the sexual exploitation of Black women during slavery that has not altered in the course of hundreds of years."

Later, in "Remembered Rapture: The Writer At Work," hooks expanded that discourse, noting, "No Black woman writer in this culture can write 'too much'. Indeed, no woman writer can write 'too much' … No woman has ever written enough."

True to her advice, hooks was always writing more and building on her previous ideas and theories. There is no disengaging of historical and cultural events in hooks' work. She sees everything through a prism of contexts that each impact each other—hence the violence of nationalism cannot be divorced from domestic violence. She could see these links so clearly and write about them with such clarity, precision, and accessibility, that the reader was left convinced and educated.

In a 1995 conversation with digital activist and lyricist John Perry Barlow, hooks said, "I have been thinking about the notion of perfect love as being without fear, and what that means for us in a world that's becoming increasingly xenophobic, tortured by fundamentalism and nationalism."

We are in that time now, where the MAGA GOP has combined fundamentalism and nationalism and added a soupcon of xenophobia. The prescience of hooks' readings of the Zeitgeist and the moment was a critical aspect of her oeuvre as a writer and theorist.

This was true even of her own identity. Though many people referred to hooks as a lesbian or gay, she preferred queer. Describing herself as "queer-pas-gay," hooks inserted the French word for not—"pas"—and said that she chose that term because being queer is "not who you're having sex with, but about being at odds with everything around it."

In an event at The New School on May 6, 2014 titled, "a conversation with bell hooks," the then-scholar-in-residence at Eugene Lang College at The New School for Liberal Arts spoke at length about this issue.

She said, "As the essence of queer, I think of Tim Dean's work [the British queer theorist] on being queer and queer not as being about who you're having sex with—that can be a dimension of it—but queer as being about the self that is at odds with everything around it, and it has to invent and create and find a place to speak and to thrive and to live."

The details of hooks' life helped build her perspective and her feminist and queer theory. She was born and died in Kentucky and often wrote about living in Appalachia (a region which is often associated with whiteness), but she lived most of her adult life elsewhere. She had several degrees: a BA from Stanford University, an MA from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, and a PhD from the University of California, Santa Cruz. She also worked across the country as a professor at the University of California, Santa Cruz, San Francisco State University, Yale, Oberlin College and City College of New York.

True to another of her sayings, "I will not have my life narrowed down. I will not bow down to somebody else's whim or to someone else's ignorance," hooks published prolifically, with over 30 books and dozens of chapters and essays in the books of others. Her publications included the iconic "Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center" (1984), "All About Love: New Visions" (2000), "Feminism is for everybody: passionate politics" (2000), "We Real Cool: Black Men and Masculinity" (2004), "Soul Sister: Women, Friendship, and Fulfillment" (2005) and "Writing Beyond Race: Living Theory and Practice" (2013). She also wrote several children's books, including "Homemade Love" (2002).

Among the issues hooks wrote about in her books was the confluence of health, mental well-being and racism. In the last decade of her life, struggling with the renal disease that ultimately killed her, she moved back to Kentucky. On her return to her birthplace, hooks compared her journey to that of author Wendell Berry. "Our trajectories are very similar," hooks told PBS, "because he went out to California, New York, the places that I too went, and then felt that urge, that call to home, that it's time to come back."

There are so many things to be said about hooks' life and work, so many visionary concepts she developed and nurtured and expanded upon. But at her core, hooks was always writing a paean to love. She wanted love to equilibrate the world, to mitigate violence, to assuage the pain of racism, misogyny, homophobia, classism.

In "Outlaw Culture: Resisting Representations," hooks wrote, "The moment we choose to love we begin to move against domination, against oppression. The moment we choose to love we begin to move towards freedom, to act in ways that liberate ourselves and others."

Victoria A. Brownworth is a Pulitzer Prize-nominated award-winning journalist whose work has appeared in the New York Times, the Los Angeles Times, the Philadelphia Inquirer, Baltimore Sun, DAME, the Advocate, and Curve among other publications. She is the Bay Area Reporter's television columnist. She was among the OUT 100 and is the author and editor of more than 20 books, including the Lambda Award- winning "Coming Out of Cancer: Writings from the Lesbian Cancer Epidemic," "Ordinary Mayhem: A Novel"; and "Too Queer: Essays from a Radical Life."

Portraits

Continued from page 1

itors a larger than life look at the leaders of the LGBTQ Community in Boston.

At 60 Seaport Boulevard Boston, WS Development presents a unique eye level installation of the portraits; offering viewers and patrons a close and intimate look at the people that are featured in the exhibition.

You can see the exhibition now through October 29.

Both installations are on view throughout the month of October in Commemoration of LGBTQ History Month. This one-of-a-kind exhibit honors the rich history of Boston's LGBTQ+ community and the many contributions the area's LGBTQ+ leaders have made to the advancement of LGBTQ+ rights in Massachusetts and beyond.

The exhibition showcases portraits of Massachusetts' top leaders in public service, entrepreneurship, business, law, and more, alongside a statement of what pride means to them.

More information at https://www.portraitsofprideboston.org

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or by email at
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or by phone at 617-782-8644.

VOTE EARLY BOSTON

Saturday, October 22 - Friday, November 4, 2022

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 22, - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 23 | 11 A.M. - 7 P.M.

BCYF Paris Street Community Center
112 Paris Street, East Boston, MA 02128
BCYF Quincy Community Center
885 Washington Street, Chinatown, MA 02111
Thelma D. Burns Building
575 Warren Street, Dorchester, MA 02121
Another Course to College Cafeteria
612 Metropolitan Avenue, Hyde Park, MA 02136
Margarita Muniz Academy
20 Child Street, Jamaica Plain, MA 02130
Dewitt Center
122 Dewitt Drive, Roxbury, MA 02120
Boston Public Library - Central Branch (Johnson Building)
700 Boylston Street, Back Bay, MA 02116
Jackson Mann School
500 Cambridge Street, Allston, MA 02134
Richard J. Murphy K-8 School Cafeteria
1 Worrell Street, Dorchester, MA 02122

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 25 | 12 - 8 P.M.

Saint Nectarios Greek Church (Banquet Hall)
39 Belgrade Avenue, Roslindale, MA 02131
BCYF Tobin Community Center (Lower Level)
1481 Tremont Street, Roxbury, MA 02120

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27 | 12 - 8 P.M.

Florian Hall
55 Hallet Street, Dorchester, MA 02122
The Institute of Contemporary Art Boston
25 Harbor Shore Drive, Boston, MA 02210

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, - SUNDAY, OCTOBER 30 | 11 A.M. - 7 P.M.

Harvard/Kent Elementary School Gymnasium
50 Bunker Hill Street, Charlestown, MA 02129
James F. Condon School Cafeteria
200 D Street, South Boston, MA 02127
BCYF Perkins Community Center Gymnasium
155 Talbot Avenue, Dorchester, MA 02124
Mildred Avenue K-8 School Gymnasium
5 Mildred Avenue, Mattapan, MA 02126
BCYF Roche Community Center Gymnasium
1716 Centre Street, West Roxbury, MA 02132
Fenway Park (Gate A)
4 Jersey Street, Fenway, MA 02215
BCYF Shelburne Community Center Gymnasium
2730 Washington Street, Roxbury, MA 02119
The Salvation Army Kroc Center
650 Dudley Street, Dorchester, MA 02125
Honan-Allston Branch Library (Community Room)
300 North Harvard Street, Allston, MA 02134

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1 | 12 - 8 P.M.

Saint Nectarios Greek Church (Banquet Hall)
39 Belgrade Avenue, Roslindale, MA 02131
BCYF Hyde Park Community Center
1179 River Street, Hyde Park, MA 02136

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3 | 12 - 8 P.M.

St. George Orthodox Church of Boston
55 Emmonsdale Road, West Roxbury, MA 02132
The Institute of Contemporary Art Boston
25 Harbor Shore Drive, Boston, MA 02210

BOSTON CITY HALL

WEEK 1 | OCTOBER 24 – 28
Monday, October 24 | 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Tuesday, October 25 | 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Wednesday, October 26 | 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursday, October 27 | 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Friday, October 28 | 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

WEEK 2 | OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 4
Monday, October 31 | 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Tuesday, November 1 | 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Wednesday, November 2 | 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Thursday, November 3 | 9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Friday, November 4 | 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.

boston.gov/ballot-dropboxes

CITY of BOSTON | Election

billy masters

Continued from page 1

I was just the victim of the ol' bait-and-switch. I went to see a film the US distributors called "Blessed Boys"—allegedly an LGBT film from Italy. My Italian is good and I'm gay, so it sounded like a match. It's my own fault that I didn't look up the name of this film in Italian. So, color me surprised when I got to the theatre and what came on the screen was "La Santa Piccola"—literally translated as "The Little Saint" or "The Miracle Child". Since the words "santa" and "piccola" end with an "a", the saint or child in question is a girl. No boys, no blessed, no nothing! In fact, there's barely a gay storyline. Still, I made the best of it, even if I continue to believe I was bamboozled—which I don't believe easily translates into Italian!

The **Anthony Rapp/Kevin Spacey** trial is continuing along, and several juicy revelations came out of the courtroom. I was shocked to hear the name **John Barrowman**. Turns out, he was with Rapp when he met Spacey. But there is a discrepancy in the two lads' memory. Rapp states the first time he went to Spacey's apartment was for a party (where the "incident" occurred); Barrowman states it was the first night they met, after going to a gay bar—and I feel obligated to remind you that Rapp was 14 and Barrowman was 19 (they went to the same high school). According to Johnny, Kevin was "flirty" and gave John a "gentle push" onto his bed. He said that something sexual "might" have happened—except Rapp was there. Stay tuned.

Everyone is paying tribute to **Angela Lansbury**, who died just five days short of her 97th birthday. But, fear not—you haven't seen the last of Angie! She'll be back on the big screen before the end of the year in "Glass Onion: A Knives Out Mystery". And she'll be in good company—also in the cast is the late **Stephen Sondheim**! We don't know if they appear together, but we do know they appear as themselves.

It bears noting that Lansbury was one of the first celebrities to join forces in the fight against AIDS. Way back in September of 1987, she headlined the first big AIDS benefit in Chicago which raised over $1 million—and, trust me, not a lot of stars were speaking out in the '80s! She also sent out Christmas cards for "Aids for AIDS", saying (in part), "This illness is robbing us of our friends and our futures. This disease knows no discrimination".

I have one Angela Lansbury story worth sharing. My friend **Rick McKay** was making his acclaimed documentary, "Broadway: The Golden Age, by the Legends Who Were There". When he would come to LA to interview people, he would stay with me. One day, he went to Angela Lansbury's house for an interview. He was a bit early and no one was home. He returned to the car to wait and, shortly thereafter, saw Angie pull into her driveway and get out of the car with a gorgeous array of roses. He waited a few minutes and then returned to her front door and rang the bell. Still no response. He rang again, and Lansbury appeared—in gardening gloves and holding pruning shears. "I'm sorry I didn't hear you—I was in the backyard cutting some flowers for our interview." And then she proceeded to arrange the roses he had previously seen her walk in with! Well, a big Broadway star needs props!

On last week's "Billy Masters LIVE", **Michael Musto** and I caught up on current events and discussed the disappointing box office numbers for "Bros". After our talk, it occurred to me—**Luke Macfarlane** was also **Michael Urie's** love interest in Hallmark's gay holiday flick, "Single All The Way". This begs the question—is Luke Macfarlane the only potential gay leading man who has a little bit of a name? We also chatted with author **James Gavin** about his fantastic biography about **George Michael**. You can pick up "George Michael—A Life" where fine books are sold. And if you buy the book, you'll read some juicy anecdotes which include yours truly!

Our next "Billy Masters LIVE" has a bit of a twist. I'll be chatting with singers **Nicolas King and Seth Sikes**, who are touring as "The New Belters" (look it up). As you know, our show typically airs live on Thursdays at 3PM Eastern. But this week, I have a scheduling conflict. I considered pre-taping the show...but then it wouldn't be "live". So on Tuesday, October 18th, we'll be live at 6PM Eastern. And if you miss it, we'll re-run it on Thursday at our usual time. BillyMasters.com/TV or on YouTube.com/BillyMastersTV. See you there!

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month. So **Jonathan Bennett** decided it was time to get a mammogram! This is not as far-fetched as you may think. One in every 100 breast cancer cases are diagnosed in men. Bennett's spouse, the lovely **Jaymes Vaughan**, had such a scare a few years ago. Since early detection is the best protection, Bennett thought an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. So he plopped a pound of pecs in a vise and had them checked out. You can see the process on BillyMasters.com. P.S. He's fine.

Madonna made some headlines last week via TikTok (which all the kids love). She was preparing to throw a pair of pink panties into the trash can. The caption on the screen said, "If I miss, I'm Gay!". And then she appeared to miss the trash can on purpose. Oh, that little minx. None of this was news to **Cassandra Peterson**, who always surfaces around this time of the year. Elvira's alter ego said, "I wasn't shocked. She has always painted herself as sexually fluid. Madonna actually hit on my girlfriend in the past!" I have so many questions—the current girlfriend? And how far in the past? Eh, I've already lost interest.

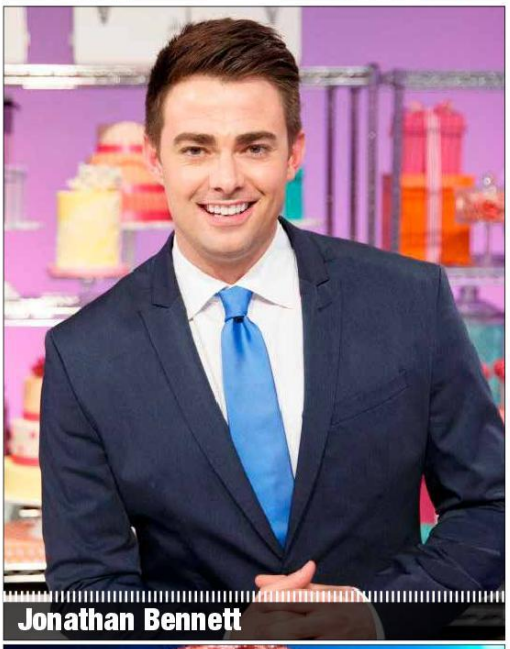
The pandemic did not slow down The Go-Go's. A documentary. A new single. A couple of books. A tour. Induction into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame. It's been a busy time for rockers who have twice announced retirement plans. But lead singer, **Belinda Carlisle**, has also enjoyed a successful solo career—far more prolific than the band, in fact. That she rarely tours in the US is due to her living abroad (to say nothing of her obligations as a Go-Go). Happily, she didn't forget her hometown and included Los Angeles as part of an upcoming mini-tour. On October 27th, Belinda will appear at the Saban Theater in Beverly Hills—one of the area's best concert venues. There is not a bad seat in the house. Belinda's opening act will be my bon ami, **Gabe Lopez** (who, in addition to being a performer, also produced Carlisle's last few efforts). Grab your tickets at WhereMusicMeetsTheSoul.com.

Gloria Estefan is celebrating a landmark. She's now in the company of people like **Cher, Diana Ross, Barbra Streisand, and even Queen Elizabeth II**. Yes, Gloria Estefan has her own Barbie doll! "Overjoyed is pretty much the word. I've gotten every award that you could possibly imagine. But somehow this was so incredibly special for me, maybe because I played with Barbie since I was a kid, a little girl, and she's an American icon!" It was important to Gloria that everything about her doll be perfect. "I actually sent them my thigh high boots and my jacket so that they could see the detail. That jewelry, the microphone, we made sure the hair was right, that she represented me in the way that was important to me. And I'm just beyond thrilled."

Those clever people at Mattel are always thinking. Just when you thought they'd done it all—complete with 2019's Wheelchair Barbie—they've unveiled a new line that fills an untapped market. We now have Barbies and Kens who wear hearing aids, have prosthetic limbs, and even suffer from vitiligo! According to a spokesperson, the Barbie sporting an over-the-ear hearing aid is the most requested of the variety.

Quando parlo di bambole (when I'm talking about dolls), it's definitely time to end yet another column. Why doesn't Mattel come out with a **Jada Pinkett Smith** doll? Then you've got a doll of color that has alopecia. A win/win. Just a thought. Before someone slaps me, check out www.BillyMasters.com—the site that won't cost you an arm or a leg. If you have a question, send it to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before Anthony Rapp uses a Barbie to show where Spacey touched him! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

John Barrowman



Jonathan Bennett

Gloria Estefan doll

Mombian

Continued from page 1

Barry Sharpless of Scripps Research for their work on "click chemistry," ways that molecules can snap together quickly and cleanly, leading to new ways of testing for infectious diseases and targeting tumors. Bertozzi is only the 59th woman to win a Nobel (versus more than 800 men), and she's also a lesbian mom raising three sons with her spouse. She's spoken out about the obstacles she's faced as both a lesbian and a woman and the need to create positive change throughout the scientific community.

Svante Pääbo, a Swedish geneticist who founded the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Germany, won this year's Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine on October 3 for his discoveries about the genomes of extinct hominins and human evolution. His work has implications for both medicine and for how we understand aspects of anthropology and society. Pääbo is also a bisexual dad who came out in his 2014 book, "Neanderthal Man: In Search of Lost Genomes."

It should not be surprising that people in the LGBTQ community have made significant contributions to STEM, as they have to every other human endeavor. While there's not necessarily anything "queer" about their work, our world would be poorer without it. The many STEM-themed, LGBTQ-inclusive children's books published this year thus come at a propitious time. Let's explore.

Picture Books

"Something Great," written and illustrated by Jeanette Bradley (Levine Querido) stars Quinn, a nonbinary child who has created Something Great in their workshop. It might look like a plastic half-gallon milk bottle on a string, but Quinn and a new friend find that it can swing, spin, lift, keep a beat, and more, gently showing simple physical principles. Quinn's sister and mother ask what it is "supposed" to be, but to Quinn, "It was just . . . itself. Something Great." Bradley's warm mixed-media illustrations add to the appeal of this story about STEM thinking, friendship, and believing in your creations.

"The Blanket Where Violet Sits," by Allan Wolf, illustrated by Lauren Tobia (Candlewick), stars a girl having a stargazing picnic with her two parents, one of ambiguous gender and the other with a small beard. In gentle rhymes, our perspective zooms out from the blanket where they sit to encompass the park, the city, and on to the whole universe, as Violet peers through her telescope, guided by a book about space. The perspective then slides back down to our planet and the park, where the parents tuck a now-sleepy Violet under her blanket. Absolutely lovely.

"Miguel's Community Garden," by JaNay Brown-Wood, illustrated by Samara Hardy (Peachtree), features a boy with two dads who wants sunflowers for his garden party. Each page gives one characteristic of a sunflower (e.g., it "has yellow petals"), then shows Miguel encountering a plant that doesn't quite match. Finally, he spots some sunflowers that fit the characteristics! He and his dads celebrate with a garden party. A cheerful book showing readers how to be careful observers.

Middle Grade Books

"Long Distance," by Whitney Gardner (Simon & Schuster), is a graphic novel with a big dose of humor. When 9-year-old Vega and her dads move to a new city, her dads enroll her in a summer camp to help her make friends. Vega soon discovers strange happenings there, however. She applies her astronomy skills to help solve the mystery, as other campers contribute their various STEM talents, but the camp's secret is something none of them could have predicted. Inset panels focus on various STEM concepts, but the book offers just as many lessons about friendship.

"The Trouble With Robots," by Michelle Mohrweis (Peachtree), is told from the alternating perspectives of two eighth-grade girls. Evelyn, who is autistic and bisexual (and has two moms), wants to lead the school robotics team to a championship but doesn't think her teammates have much to offer. Newcomer Allie has trouble controlling her anger, so the principal offers her a last chance to prove herself, in the robotics classroom. When the team's existence is threatened, however, the two must work together to save it. Allie also comes to realize she is asexual and/or aromantic; two secondary boy characters are also dating each other. Mohrweis, a STEM educator, weaves in information about robotics, gender bias in STEM, and more, but keeps it a character-driven story with some unexpected twists.

For older titles, including biographies of queer STEM icons as well as books about animals with diverse family structures and approaches to gender, visit my Database of LGBTQ Family Books and More and filter by the "STEM" tag (mombian.com/database).

For resources to make STEM classrooms more LGBTQ inclusive, visit Gender Inclusive Biology (genderinclusivebiology.com) and the Queer Mathematics Teacher (thequeermathematicsteacher.com).

These books and resources are welcome ways of helping the younger generation, LGBTQ and not, see LGBTQ people and those with LGBTQ parents among the STEM innovators of the future. They also happily show that books with LGBTQ characters don't need to be "about" their LGBTQ identities. Share them with the young people in your lives.

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, music, and more.

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