October 31 - November 13, 2024
50 cents at newsstands Vol. 40, No 8

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A Queer Parent's View on the Coming Election

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

I am writing this column shortly before the November election, an election that will have major ramifications for LGBTQ families. Let's look at where we are now and what's at stake.

Approximately 5 million children are being raised by an LGBTQ parent in the U.S., and more than 2.5 million LGBTQ adults are parenting children under the age of 18, according to a June report from UCLA's Williams Institute. Almost a third (32%) of LGBTQ adults report ever having a child (who may now be grown or living elsewhere). And if there's one thing that LGBTQ history has taught us, it's that we are resilient.

There have been great advances this year in parentage legislation to protect LGBTQ families, notably in Massachusetts and Michigan. On the flip side, there have also been more than 500 anti-LGBTQ state bills across the country. More than 340 have been defeated, which is heartening, but more than 150 have become law or are advancing, per

see **MOMBIAN,** *page 4*

Ending Trump's 'rough hour'

I will go down writing

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

Madness is the monster in the closet as Election Day approaches. For example, Donald Trump says Kamala Harris wants to ban cows and windows.

Washington Post columnist Dana Milbank, after pointing out that Trump said the same thing about Joe Biden in 2020, writes, "Four years later, there are still 87 million head of cattle on U.S. farms. And the multibillion-dollar U.S. window market is growing steadily. Yet it didn't occur to Trump to defenestrate these wacky claims."

Defenestration is execution by throwing people out windows. Someone once told me defenestration is a synonym for masturbation, which is true only if it is done with extreme carelessness.

This election could be a referendum on America's original sin, embodied in the hypocrisy of a slave owner declaring that "all men are created equal." The contrast between our creed and our conduct has driven 248 years of struggle.

We are days away from learning

see **ROSENDALL,** *page 4*

Black Male Votes Matter!

by Rev. Irene Monroe
contributing writer

The last time I saw a huge gathering of Black men was the Million Man March in 1995. They came to the nation's capitol to voice their concerns. Voting was one of them. Within a year of The March, over 1.5 million Black men registered to vote for the first time.

On Tuesday, October 29, a week before Election Day, a brotherhood of black men gathered again. BET Media Group premiered the "BET Black Men's Summit," and comedian, actor, and radio host D.L. Hughley hosted. It was streamed on BET+, BET.com, and across the BET social media platforms. Again, they came to voice their concerns on topics important to them. They addressed seven topics:

- Harris' record
- Protecting our community
- Confronting sexism
- State of the economy
- Economic opportunity
- Protecting Black women
- Call to action

Also, the brotherhood gathered

see **MONROE,** *page 5*

LGBTQ Guide to Election Night

Photo via Adobe.

By Lisa Keen
Keen News Service

For many people, the specter of November 8, 2016, looms large over election day November 5, 2024. The 2016 election day was poised to see the Democrat Hillary Clinton become the first woman president. Famously, it didn't happen. At 2:40 a.m. that Wednesday, major media began calling the race for Republican Donald Trump.

Four years later, it took until the

see **ELECTION,** *page 2*

Golden Rainbow TIMES
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The Drumbeat

by Judah Leblang | www.JudahLeblang.com
contributing writer

It's a drumbeat, a thrum, an electric current running through my mind and body on a daily basis. "It" is the news – an endless stream on phone (I'm addicted), TV, National Public Radio. The pundits, newscasters, commentators count down hours, days, weeks till election day, and whatever comes next. Like a rubbernecker at a five-car pileup, I can't look away, and can't stop thinking about the election and its aftermath.

see **LEBLANG,** *page 7*

"I'm a good singer, you know. I'm a good singer. I'm not a great singer, right. But, you know what? I'll take good."

- Cher during her induction speech to the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

more in Billy Masters on page 6!

Photo via Cher, Facebook.

Election

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Saturday after election day before two major news coalitions could report Democrat Joe Biden was the victor over Trump.

This year, it is hard to predict when a winner in the presidential race between Republican Trump and Democrat Kamala Harris might become apparent. As the New Republic magazine reported October 23, "A flood of GOP-aligned polls has been released for the precise purpose of influencing the polling averages, and thus the election forecasts, in Trump's favor." Looking at only well-known independent polling operations, several things seem clear at this point, just days before the election:

- In seven states polls are too close to predict the outcome: Georgia, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin, Nevada, and Arizona. They have a combined total of 93 Electoral votes (EVs). In 2020, Democratic nominee Joe Biden won six of the seven (all but North Carolina). Current polling in these states suggest Harris will take 50 EV, Trump 43.
- Two states, Nebraska and Maine, split their Electoral votes based on who wins each Congressional district. Polling at the moment suggests that, of the nine Electoral votes they have combined, five will go to Trump and four to Harris.
- In the other 41 states, where results seem largely predictable (due to each state's past voting records, current large polling margins, and known demographics), Harris has 222 EVs and Trump 214. Add in the likely splits from Nebraska and Maine, the numbers show Harris with a core 226, Trump with a core 219.

If swing state EVs are distributed based on who has the tiniest of margins, Harris appears poised to win 276 to Trump's 262. It takes 270 to win.

If neither candidate has a clear path to 270 at 10 p.m. EDT, it is likely that Trump will have accumulated 258 EVs to Harris' 196. Once the polls close in California, Washington, Oregon, and Idaho at 11 p.m. (8 p.m. PDT), Trump will pull in four Electoral votes from Idaho, and Harris will surge to the winning mark of 270 with the addition of the 74 Electoral votes of the three west coast states.

But no one should count on getting to bed at a decent hour November 5; there are just too many ifs, ands, and buts —numerous other scenarios that could play out, including the possibility that some states will not know their results until many hours or days after the polls close.

Plus, there are other races of interest to LGBTQ voters Tuesday night. Perhaps the most significant is lesbian U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin's very tight race to win re-election to a third term. Republicans have pummeled her state with television ads claiming that Baldwin is an extreme radical trying to "force girls to share locker rooms with biological men." Her opponent has been claiming Baldwin wants to "change Title IX to allow guys to play in girls' sports and guys to go into girls' locker rooms and bathrooms." They have even derided her for "being in bed with Wall Street," a thinly veiled reference to other attack ads noting that Baldwin's wealthy girlfriend is an investment advisor in Manhattan.

A gay Republican is running a long-shot campaign for the open U.S. Senate seat in New Jersey, but is not expected to win.

Fifteen openly LGBTQ people are running for U.S. House seats this year: ten incumbents and five challengers. Polls suggest four of those five newcomers could win, and, Democrats need a net gain of four new seats in order to take the majority in the House. Things are a little trickier in the Senate. There, Democrats would need to hang onto to Arizona, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin and pick up New Jersey and Michigan in order to keep the Senate majority.

Here's a brief synopsis of what to watch for and when on Election Night (all times EDT):

7:00 – 8:00 p.m.

Presidential race: Trump will likely end the hour with 82 Electoral votes, Harris 16. If Harris takes either Georgia or North Carolina, a big upset is in the works. Keep an eye on Virginia's 13 EVs. Polls indicate they are "likely" to go to Harris, but an upset there would seriously hamper Harris' prospects for the rest of the evening.

U.S. House: Incumbent Becca Balint of Vermont (at-large) is poised to win easily.

8:00 – 9:00 p.m.

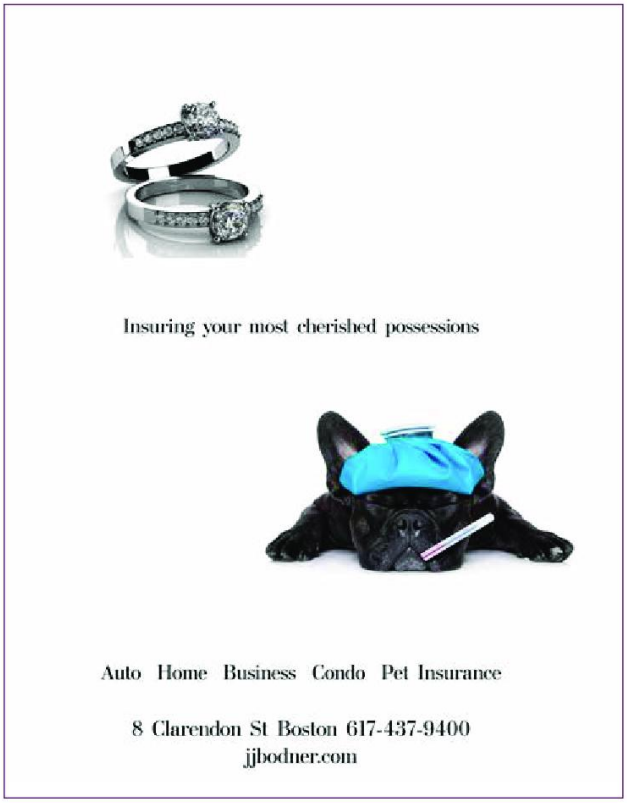
Presidential race: Michigan and Pennsylvania are the swing states to watch this hour. Harris needs both; if Trump wins either, he has a much stronger chance of getting to 270.

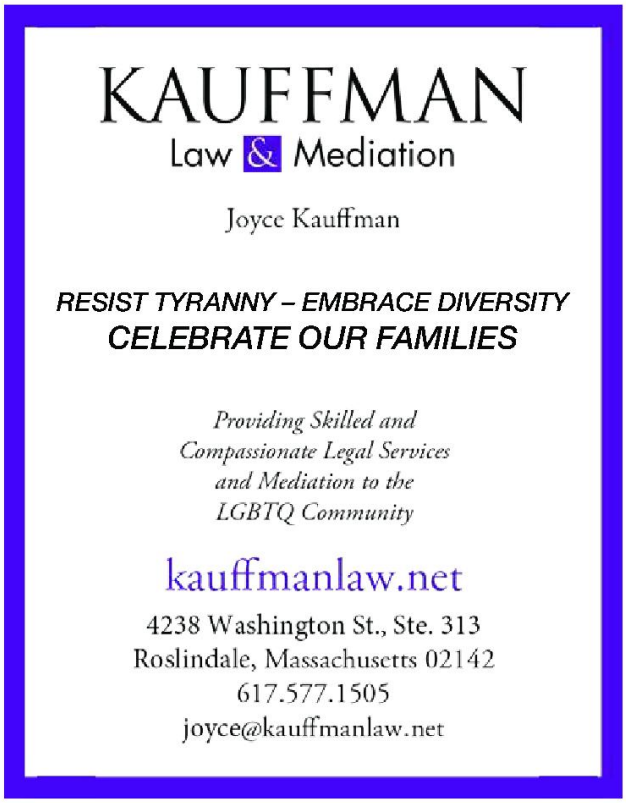
U.S. Senate: Openly gay hotelier Curtis Bashaw is running for the seat left open by Democratic Senator Robert Menendez of New Jersey. (Menendez was convicted in July for accepting bribes in return for helping Egypt and Qatar.) In addition to running red in a very blue state, Bashaw has not run for or held elective office before and his Democratic opponent has served two terms in the U.S. House.

9:00 – 10:00 p.m.

Presidential race: Wisconsin is a must-win for Harris. Arizona has been close but leaning toward Trump. If Harris has won Pennsylvania and Michigan in the previous hour, Wisconsin would position her to reach the magic mark of 270 Electoral votes to win when the west coast states are reported.

U.S. Senate: Lesbian U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin is in a very close race to win a third term. Her opponent, a Republican businessman, has





a brother whose political action committee has spent several million dollars in attack ads against Baldwin. One attack ad mentions that New York residents have donated $1.3 million to the Baldwin campaign; it did not mention that her opponent, Republican Eric Hovde, has a home and business in Orange County, California. And Hovde's brother, Steven, contributed at least $2 million to oppose Baldwin.

U.S. House: State Rep. Julie Johnson is leading the polls to win the Texas 32nd Congressional district seat. The Dallas Morning News endorsed her, and she could become the first openly LGBTQ member of Congress from the southern states.Former U.S. House Rep. Mondaire Jones is running for New York's 17th Congressional district seat. The polls show him even with Republican incumbent Michael Lawler.

10:00 – 11:00 p.m.

Presidential race: The swing state of Nevada, with six EVs, has been leaning toward Harris, though some polls have called it a toss up at this late point. National Public Radio reported this month that the Trump campaign has spent $17 million on campaign ads portraying Harris as in favor of transgender surgery for prison inmates and migrants. The ads are appearing in all seven swing states, including Nevada.

11:00-12:00 a.m.

Presidential race: If there is, as there was in 2020, a "red wave" of votes for Trump for most of the evening but he has reached only 263 Electoral votes, the "blue tsunami" will hit at 11 p.m. with the report of votes from California, Oregon, and Washington. All three will go for Harris, giving her their 74 EVs, for a total of 270.

U.S. House: California and Washington State each have at least one openly LGBTQ candidate for the U.S. House that is well positioned to win. In California, that is Will Rollins, making his second bid for the Congressional District 41 seat. He is up against Republican incumbent Ken Calvert, and the latest polls showed them tied. In Washington State, State Senator Emily Randall was the top vote getter in the all parties primary, including 23,000 more votes than the other top Democrat and 10,000 more than the second top vote getter, a Republican. The seat is seen as a solidly Democratic one.

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Make a voting plan!

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2024 INFORMATION FOR VOTERS BOOK
sec.state.ma.us/divisions/elections/research-and-statistics/info-for-voters-2024.htm

FIND YOUR POLLING LOCATION
sec.state.ma.us/WhereDoIVoteMA/WhereDoIVote

Mombian

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the ACLU—still far too many.

In another area, the U.S. Supreme Court Dobbs decision that ended the federal right to abortion has also threatened access to in vitro fertilization (IVF), a fertility technique used by both queer and non-queer families. The Alabama Supreme Court ruled earlier this year that frozen embryos should be considered "children," causing almost all IVF providers in the state to immediately halt services, fearful of liability. State legislation was quickly passed to provide legal immunity to IVF providers and patients—but some lawmakers and advocates remain concerned that it still does not offer sufficient protection, and some worry about similar threats to IVF in other states that have laws defining embryos and/or fetuses as people.

Many queer parents are therefore worried about access to IVF as well as to other reproductive and sexual health care, per a recent study from researchers at Clark University and Harvard Medical School; some queer parents, especially in abortion-hostile states, even said they had stopped trying to get pregnant again because of the risk of pregnancy complications in an environment where they may not be able to access care.

And even now, 10 states have religious exemption laws that permit medical professionals to decline to serve LGBTQ clients, per the Movement Advancement Project. Fourteen states also permit state-licensed child welfare agencies to refuse services to children and families, including LGBTQ people and same-sex couples, if doing so conflicts with their religious beliefs.

In many states, too, children's books that authentically reflect LGBTQ and other marginalized identities are being banned or restricted in public schools and libraries.

That's not a rosy picture—but it could get a lot worse. Based on things said by Donald Trump and those in his circle, such anti-LGBTQ moves would be encouraged, strengthened, and extended under a Trump presidency, either through direct presidential power, Trump-appointed judges, or simply a fertile climate for such policies. Among other things, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas's concurring opinion in Dobbs made it clear that some conservatives are also aiming to restrict or overturn the federal right to marriage equality.

And Project 2025, a policy initiative published by conservative think tank The Heritage Foundation, promotes a "biblically based" definition of marriage and family, asserting that family forms other than "a heterosexual, intact marriage" lead to "higher levels of instability" and poorer outcomes for children. This has been proven false by dozens of peer-reviewed studies over decades. Nevertheless, Project 2025 states that "For the sake of child well-being, [government] programs should affirm that children require and deserve both the love and nurturing of a mother and the play and protection of a father." If the policies in Project 2025 were implemented, LGBTQ people and families could face widespread legal discrimination in adoption and foster care, housing, employment, and more.

Many of the authors, editors, and contributors to Project 2025 have ties to the Trump campaign and/or his previous administration, per the New York Times. Trump himself has spread malicious lies about schools trying to "make" kids transgender, and has said he would stop all gender-affirming care for minors.

LGBTQ issues aside, I am also deeply concerned by things Donald Trump has said that indicate he would govern with little regard for the guardrails of our democracy.

Kamala Harris, on the other hand, has advocated for reproductive rights and LGBTQ rights, and was a champion of marriage equality. No, I do not agree with her on every issue. No candidate is perfect. But if Donald Trump wins, many more of us will be too busy fighting discrimination and defending our rights as LGBTQ people to have the time to tackle other issues of social justice and peace, at home or around the world. With Harris, we have a better chance to do that.

So vote. Vote early if you can. Urge your children to vote if they are old enough. Offer to take friends and neighbors to the polls (or arrange transportation for yourself, if needed). Vote all the way down your ballot—state and local elections are also vital. Talk with everyone you can about why this election matters to you. And visit pridetothepolls.com, a project of The Human Rights Campaign Foundation, for resources on voting, voter suppression and fraud, getting a free Lyft ride to the polls, and more. This election will shape the kind of country we are passing on to our children, and that's worth all the effort we can give it.

Dana Rudolph is the founder and publisher of Mombian (mombian.com), a two-time GLAAD Media Award-winning blog plus a searchable database of 1,600+ LGBTQ family books.

Rosendall

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whether our constitutional republic will endure or be ripped apart by people who object to being called racist while voting for a man who says, "We're like a garbage can for the rest of the world to dump the people they don't want."

Vice President Harris, the most qualified presidential nominee in living memory, is the only real alternative to a disastrous return to power by Trump. Those who say they don't know enough about her are hardly credible, considering they know enough about her opponent to disqualify him many times over.

Trump says "one rough hour" by police will end crime. He is not referring to his own crimes.

Soviet-era Russia made it a crime to possess a photo of anyone who had been purged and rendered a non-person. Hitler's Germany forced the exile of sexologist Magnus Hirschfeld, whose Institute for Sexual Science was looted and its books burned by Nazis in 1933.

What makes anyone think Trump, who admires Putin and echoes Hitler in calling minority populations vermin, would spare queer folk?

As for me, it is fruitless to try to erase the hundreds of commentaries I wrote that remain online, including my 2015 year-in-review in the Washington Blade titled "Year of the Arsonist" and illustrated with a photo of the Reichstag Fire. The arsonist, naturally, was Trump.

In the intervening years I have cursed and mocked him, sometimes simultaneously. I might as well throw myself on the mercy of the court.

Honestly, any fear I might have is overcome by indignation. Those commentators willing to kowtow endlessly to an ignorant thug are already with him.

The rest of us will go down writing.

Harris showed the right stuff with her strong, confident handling of a hostile interview with Bret Baier on Fox News. She did not let herself be rolled. Afterward, Baier said he "made a mistake" by running the wrong clip of Trump. Was it a mistake when he repeatedly talked over her? Harris didn't let him get away with erasing Trump's talk of an "enemy from within" and threat to use the military against domestic opponents.

Why be intimidated by a man who, as Harris points out, is unhinged and doesn't know what he's talking about? His abuses are too many to review here. He may hope to win by wearing us down.

A British friend advises me to keep a packed bag ready in case I find myself like Humphrey Bogart in Casablanca taking the last train out of Paris. I live in a town where every other person thinks they're the lead character, so the train will be awfully crowded.

Trump is deteriorating before our eyes; but he was never a prize. Facebook reminds me of something I posted in 2019: "Trump's ignorance and refusal to prepare are a continual source of embarrassment. He called Italian President Sergio Mattarella 'President Mozzarella.' He called American DefSec Mark Esper 'Mark Esperanto.' He calls the Asian countries Nepal and Bhutan 'Nipple' and 'Button.' He referred to the nonexistent African country Nambia. Next he'll invite General Tso to a summit meeting." (General Tso, it turned out, was too chicken to show up.)

Worse than stupidity are fascism (which has threatened America before) and disrespect for our fallen warriors. Neither can ever be accepted.

Trump has said so much beyond the pale that for people to continue supporting him shows they like him for his sociopathy rather than despite it.

Our Founders, in declaring independence from Great Britain, pledged "our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." Upholding honor, decency and sanity requires electing Kamala Harris.

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Monroe

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to dispel categorically the disinformation that Black men would not vote for V.P. Kamala Harris for president because she is a woman.

Jockeying for Black Male Votes

"This is the first time black men's votes are coveted," renowned Civil Rights attorney Ben Crump told the audience at The Summit. Both Republicans and Democrats are vying for their votes. But many black men contest that both political parties court them only during election time, with Democrats expecting overwhelming their votes. While it's true that black men are a vital voting bloc, they are not a monolith.

"My vote is transactional, " Hughley told the audience. However, Stanley Campbell of Albuquerque told The Washington Post what most Black men feel about the Democratic Party. "It has long been a saying among Black men and nonvoting Black communities that Democrats show up only when they want your vote,"

When early national polls revealed that Black male votes had increased for Donald Trump in this presidential race from his last run for the presidency, and Harris's numbers were lower in this race than Biden's run in 2020, the assumption was solely because of sexism. However, Democrats forgot that Black men had overwhelmingly voted for Hilary Clinton (81 percent) for president in 2016, albeit Hilary Clinton in 1996 called black boys "super-predators," and Bill Clinton's 1994 "Tough-on-Crime "Bill contributed to the mass incarceration of Black men. According to a Black Male Voter Study by BET Consumer Insights, 89% of Black men intend to vote in this election.

Since the Voting Rights Act in 1965, African Americans have been voting in large numbers, albeit we are still confronted with the various machinations of voter suppression on state and local levels. The strength of the Black male vote has been disenfranchised consistently, with mass incarceration as one of the reasons.

Confronting Sexism

Former President Obama's "tough talk" to Black men concerning their hesitancy to cast their ballot for Harris opened Pandora's Box.

"I'm speaking to men directly — part of it makes me think that, well, you just aren't feeling the idea of having a woman as president, and you're coming up with other alternatives and other reasons for that," Obama told a group of black men at a Pittsburgh campaign field office. "That lack of enthusiasm for Harris seems to be more pronounced with the brothers."

None of the black men at The Summit denied that sexism isn't an issue. "There are men who don't want to see a woman become president, especially a Black woman. However, that isn't an accurate representation of OUR entire community," Actor Michael Ealy shared with the audience and on X (formerly known as Twitter).

Several brothers clapped back, stating it's more complicated than simply sexist attitudes. Sexism easily masks and oversimplifies issues troubling them, like employment, providing for their families, child care, health care, mental health, policing, and mass incarceration, to name a few.

Because Black men are persistently police, the misperception many of them held for decades until recently concerning Harris was when she was a California prosecutor from 1990 to 2004.

Hughley falsely claimed Harris sent thousands of Black men to prison for marijuana offenses. Actually, during her tenure, there were 1,956 convictions for misdemeanor and felony marijuana offenses, where 45 were sent to state prison, many of whom weren't Black. Hughley gave both a public apology and an endorsement of Harris at the DNC.

The men at The Summit unanimously concurred that voting for Harris for president will not be a problem. "When you look at Kamala Harris, who's been a public servant basically her whole life, she is the most qualified candidate to run for president," Ealy stated.

Meeting the moment

Harris has traveled around the country talking to black men. She has sat for an interview with Charlamagne tha God on The Breakfast Club. Harris realized Black men's concerns had been neglected for too long. Harris's "Opportunity for Black Men" agenda aims to remedy the persistent challenges Black men face. This will be the first time any president has devised an agenda that speaks specifically to Black men. `

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billy masters

Last week, a friend was in an accident using my Los Angeles car—the favorite in my fleet of cars. He was OK, but the car was less fortunate. Eh, that's what insurance is for. But due to its age and the amount of damage, the insurance company wanted to total it. "It's old," said the adjuster. "It's not old," said my mechanic, "it's a classic." Both words roughly mean the same thing, but have different connotations. Am I old? Sure—but like my mangled car, I'm also a classic. I told the insurance guy I wasn't totaling it—she still has a whole lotta years left in her. If I have to pay for repairs out of pocket, so be it. They re-evaluated and decided to fix it. 'Cause it's a classic!

I returned to the glittering gay scene in South Beach for the Task Force's annual gala at the Miami Beach Convention Center. As you know, the National LGBTQ Task Force fights discrimination, anti-gay legislation, and most importantly, helps people get out and vote. The gala honors people who support their mission, and this year the honorees were my pals **Jim Tyrrell and Roger Thomson**, along with **Karamo** from "Queer Eye". **Jai Rodriguez**, a "QE" OG, hosted alongside the irrepressible **Ginger Minj**. **Athena Dion** set the tone with her pre-show set. Powerhouse vocalist **Frenchie Davis** sang, and then joined Jai and company for a rendition of "Seasons of Love" from "Rent" (Frenchie and Jai did the show together on Broadway). You can see that video on our website. SoBe royalty **Edison Farrow and David Sexton** made sure I met everyone. David even flew in his pal **Kimberley Locke** (more on her later).

I was seated next to the "Real Housewives of Miami". Full disclosure—I've never seen the show and didn't know who any of them were. But they were all lovely—in that vaguely Telemundo sort of way. I was particularly drawn to the diminutive **Adriana de Moura**. She's one of the most gorgeous people I've ever met, and has the most captivating eyes. During our chat, I was delighted to learn that we have something in common—a background as classical pianists. We may collaborate on something special in the near future.

The next day, many of the performers from the Task Force Gala came out for "Freedom Rally" in South Beach. While I was unable to attend, I did get a video of **Frenchie** and **Kimberley Locke** joining forces on "Band of Gold", which they first did during Hollywood Week on "American Idol" way back in 2003. After over 20 years, they sound (and look) as good as ever. Well, they're classics—as you can see from the video on BillyMasters.com.

While I was cavorting with the glitterati in SoBe, **Taylor Swift** was at nearby Hard Rock Stadium regaling the masses—well, the masses who could afford tickets! This would normally not be column-worthy, but spotted in the crowd were **Ivanka Trump** (Kushner) and her 13-year-old daughter, Arabella. While nary a female Trump can ever be found at any of Donald's rallies, the one he wants to sleep with went to see someone he loathes. Although, to be fair, he's also said nice things about Taylor. Once he said, "I think she's beautiful—very beautiful. I find her very beautiful." Then he said, "I was not a Taylor Swift fan...She's a very liberal person, she seems to always endorse a Democrat and she'll probably pay a price for it in the marketplace." Actually, I think Ivanka is the one who did the paying—and from her seat location, it was a pretty penny, to be sure.

Meanwhile, a legendary lady was treated rather poorly at another glittering affair. **Darlene Love**, a member of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame class of 2011, was invited to this year's Induction Ceremony—specifically because they were honoring her friends and collaborators **Dionne Warwick and Cher** (who she recorded with last year). All seemed fine at first. She and her husband were flown out, put up, etc. While it seemed they had rolled out the red carpet for her, Darlene was not actually allowed on the red carpet. And that was just the beginning. She was seated way back in the hall, she couldn't visit her friends backstage, and she was kept from the press. When she got home, Darlene went public with the snub saying, "It's disheartening to see how much the event has strayed from its roots. The music industry is about our contributions, not just the fanfare. Do better next time, Rock & Roll Hall of Fame." Within moments of her post going public, she got a call from the president of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, **Greg Harris**. He "personally apologized to me and all the other inductees who felt mistreated at Saturday's event...We ended the call with love, understanding, and no hard feelings." So, I guess I'm the only one who's still pissed off ! To quote **Bette Midler**, who inducted Darlene into the Rock Hall of Fame, "We hold a grudge".

Darlene famously appeared on Broadway in the musical "Hairspray" by **Marc Shaiman and Scott Wittman**. Another Shaiman/Wittman show is poised to take Broadway by storm. On March 11, 2025, the stage version of "Smash" will finally hit the Great White Way. The musical, based on the short-lived 2012 NBC series of the same name, has been in the making since the show wrapped. Rather than mount the **Marilyn Monroe** musical "Bombshell" (which is what the series was about), "Smash" will be a m lange of that show and the series drama. The announcement was made last week on **Marc Shaiman's** birthday—so happy bday, Marc. And congrats!!!

Elsewhere on Broadway, **Jim Parsons** just opened in a revival of "Our Town", alongside the estimable talents of (among other people), **Miss Katie Holmes**. During an interview, he was asked about the possibility of returning to the role of Sheldon Cooper. "As we sit here now, no, but also I would never say never to anything, because life just changes so much. You know, one of the things is that it was so special as what it was as what it is. And they call it lightning in a bottle for a reason, and you can be certain it wouldn't be that. And so why would we be doing it?" Perhaps one reason he's not so enthusiastic is he hasn't been away from the character for very long. Sure, "The Big Bang Theory" wrapped in 2019, but he was executive producer and narrator on the sitcom's prequel, "Young Sheldon", which just ended. An unexpected twist was ending that series by showing Sheldon and wife Amy (**Mayim Bialik**) in the future. "It just felt like a perfect little coda on the end of that entire beautiful experience."

There might be similar reasons to revisit the character coming up. For instance, his onscreen brother and sister-in-law just kicked off their own series—"George and Mandy's First Marriage". And that may not be the only spinoff. There is talk for **Kevin Sussman** (manager of the comic book store), **Lauren Lapkus** (his girlfriend) and **Brian Poehn** (geologist) to have their own spinoff at HBO, or Max, or whatever they're calling it these days.

Buzz is surrounding a return to the small screen of "White Collar". The show's creator **Jeff Eastin** revealed that a follow-up series, "White Collar Renaissance", is in the works. He's written the pilot script, titled "Masquerade" and, reportedly, **Matt Bomer, Tim DeKay and Tiffani Thiessen** are all onboard for this reboot. Stay tuned.

Our "Ask Billy" question comes from the world of real-life crime. Patrick in San Francisco writes, *"I know you wrote about that guy from Abercrombie in the past. I saw he was just arrested. What's going on?"*

Former A&F CEO **Mike Jeffries** was arrested and charged with 15 counts of prostitution and sex trafficking. Of course, most of these charges have been enumerated in the various documentaries about the case, but let me briefly recap. It's been alleged by many very attractive young men that they were pressed into various sexual activities at various locales with the promise of becoming A&F models. I wasn't surprised that Jeffries pled not guilty. I was surprised that he was placed under house arrest after posting a $10 million bail bond using his home as collateral. Until his next court hearing on December 12th, he is prohibited from contacting co-defendants, witnesses, or victims. Well, that's his whole address book. Who does that leave? Probably not his partner, **Matthew Smith**, who was arrested but not arraigned...yet (although the judge did rule that the British citizen not leave the country). Another person arrested but not yet arraigned was their "associate" **James Jacobson**, who allegedly helped "procure" the boys.

When most of these stories take place in Southern Florida, it's definitely time to end yet another column. Didn't I mention that Jeffries and Smith were arrested in West Palm Beach? Not even Palm Beach proper! Oh, the humanity. Of course, more classic Billy Masters content can be found on www.BillyMasters.com—the site that breaks no laws...only commandments. If you've got a question for me, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com and I promise to get back to you before I get my car back from the shop! Before we wrap up, a reminder—get out and vote. You know what I say—vote early, vote often. Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.

Photo via Karamo, Instagram.

Karamo Brown

Photo by IHeartRadioCA, via Wikimedia Commons.

Taylor Swift

Photo by iDominick, via Wikimedia Commons.

Jim Parsons

LeBlang

Continued from page 1

Many of us are suffering from a kind of collective, societal PTSD after living through the first -- and hopefully last -- Trump administration. But as a sixty-something Boomer with a good memory, Trump and the early years of Covid were simply the coup de grace of a long line of bad memories tied to awful/venal/unethical Republican leaders, going back to Nixon, Reagan, George H.W. Bush, his son, W, etc.

In 2016, Michelle Obama rallied Dems for Hillary with the line, "When they go low, we go high." Well, we know how that worked out; it didn't. But my personal wake-up call came earlier, back in 2000, when George W. Bush "won" Florida by 537 votes while thousands of voters were mistakenly thrown off the voter rolls and the US Supreme Court stopped the count in heavily-Democratic southeast Florida, which essentially gave the Presidency to George W Bush.

Four years later in 2004, John Kerry ran a weak campaign, scuttled by W's "swift boat" ads, which basically said that Kerry (a decorated Vietnam vet), hadn't earned his second purple heart, and that his military record was a sham. Meanwhile, W had avoided serving in Vietnam by joining the Texas National Guard through his father's connections, while Kerry had volunteered for military service. Before the election, the Boston Globe reported that W had basically gone AWOL, had disappeared for a year when he was supposed to be serving in the National Guard. The story was ignored by the national media, and Kerry was suddenly on the defensive. Republican operatives had taken Kerry's strength and turned it into a weakness.

Fast forward to 2016, and we had Hillary's emails and the Comey report, which turned out to be a big "nothingburger," but probably swayed some undecided voters in a very close election. And so we ended up with Trump, a direct line to the fascist Republican party we have today, a cult of personality focused on Donald, and a sizable number of people who could not, and still cannot accept Biden's victory and Trump's defeat in 2020.

Now, in this liminal space, I turn on NPR, scan my twitter feed, check election highlights on Daily Kos and other progressive websites. Early voting is happening, ballots roll in, the experts analyze the data and say the numbers look good, bad, indifferent.

For me, at 67, the years fly by, campaigns and elections merging one into another, years and decades collapsing like a house of cards. Didn't we just go through this last year? But no, almost four years have passed since our last presidential election and its messy aftermath, the uprising of January 6 and the storming of the Capitol. Today, I'm hunkered down in my small apartment, hoping that Harris wins, not only the popular vote but in the electoral college, too -- by a large enough margin that Congress or our corrupt Supreme Court won't be able to overturn a fair election.

Before 2000, I had an easy faith in our democracy. Today, I take nothing for granted. Instead, I watch, wait, and hope as the news flows around me, like an island in the stream.

Judah Leblang is a writer, teacher, and storyteller in Boston. He will be performing his new one-man show, "The Expiration Date," at Medford Public Library on Saturday November 9 at 3 PM.

Find out more at /medfordlibrary.org/event/the-expiration-date-a-one-man-show-with-judah-leblang/

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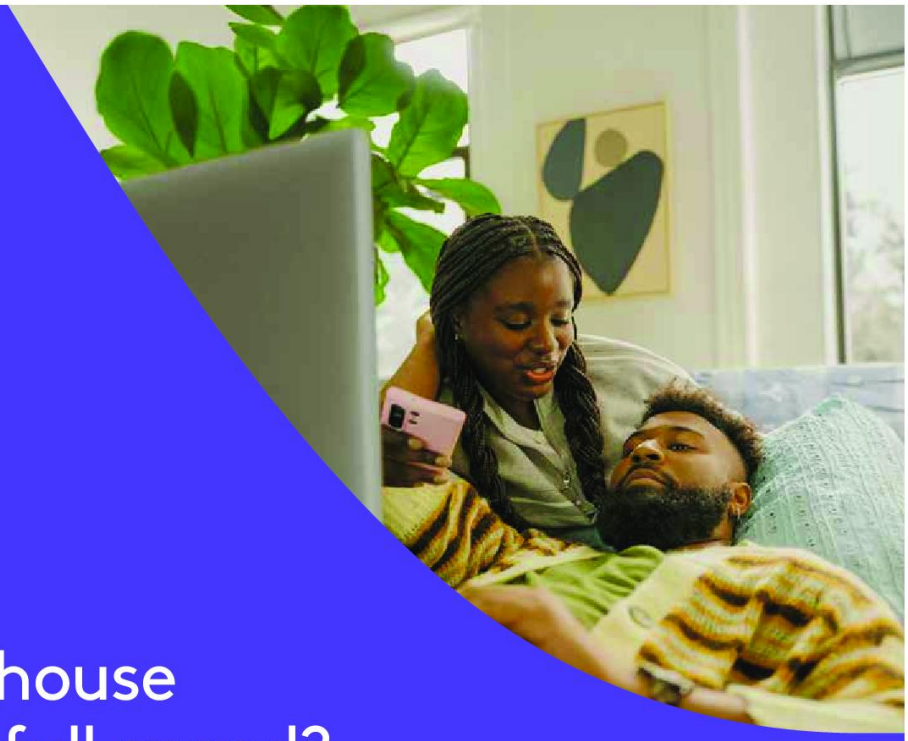

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