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LGBTQ+ PRIDE EDITION: PART 3

BOSTON PRIDE EVENTS



JUNE 30 - JULY 4

BOSTON URBAN PRIDE

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THURSDAY JUNE 30

NIGHT OF 1000 BEYONCES, CLUB CAFE

6pm, Club Café, 209 Columbus Ave., Boston

NEW ENGLAND PRIDE EVENTS



VERMONT

WHITE RIVER JUNCTION WRJ PRIDE FEST JULY 30

10am-6pm, Main Street Museum, White River Junction, VT
www.pridecentervt.org/events

BURLINGTON PRIDE SEPTEMBER 9-18

12n-5pm, Waterfront Park, 20 Lake St., Burlington, VT
www.pridecentervt.org/pride/

'This is the future' grassroots LGBTQ+ organizers reimagine Boston Pride



A family visiting from Paris, France takes in Boston's Pop-Up Pride. Parents Sophie Vasset (left) and Anne Cremieux (right) with their children Irene (left) and Axel (right). Photo by Lee Hill / GBH News.

By **Tori Bedford**
courtesy www.GBH.org

Since 1978, Judy Lippke hasn't missed a Pride festival in Boston, and this year is no different — though

Pride itself has changed. Lippke was among the throngs of people who gathered on Boston Common on Sunday for Pop-Up Pride.

see **BOSTON PRIDE**, page 10



Boston Pride returns to the community

by **Rev. Irene Monroe**
contributing writer

On June 12 was Boston Pop-Up Pride, to the surprise and joy of the throngs of revelers who gathered on Boston Common. When Boston Pride was dismantled last July, a coalition of LGBTQ+ community activists and

groups stepped up and got busy. They reimaged a new Boston Pride organization where its long-ignored marginalized groups — especially communities of

see **MONROE**, page 13

Abortion decision called 'full scale assault' on rights

By **Lisa Keen**
Keen News Service

In a ruling that one legal activist said will put LGBT rights "on the chopping block," the U.S. Supreme Court today (June 24) ruled 6 to 3 that the U.S. Constitution "does not prohibit" states from banning abortion.

A concurring opinion from Justice Clarence Thomas underscores that alarm for LGBT people. In it, Thomas urges the court to "reconsider all of this Court's substantive due process precedents, including *Griswold*, *Lawrence*, and *Obergefell*." *Lawrence* struck down state bans against same-sex sexual relations; *Obergefell* struck down state bans against marriage for same-sex couples; and *Griswold* struck down bans against couples using contraceptive.

"As Justice Thomas's concurrence makes clear, we must face the reality that the precedents that have transformed the place of LGBTQ people in our society are now in the crosshairs of this reactionary Court, which has no regard for precedent and no commitment to protecting civil liberties," said Shannon Minter, legal director for the National Center for Lesbian Rights. "We are on notice that our rights are on the chopping block, and



Photo by Gayatri Mahotra via Unsplash.

we should not waste a moment in mobilizing political support. If we cannot rely on the Supreme Court, we must turn to our local, state, and federal representatives to secure fundamental freedoms through legislation. We are witnessing a full-scale assault on the rights of women and LGBTQ people, and the moment to act is now."

The 6 to 3 decision came in *Dobbs v. Jackson*, a case in which an abortion clinic challenged a new law in Mississippi that banned abortion at any time after 15 weeks, unless there is a medical emergency or severe fetal ab-

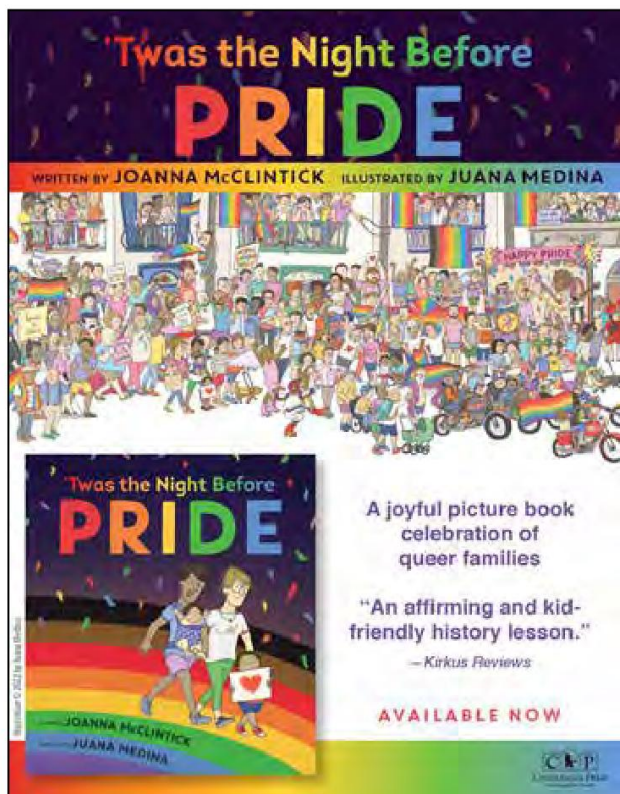
see **ABORTION**, page 12



"I'm not gay. I'm not straight. I don't know what I am. I love people...I refuse to be anything, really, except for open to it all."

—Keshha (without the dollar-sign) makes this revelation in her Happy Pride post.

more in Billy Masters on page 6!



WHO panel: Monkeypox not a global emergency 'at this stage'

By Maria Cheng
AP Medical Writer

LONDON (AP)—The World Health Organization said the escalating monkeypox outbreak in more than 50 countries should be closely monitored but does not warrant being declared a global health emergency.

In a statement Saturday, a WHO emergency committee said many aspects of the outbreak were “unusual” and acknowledged that monkeypox—which is endemic in some African countries—has been neglected for years.

“While a few members expressed differing views, the committee resolved by consensus to advise the WHO director-general that at this stage the outbreak should be determined to not constitute” a global health emergency, WHO said in a statement.

WHO nevertheless pointed to the “emergency nature” of the outbreak and said controlling its spread requires an “intense” response.

The committee said the outbreak should be “closely monitored and reviewed after a few weeks.” But it would recommend a re-assessment before then if certain new developments emerge—such as cases among sex workers; spread to other countries or within countries that have already had cases; increased severity of cases; or an increasing rate of spread.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus convened the emergency committee on Thursday after expressing concern about the epidemic of monkeypox in countries that haven’t previously reported the disease.

“What makes the current outbreak especially concerning is the rapid, continuing spread into new countries and regions and the risk of further, sustained transmission into vulnerable populations including people that are immunocompromised, pregnant women and children,” the WHO chief said.

Monkeypox has sickened people for decades in central and west Africa, but until last month, the disease had not been known to cause significant outbreaks in multiple countries at the same time and involving people with no travel links to the continent.

Declaring a global health emergency means that a health crisis is an “extraordinary” event requiring a globally-managed response and that a disease is at high risk of spilling across borders. WHO previously made similar declarations for diseases including COVID-19, Ebola in Congo and West Africa, Zika in Brazil and the ongoing effort to wipe out polio.

The emergency declaration mostly serves as a plea to draw more global resources and attention to an outbreak. Past announcements have had mixed impact, given that WHO is largely

powerless when trying to convince countries to act.

WHO said this week it has confirmed more than 3,200 monkeypox infections in about 40 countries that haven’t previously reported the disease. The vast majority of cases are in men who are gay, bisexual or have sex with other men and more than 80% of the cases are in Europe.

A leading WHO adviser said last month the spike in cases in Europe was likely tied to sexual activity by men at two raves in Spain and Belgium, speculating that its appearance in the gay and bisexual community was a “random event.” British officials have said most cases in the U.K. involve men who reported having sex with other men in venues such as saunas and sex clubs.

Scientists warn that anyone in close, physical contact with someone infected with monkeypox or their clothing or bedsheet is at risk of catching the disease, regardless of their sexual orientation.

People with monkeypox often experience symptoms like fever, body aches and a rash; most recover within weeks without needing medical care.

Monkeypox in Africa mostly affects people who come into contact with infected wild animals, like rodents or primates. There has been about 1,500 reported cases of monkeypox, including 70 deaths, in Congo, Cameroon and the Central African Republic.

To date, scientists haven’t found any mutations in the monkeypox virus that suggest it’s more transmissible or lethal, although the number of changes detected show the virus has likely been spreading undetected for years.

The version of the disease transmitting beyond Africa typically has a fatality rate of less than 1%, while the version seen in Africa can kill up to 10% of people affected.

WHO is also creating a vaccine-sharing mechanism for monkeypox, which could see vaccines go to rich countries like Britain, which currently has the biggest outbreak beyond Africa.

Some experts warned that could entrench the deep inequities seen between rich and poor countries during the coronavirus pandemic.

“France, Germany, the U.S. and U.K. already have a lot of resources and plenty of vaccines to deal with this and they don’t need vaccines from WHO,” said Dr. Irwin Redlener, an expert in disaster preparedness and response at Columbia University.

“What we should be doing is trying to help the countries in Africa where monkeypox has been endemic and largely neglected,” he said. “Monkeypox is not COVID, but our attention should not be so distorted that it only becomes a problem when it is seen in rich countries.”



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“Reimagining the World” Through Drag

An Interview with Lil Miss Hot Mess

by Dana Rudolph | drudolph@mombian.com
contributing writer

Politicians in Florida and Texas have recently proposed banning minors from drag performances, including storytimes for children. There have been demonstrations by white supremacists at drag storytimes in California and North Carolina. Drag queen and children’s book author Lil Miss Hot Mess has been a leading voice opposing those actions, and thinks kids and drag have a natural rapport.

“There are so many cultural affinities between kids and drag queens,” she said in an interview. “We’re both encouraged to explore and expand our imaginations, to tap into our creativity, to use play as something that’s not only fun but also a learning opportunity. Drag queens get to play dress-up for a living.”

Hot Mess, who has performed on Saturday Night Live (among other venues) and is also an assistant professor at the University of Arizona, serves on the board of Drag Queen Story Hour (DQSH), a nonprofit network that organizes readings for children at libraries, schools, and bookstores. She has been doing drag storytimes since 2016, the year after DQSH formed.

“Seeing kids’ reactions to drag and their interpretations of it is so incredible,” she observed. When kids come dressed up to DQSH events, “Sometimes I don’t know if it’s their version of drag, if it’s a leftover Halloween costume, if it’s their Disney princess look. There is something powerful about that transformation ... about having the audacity to be creative and public.”

Even at home, she said, “There are ways parents can use drag as a tool to invite creativity and play with their own children,” such as sometimes changing “dress-up time into drag time” or encouraging kids “to express themselves artistically as performers, as visual artists, musicians, or whatever interest they have.”

Her picture books, “The Hips on the Drag Queen



LMHM - credit: Deniz Durmus / Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County



LMHM - credit: Tammy Orr Wyant / Museum of Contemporary Art Tucson.

Go Swish, Swish, Swish,” and “If You’re a Drag Queen and You Know It” (Running Press), further invite kids “into the action” of drag. She explained, “There is a long history of drag performers making parodies of songs, so this felt like an age-appropriate way to do that. I also wanted kids to see what it feels like to shimmy their shoulders or push their hips or shout ‘Yaas, queen!’ because even if that’s not who they are, I think another part of drag is about stepping outside of your comfort zone and being willing to try something new to better get at who you are, inside and outside.”

Although that may seem like a positive lesson, Senator Marco Rubio (R-FL) last month specifically targeted Hot Mess and her first book in a letter to the Secretary of the Air Force, successfully urging him to cancel a scheduled DQSH reading for Air Force families and repeating myths that the event would include “explicitly sexualized” performers.

“I didn’t expect this intensification and level of hatred and violence to be so profound lately,” Hot Mess said. Yet even though she’s “horrified” that “words like ‘groomer’ are becoming more mainstream in conservative discourse as ways to try to discredit all LGBTQ people,” she noted, “That’s the kind of language that’s been thrown around at us and our program for years now. I wish that more mainstream LGBT groups and progressive groups had been taking that seriously all along.”

The current attacks, she said, are “rooted in the same old homophobia, transphobia, racism, sexism, etc.,” with the politicians “targeting a group to deflect attention from themselves” and from their inaction on matters like gun violence.

She views the attacks as a “war on imagination,” explaining, “They want us to be afraid, they want us to not be able to imagine possibilities beyond what they’re offering us. I think one of the great potentials—and to them one of the threats—is that drag offers us a way of reimagining the world to be a more bright and beautiful place.”

“I like to remind them that we’re doing this in age-appropriate ways, we get trained by librarians and educators, and we think deeply about how to translate this traditional art form of drag into things that will be not only appropriate but also educational and entertaining for children,” she explained.

She added that DQSH embodies many of the same themes and values already promoted in children’s literature, “like expressing yourself, finding your inner voice, standing up for what you believe in and for your friends, standing up against bullies, and doing things to make the world around you a better place.”

To help counter the attacks, the biggest thing people can do is to financially support programs like DQSH, she said. They can also work with local libraries and schools to create demand for such events. To minimize potential opposition, she suggests “relationship building and knowing who your allies are,” so that supporters will likely outnumber any protesters. Additionally, “Having conversations with families about the value of Story Hour, about the history and herstory of drag and the ways in which drag performers have been and are parts of communities, the ways they can position drag performers as role models for children, all helps to set the stage.”

She admitted, “We’re in a moment where the Right is trying to claw back the rights and freedoms that we’ve achieved in the past several decades through multiple political struggles, and it’s scary.” At the same time, she asserted, “I’m optimistic that if we keep holding our heads up high, if we keep organizing like our lives depend on it, and if we keep creating joy and fabulousness, that we can truly build the more just world we all want to live in.”

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

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billy masters

Continued from page 1

Here's a Pride Month story I somehow missed. The UK had a special 50 pence coin minted to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Pride (the first UK Pride march took place in London in 1972). Not only do they have a coin, they have a special collection of Pride stamps issued by the Royal Mail, which depicts members of the leather community, drag queens, and same-sex couples. If people only still wrote letters...

Sexy singer **Darren Hayes** (formerly of "Savage Garden") posted a Pride photo on Instagram which was banned. The photo in question featured Hayes fully dressed, lounging on his bed, with a naked man laying face down on his crotch. You know what they say—location, location, location. While somewhat risqué, it should be noted no private parts were shown nor actions implied. And yet, Instagram felt he was "soliciting sex". Either way, you can see the original photo on BillyMasters.com.

Hot on the heels of being snubbed by the Tony Awards, **Beanie Feldstein** announced her engagement to **Bonnie Chance Roberts**. She shared a photo of Bonnie getting down on one knee to propose. No wedding date has been announced, although her schedule is wide open after September 25th...if not before.

Winning a Tony Award doesn't guarantee anything. The revival of "Company" won more Tonys than any other musical this season—including best director and featured actor and actress. But it's closing on July 31st—likely due to the typical summer dip in box office, to say nothing of their large cast. While that date could be adjusted if the numbers go up, the production can look forward to a national tour next year—likely recast from top to bottom.

I suspect Ms. LuPone will be happy to get out of that theatre after July 1st. Why? Because the Broadway League has announced that's when they are lifting the audience mask mandate. Not everyone is happy with this decision. Actors Equity (the union covering Broadway performers) says that the decision was made "unilaterally, without input". However, the League claims that it is "entirely consistent with our fully negotiated safety protocols"—meaning they can do whatever they want. Just because the League says masks are not required, that doesn't mean all producers will fall in line. "American Buffalo" has already announced that they will require audiences to be fully masked throughout the run. Since it closes on July 10th, it's probably much ado about nothing.

Combining Pride Month and Broadway, we have a special "Billy Masters LIVE". I've been a fan of transgender actress and activist **Alexandra Billings** since her early days in Chicago. Of course, the Windy City wasn't big enough for Billings, who made her way to Broadway, Hollywood, and everywhere in between. She recounts tales of her extraordinary life and career in the memoir "This Time for Me"—which is as engaging and titillating as the lady herself. Billy and Billings will sit down for a tête-à-tête Thursday, June 30th at 3PM Eastern / Noon Pacific. As usual, you can watch "Billy Masters LIVE" on our YouTube channel, Billy Masters TV, or on BillyMasters.com/TV. While you're there, subscribe. After all, it's free!

With Fourth of July weekend imminent, Billy will be heading to Provincetown for a bacchanal of boys and booze. And let's throw a bit of Broadway into the mix, since some fantastic performers are heading to our little patch of paradise precipitously perched on the crest of Cape Cod. Here's a glimpse at the months ahead.

The veritable Crown & Anchor has gone through a transition. The largest venue in town recently changed hands. Happily, the entertainment lineup remains as fantastic as ever—and perhaps slightly better. For years, **Ryan Landry's** legendary "Showgirls" was a staple for The Crown. A squabble with management meant Landry has been nomadic for a handful of years. Happily, he has returned to the fold and the show returns to its Monday night perch. This past week, both **Parker Posey** and **Jesse Tyler Ferguson** showed up to enjoy such Ptown staples as **Thirsty Burlington** and **Randy Roberts**. Photos and

videos can be found on BillyMasters.com.

Thirsty's tribute to **Cher** will be at The Crown all summer. So will **Varla Jean Merman's** new show, "Ready to Blow". There's so much going on at The Crown, you should check out their website, OnlyAtTheCrown.com.

The Ptown Art House under the aegis of **Mark Cortale** is back with an extraordinarily diverse roster of stars. From Broadway babies, to devilish drag queens and everything in between, the Art House has something for everyone. You can never go wrong with resident comedian, the outrageous **Judy Gold**. Sprinkled throughout the summer are **Faith Prince** and **Jason Graae** (forever proving that they are not the same person), **Ginger Minj** (ditto), **Melissa Errico**, **Liz and Ann Hampton Callaway**, **Nicolas King**, and **Steven Brinberg** as Simply Barbra! And, what would a summer be without the beloved **Marilyn Maye**, who returns for her 12th season at the end of August.

The Art House also hosts **Seth Rudetsky's** wildly popular evenings. This summer, he hosts such greats as **Audra McDonald**, **Rachel Bay Jones**, **Lillias White**, **Stephanie J. Block**, **Victoria Clark**, **Donna McKechnie**, and even **Chita Rivera**. Some of those evenings are too big for the confines of the Art House and will be held at Town Hall. Others at that larger venue include **Bianca Del Rio** and even **The Indigo Girls!** Check out PtownArtHouse.com.

The Pilgrim House has quite a lineup, led by the rambunctious **Miss Richfield 1981**. In hot pursuit are **Miss Conception**, **Latrice Royale**, **Ada Vox**, and the legendary **Sharon McNight**. Speaking of legendary, **Coco Peru** will be there at the end of August for her (alleged) final Ptown performances. Grab your tix at PilgrimHousePtown.com.

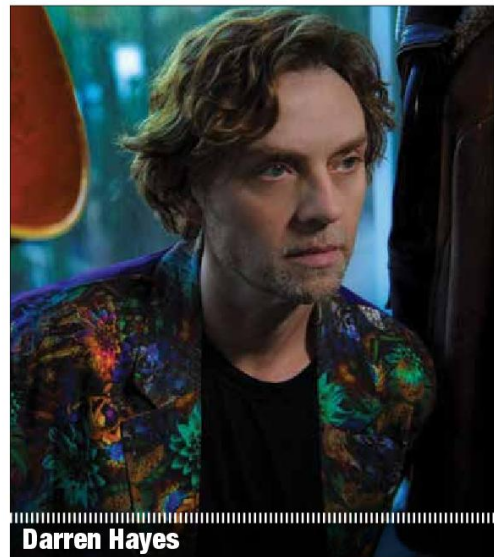
Some of my favorite people are playing the Post Office Café and Cabaret. You can enjoy the antics of the **Anita Cocktail Variety Show** all season long. My darling **Randy Roberts** returns after taking a year off. Also on the schedule are **Edie**, **Paige Turner**, **Seth Sikes**, and the fantastic **Debby Holiday**, who returns with her tribute to **Tina Turner**. Dates and deets can be found at PostOfficeCafe.net.

I wouldn't think I'd have to say this but, for the love of God, stop sending dick pics to **Eric Dane!** The Great Dane was on **Andy Cohen** (his show, not him personally) discussing his role on "Euphoria" when he made the revelation. "I get dick pics. I think that guys now assume that I'm going the other way, which is fine. I've seen a lot of ugly penises. I've seen a lot of pretty ones." Speaking of dick pics, I'll post Dane's dick from "Euphoria"...even though it's a prosthetic. Still, it's on BillyMasters.com.

This leads to our "Ask Billy" question from Tom in Maine: "I just saw 'Good Luck to You, Leo Grande' and loved it. What do you know about **Daryl McCormack**? He's got it all — and you get to see all!"

The sexy 29-year-old actor hails from Ireland. He has an Irish mother and an African-American father (from the exotic locale of Baltimore). Daryl is the product of a California tryst. As to Daryl himself, he's cagey about his romantic life—only saying he is not in a relationship. In the flick, Daryl plays a hooker Emma hires to experience her first orgasm—and experience it she does...repeatedly! And here's a fun fact—rather than hire an intimacy coach for their love scenes, Daryl and Emma Thompson choreographed the sex themselves. Clearly they were comfortable around each other—comfortable enough for Daryl to show everything he's got, which is significant. If you're into that sort of thing, head over to BillyMasters.com—or watch the flick on Hulu.

When Leo is extra Grande, it's definitely time to end yet another column. While I'm causing some fireworks of my own in Ptown, you can check out www.BillyMasters.com—the site that provides more bang for your buck. If you have a question, send it along to Billy@BillyMasters.com, and I promise to get back to you before someone tells Mike Pence that the UK's Pride currency has nothing to do with him! Until next time, remember, one man's filth is another man's bible.



Darren Hayes



Judy Gold



Daryl McCormack



The quickening of American fascism Radical right abortion ruling is the real devil's spawn

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

A dark time for America was ushered in by the Supreme Court the week of the summer solstice. Minutes after Roe v. Wade was overturned, former acting Solicitor General Neal Katyal called it "as devastating a ruling as can be imagined."

The theft of women's bodily autonomy on 6/24 will scar the calendar like 9/11.

Every generation of activists must learn to channel rage productively; but as the ruling sank in, rage threatened to devour many of us.

In some states, rape victims will have to carry their rapists' babies to term. Girls impregnated by their fathers will have to bear their siblings. Women who suffer miscarriages will be treated as murder suspects. Fertility treatments will be banned. Menstrual periods will be surveilled. On the very day of a states' rights ruling, Mike Pence endorsed a nationwide ban. The previous day's gun ruling raised fresh prospects of MAGA fanatics shooting up clinics in blue states.

A few years ago, skeptics mocked warnings of a dystopian nightmare like the one portrayed in Margaret Atwoods The Handmaid's Tale. Are they laughing now?

Religious bullies appear bent on plunging us into horrors befitting a Hieronymus Bosch painting. The attendant fear and violence threaten civic cohesion.

The ruling penned by Justice Samuel Alito, awful enough by itself, raised alarms about what other rights were in the Court's crosshairs. Justice Clarence Thomas suggested in a concurring opinion that all rights stemming from substantive due process should be reversed, including contraception, gay sex, and marriage equality. He did not mention Loving v. Virginia; but why should his interracial marriage not succumb to the purge he fosters, just as Robespierre's turn came at the guillotine?

Advocates of forced birth point out that privacy is not mentioned in the Constitution. Neither, as it happens, is the right to marry. Nor is Alito's claim that unenumerated rights must be "deeply rooted in this Nation's history and tradition," a newly minted test that (surprise!) privileges white men. But liberty is mentioned. Due process is mentioned. Equal protection is mentioned.

Alito's tendentious history cannot justify abortion bans starting at conception, even if our liberties

were circumscribed by the views of 18th century men awash in sexism and slavery. For centuries the dividing line was the moment of quickening, when the mother first felt her baby move in her womb, around sixteen to twenty weeks.

My sisters' rights are not legitimately changed by a stolen court's overreach, any more than were mine prior to Lawrence v. Texas depending on which state I made love in. Whether Obergefell stays or goes, my spiritual bond with my fiancé can never be broken by official denial and scorn.

The high court is packed with a radically unrepresentative majority that violates its own stated principles from one day to the next as it strives to justify desired outcomes. They are authoritarians, not philosophers. Their operative principle is the raw pursuit of power.

But power does not belong exclusively to this Court surrounded by riot fencing. The right to vote is a hard-won franchise too many fail to exercise. That must now change.

An abortion care underground is forming, even as fighters for women's equality prepare to battle resur-

gent criminalization in courts and statehouses. Until now, Democrats were hamstringed by over-caution. At long last we may be getting our fight on.

"This is not over," said Vice President Kamala Harris not eighteen months after becoming the first woman in that office. New York's first female governor, Kathy Hochul, spoke similarly. Older women are telling of harrowing efforts in their youth to obtain legally denied healthcare. Meanwhile, people who cried "My body, my choice" in rejecting masks and vaccines during a pandemic vow to hunt down women and their helpers for invoking the same principle.

The truth is that unlike airborne viruses, abortion is not catching. But the love of freedom is.

History haunts us. If you visit author F. Scott Fitzgerald's grave in the old Saint Mary's churchyard in Rockville, Maryland, you will find nearby a grave stone from 1695. That was a few years after the Salem witch trials that drew inspiration from British jurist Sir Matthew Hale, a proponent of persecution whom Alito cites without embarrassment or shame.

Carved above Fitzgerald's grave is the last line of The Great Gatsby, which has new resonance as the call of freedom summons us to risk our own once again: "So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past."

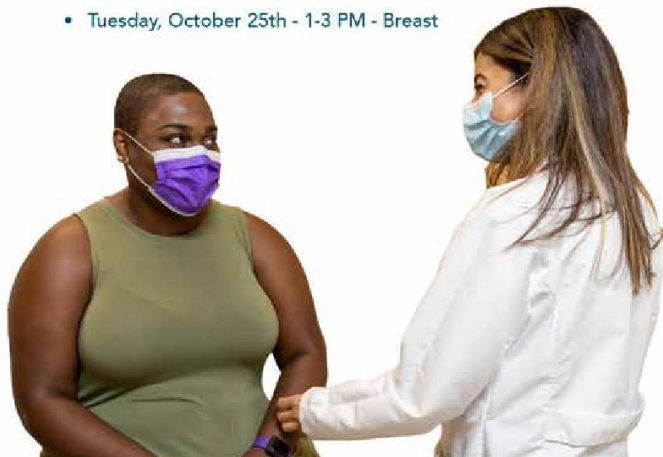
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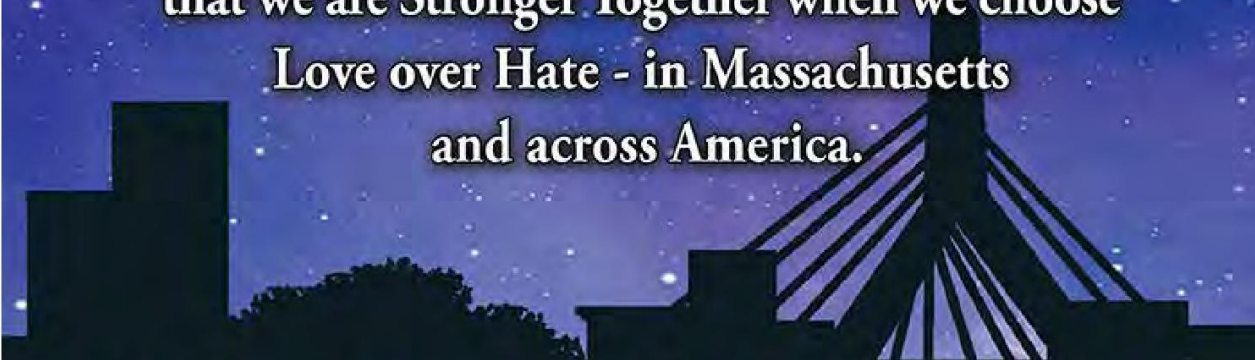
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Bending Toward Justice—Or Not?

by Judah Leblang | www.JudahLeblang.com
contributing writer

In the space of 35 years, since I came out in the mid-1980s, nervously tiptoeing out of the closet, life has changed for me and other LGBT people in dramatic ways. In just one or two generations, the arc of the moral universe, (to paraphrase Martin Luther King), has bent toward justice. In some ways, the pace has been breathtaking, the basic rights the younger generations take for granted now were not in evidence in the 1980s and '90s.

I came out in Columbus, Ohio, a conservative white-bread city that is somewhat of a gay mecca in the Midwest today. In 1985, protesters lined the streets, shouting at the hundreds (rather than thousands or tens of thousands of marchers at today's Pride Festivals), threatening gays and lesbians with hellfire and damnation.

In '85, I was a teacher at the Ohio School for the Deaf on the city's north side. I'd been at the deaf school for five years, but it wasn't until my fifth and final year that I took the risk of going to a gay men's support group that met at the Paulist Center near Ohio State University. (I may be the first and only gay Jewish man who came out through the good offices of the Catholic Church). At the time, I was afraid to be seen at a gay bar (though I started frequenting "The Garage," a dark disco-styled dance club the following winter).

The next year, the Supreme Court basically declared that gay sex, (sodomy) between two consenting adults could be illegal, as it was in Texas. Our failing President, Ronald Reagan, his mind already clouded with dementia and his ongoing prejudice, ignored the AIDS crisis and the thousands dying while the Federal Government did virtually nothing.

Even after moving to Boston, I discovered that being gay carried risks beyond catching HIV. I got a job as a career counselor at Boston University and found that the University had no protections for gay and lesbian employees, while BU's president, John Silber was a known homophobe. Consequently, I came out to a few coworkers but kept my identity a secret from students and administrators.

A few years later, I worked as a high school teacher in a school system near Boston and came out at a staff meeting two days after I started. When I mentioned that I wanted to come out to my students, several of whom used homophobic slurs in the classroom, one of my (supposedly)

liberal colleagues told me that "I don't tell the kids about my drug use in college," equating that with coming out to my high school students, as if being gay was a secret vice.

Fast forward 25 years, and the landscape has changed. Today, there are many 'out' teachers, and students have role models in schools, in the media, and in popular culture—all of which were lacking when I was coming of age in the 1970s. Gay/straight alliances, same-sex marriage, workplace protections—all seemed a distant dream back in the late 20th Century.

I look at Generations Y and Z, at their confidence, gender fluidity, their ease at coming out in their teen years, and their refusal to fit into the neat boxes of what society expects of them. It took me a decade of inner struggle, fighting shame, self-doubt, and several therapists who told me that my sexuality was a choice, before I finally admitted to myself that I was gay—and longer before I could comfortably share that fact with others.

Today, living in the Northeast, it's easy to become complacent. In New York City, Pride feels like a city holiday. It seems easy to join the crowd and celebrate, to forget that the Stonewall uprising happened in my lifetime.

I'm a bit envious of these upcoming generations, of their expanded possibilities. And yet, the landscape seems to be shifting, tectonic plates shifting under the surface of American society. The rightward tilt of the Supreme Court and the end of *Roe v. Wade*, the fixation of Republican officials on limiting trans rights and in stirring up fear of LGBT people and targeting the most vulnerable among us, portends a swing of the pendulum—the arc of justice moving in the wrong direction.

A Republican president along the lines of Trump, Cruz, or DeSantis, a Republican-controlled Congress, and a Supreme Court that ignores legal precedent (the latter already in place), portends a dark future for LGBT rights.

It seems that we're at a crossroads as a society; we could continue setting a place at the table for everyone, or we could go back to the bad old days of the 1970s, when being different—being queer—meant being ostracized or rejected. In today's United States, the choice is up to us.

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



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Boston Pride

Continued from page 1

On a small stage drag queens, musicians and activists performed amid a sea of rainbow flags and glitter-painted faces. The grassroots celebration rose from the ashes of the now-disbanded Boston Pride tradition.

"I would like to see this event grow bigger, and I certainly don't want to return to a parade of bank floats," Lippke, a 73-year-old Brookline resident, said. "Over the years Boston Pride became much more politicized and less reflective of the gay community of Greater Boston."

With an array of smaller events across the city, Boston is marking Pride Month for the first time since the organization Boston Pride disbanded last July amid calls for inclusivity and growing criticism over the corporatization of the annual parade.

"It is clear to us that our community needs and wants change without the involvement of Boston Pride," the nonprofit's Board of Directors said in a statement posted online last summer, announcing the end of all planned events and a dissolution of the organization. "We have heard the concerns of the [Queer and Transgender People of Color] community and others. We care too much to stand in the way."

The end of Boston Pride opened up a new opportunity to reimagine what Pride Month celebrations could look like in the city, with an emphasis on local performers and support from nonprofits, said Andre Isaacs, an emcee at Pop-Up Pride.

"Once it was dismantled, communities who didn't feel represented by the corporatization of Pride and the direction it was going came together



"It's important to celebrate our diversity. I'm a lesbian, I'm married and I have a son. It's important for him to see people like us. We're part of this world just like everybody else." Josiane Martinez, West Roxbury. Lee Hill / GBH News.

Rob Phelps (left) of Quincy and Jim Dalglish (right) of Quincy, have been a couple for 30 years. Lee Hill / GBH News.



Reverend Irene Monroe of Cambridge is a GBH contributor and co-host of the podcast All Rev'd Up. "This is a new beginning for Pride. Taking it back to the community. And this time, it will sprout more diversity. And I'm here to witness it." Lee Hill / GBH News.

to create something that reflects the community," Isaacs said. "We imagined a grassroots Pride, something that reflects the will of the people, where people actually feel that this is for them and by them."

Isaacs, who moved from Kingston, Jamaica to Jamaica Plain, says Pride celebrations in Boston haven't always felt welcoming for people like him.

"As a queer, Black immigrant living in Boston, in the United States in general, it has been difficult at times to feel like a part of the community in terms of representation," Isaacs said. "Even at Pride, which is a space we would hope would be more welcoming. I definitely feel a lot more excited about this event than I have about the generalized Pride events in the past."

Among the local performers, was Jameel Johnson, a 27-year-old Roxbury native and singer-songwriter who performs under the name Karim.

"You can see there's definitely a more diverse crowd out here, a lot more Black and Brown people like myself, a lot of young people and their parents," Johnson said. "That's wonderful to see."

Pop-Up Pride came together in three months, lead organizer Jo Trigilio said, with financial help from nonprofits, local businesses and the Eastern Bank Charitable Foundation, a Boston-based nonprofit with a longtime involvement in Pride celebrations.

"I'm not necessarily anti-corporate, but I think that because LGBTQ people's rights are in jeopardy and we're under attack, this is really not the time for companies and corporations to treat us as a market and use pride as a marketing opportunity," Trigilio continues. "It's kind of offensive to use us as a marketing opportunity when we're trying to gather together because we're under attack and our youth

are under attack." Trigilio is referring to the wave of anti-LGBTQ legislation that's sweeping the country.

When Trigilio moved to Boston in 1998, "I was a little bit surprised at how commercialized Pride was here, and male centered," she said. Trigilio's response was to join the organizing committee for the Boston Dyke March, which celebrated its 25th anniversary on Friday.

"That felt more authentic to me, you know, we were doing it grassroots," she said.

Pop-Up Pride was created in the same spirit, Trigilio said.

"This is the future," she said. "This is what it looks like to have a community-centered Pride."

This year's celebrations come after years of growing tension between organizers at Boston Pride and

see BOSTON PRIDE, page 13

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Abortion

Continued from page 1

normality.

In language that is overtly dismissive of concern for how the decision will impact other rights, Justice Samuel Alito, writing for the majority, says that these considerations are "too much" and lack "any serious discussion."

"These attempts to justify abortion through appeals to a broader right to autonomy and to define one's 'concept of existence' prove too much," wrote Alito, who was joined on the majority opinion by Justices Clarence Thomas, Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett. Chief Justice John Roberts did not sign onto Alito's decision but issued his own opinion, concurring in the judgment.

Alito does little to quell concern that the decision will impact these other rights.

He says the majority has "stated unequivocally that "[n]othing in this opinion should be understood to cast doubt on precedents that do not concern abortion," adding that abortion involves taking a "potential life," while the decisions in the other cases do not. But then he adds this:

"Each precedent is subject to its own *stare decisis* analysis, and the factors that our doctrine instructs us to consider like reliance and workability are different for these cases than for our abortion jurisprudence," said Alito. Given that the *Dobbs* decision analysis of *stare decisis* (respect for precedent) overturns the 50-year-old *Roe v. Wade* decision, this reassurance falls empty. *Obergefell v. Hodges*, striking state bans on same-sex marriage, was issued only seven years ago. *Lawrence v. Texas*, striking state bans on consensual sex between same-sex adults, was issued only 19 years ago.

Adding to that concern, Justice Thomas' concurring opinion (see page 3) urges the court "reconsider all of this Court's substantive due process precedents," including *Griswold*, *Lawrence*, and *Obergefell*. He states that the court has "a duty to 'correct the error' established in those precedents...."

Generally, judges and justices are expected to keep pre-conceived ideas of how a case might be decided to themselves. But Justice Brett Kavanaugh appears to abandon that protocol, too. In his concurring opinion, he includes a footnote (page

8) that says *Obergefell* "overruled" *Baker v. Nelson*.

"Much of American society was built around the traditional view of marriage that was upheld in *Baker v. Nelson*, and that was reflected in laws ranging from tax laws to estate laws to family laws. In *Obergefell v. Hodges*, the Court nonetheless overruled *Baker*."

"This is the most shockingly *activist* Court we have seen in any of our lifetimes," said Jenny Pizer, senior legal counsel for Lambda Legal. "The arrogantly selective reading of history and disdain for generations of jurisprudence would be bizarre if it weren't so terrifying."

The court did not "overrule" *Baker v. Nelson*. In *Baker v. Nelson*, a 1972 appeal, the Supreme Court did not issue an opinion. It summarily dismissed a gay couple's appeal to recognize same-sex marriage.

In the majority opinion June 24 in *Dobbs*, the court does overturn two major precedents: *Roe v. Wade* and *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*. *Roe v. Wade*, in 1973, said the Constitution implies that citizens have a right to privacy and liberty and that those rights cover the right to choose an abortion. *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, in 1992, said states could regulate abortion once a fetus becomes viable as long as the regulations did not create an undue burden to women who seek an abortion.

In his opinion concurring in the judgment of the majority, Chief Justice John Roberts says he sees "no sound basis for questioning the adequacy" of 15 weeks for a woman to obtain an abortion. He chose not to sign onto Alito's opinion apparently because, as he said, "its dramatic and consequential ruling is unnecessary to decide the case before us."

"The Court's decision to overrule *Roe* and *Casey* is a serious jolt to the legal system—regardless of how you view those cases," writes Roberts. "A narrower decision rejecting the misguided viability line would be markedly less unsettling, and nothing more is needed to decide this case."

"Seeing this carte blanche invitation to legislatures to eliminate the freedom to make one's own decisions about one's own body and life, especially following yesterday's absurd decision elevating gun rights over public safety," said Lambda's Pizer, "offers a picture of American society potentially transformed in a horrifying direction."

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Boston Pride

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other groups, including Trigilio, who was accused by Boston Pride organizers of infringing on their name after creating Boston Pride 4 The People in 2020. Due to COVID-19 concerns, Boston Pride in 2020 and 2021 were both canceled.

Taking in Pop-Up Pride were Quincy residents,

Rob Phelps and Jim Dalglish, who have been a couple for 30 years. Jim Dalglish says he recognizes the enduring importance of Pride. "As a kid in the early 80s, it was dangerous to do this. I don't [any longer] want it to be an act of courage. I want it to be a celebration! In this political climate, I feel like this could be going away."

After attending her last Pride celebration in 2018, Quincy resident Ariana Fugoso, 25, says she was hoping for a bigger post-pandemic come-

back this year.

"Of course it's good with local people and it's nice that we're all gathered here together, but I still miss the big celebration with the whole city involved," Fugoso said. "But again, with everything that's happened, I guess, you know, this works."

Judy Lippke says she also misses the all-encompassing, city-wide, confetti-on-every-street Pride celebrations of the past, something she's hoping

the new wave will grow into in coming years.

"It was sad that the Pride committee couldn't work out a way to be more diversified and work out their differences, but I do think it's great that this Pop Up Pride has appeared," she said. "I hope that we can develop a bigger gay Pride event that is not corporate and that is more grassroots and respectful of all of our all of the different people in our community, all the cultural diversity that we have."

Monroe

Continued from page 1

Queer and Trans Black, Indigenous, and people of color (QTBIPOC)- become essential actors in its new chapter.

"I can't believe my eyes. There are a lot more people of color at this Pride than any I've attended since coming to Boston in 2012," Jason Wong told me, who's originally from Chicago.

Although Pop-Up Pride was a grassroots, community-organized, community-centered, one-time event, it has laid a solid foundation for future Pride events serving Greater Boston: a rally with diverse community speakers, local artists, musicians, performers, community tables, food vendors, a family area, an LGBTQ+ youth area, and support from nonprofits.

Cassi Braithwaite of Walpole told me, "I like the diversity. It feels like I've come out to see local talent, to a community event, more accessible, and it doesn't feel like a marketing event."

For some in the community, Boston Pride had become a vast corporate and commercialized ex-

travaganza where marginal groups were nonessentials except for photo-ops highlighting diversity. They saw the floats in the parade as selling the soul of the movement's grassroots message for entry into the mainstream instead of changing the mainstream. However, others in the community welcome corporate sponsors, viewing it as vital for the financial cost and continuation of Boston Pride and affirming LGBTQ+ issues and their employees.

With this year's Pride events occurring across the state and in various cities, these community-based grassroots events feel authentic, appropriate, and empowering. They decentralized the behemoth-like hold and power Boston Pride had over the entire state and much of New England for nearly 50 years. With more acceptance of LGBTQ+ Americans, many activists feel that local Pride events throughout Massachusetts hold communities, towns, local officials, and politicians accountable to its LGBTQ+ denizens, especially in the drive to combat anti-LGBTQ+ legislation with more than 300 bills in 28 states so far this year.

"This is a Pride by the people for the people," Rebekah Levit of Natick shared. And Braithwaite said, "No one group owns it. No one group calls the shots."

For example, DignityUSA, the largest LGBTQ faith organization in the country headquartered in Boston, kicked off Pride Month by hosting an online prayer service. The event celebrated Pride and was a form of pastoral care needed during this ongoing pandemic. "True blessings don't come from hierarchies of power; they come from communities of care, love, and solidarity," the website posted.

Trans Resistance MA, an outspoken critic of the Boston Pride board's transmisogyny and racism, will have its Pride march, a march from Nubian Square in Roxbury to the Franklin Park Playstead, and festival on June 25.

"Our black communities need to see us too like the rest of Boston does," Jamal Jones stated. "It ain't like they don't know where here."

Over-policing is an issue for communities of POC, especially its transgender community. Like last year's march, the TRM's statement on policing is the same:

"We plan to have minimal, if any, contact with law enforcement. Police officers will not be invited to the event or asked to secure the march route."

In 2020, the murder of George Floyd raised additional fear for LGBTQ+ people of color concerning the police. The refusal of Boston Pride's

board to publicly support the LGBTQ+ community of color position statement on policing simply further highlighted the decades-long racial strife among us.

"I miss the parade," Jake Green of Somerville shared. "It does highlight the disagreement. With no parade, Pride is bittersweet."

Boston Pride had an inauspicious beginning, comprising a small motley group of LGBTQ+ activists who marched to a Vietnam protest from Cambridge Common to Boston Common in June 1970. The group held a rally on Boston Common, commemorating the previous Stonewall Riots. Boston Pride evolved into a series of weeklong events, one of the city's largest public and money-making events. Its parade, the flagship event, drew cheering spectators of nearly one million throughout New England and beyond than in its early years with hecklers along a sparsely attended parade route.

"It's an impressive crowd of folks today, as a first, without the parade and rainbow washing voices and advertisements of corporations," one of the Pop-up Pride organizers stated.

Pop-Up Pride was vital, and many local LGBTQ+ communities agree.

I agree. But, I miss the parade, too.

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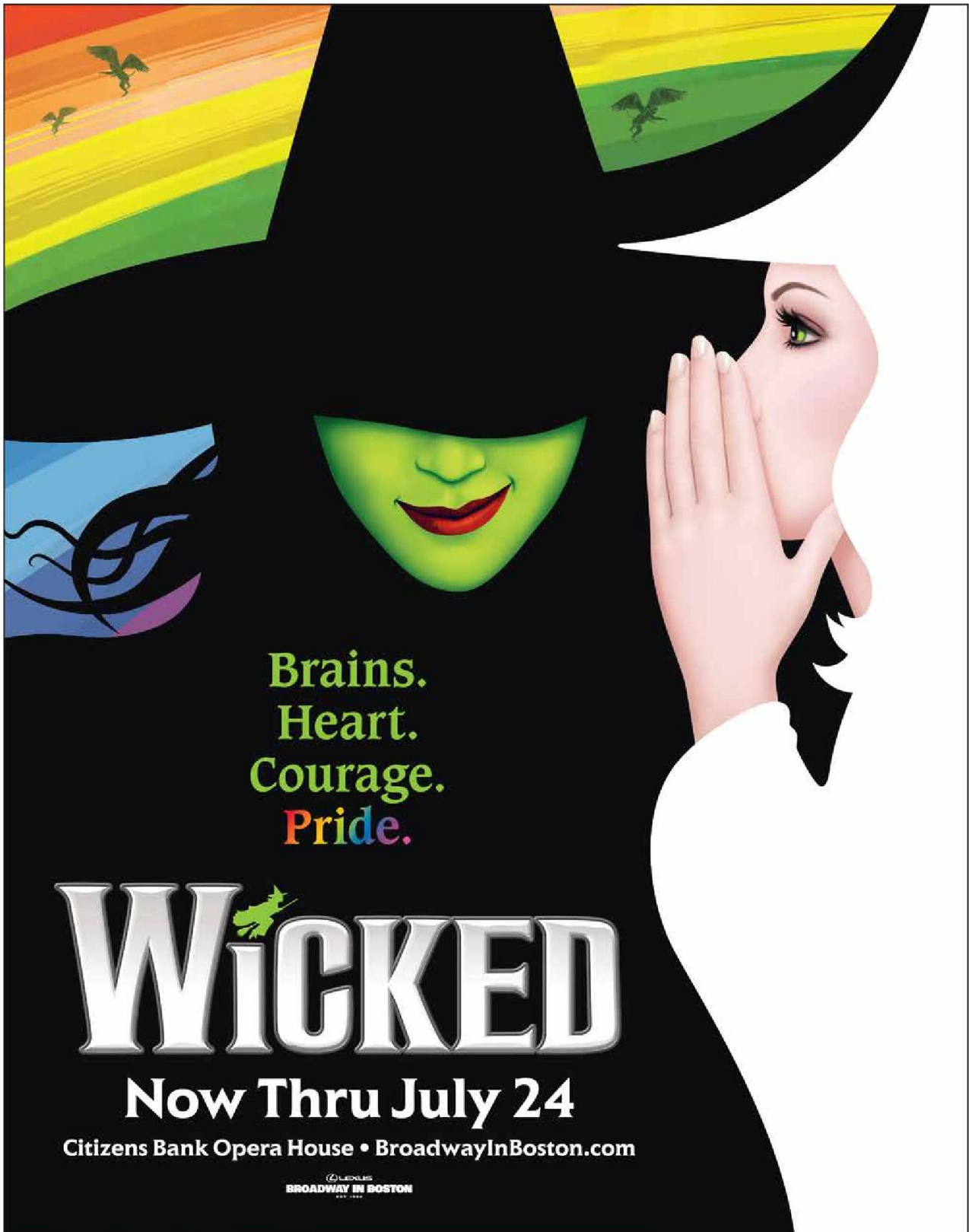
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