LUMBER YARD REBUILDS
Gay community staple rises from ashes

BY CARTER HEMION
SGN CONTRIBUTING WRITER

In July 2021, the Lumber Yard, White Center’s first LGBTQ+ bar, suffered extensive damage in a fire still under active investigation as arson and a hate crime. Since then, the bar has been rebuilding across the street from its original location, with the support of the community. Its reopening is anticipated in early June 2022.

The bar is co-owned by husbands Nathan Adams and Michale Farrar. Adams shared updates on the construction at 9630 16th Ave. SW. He assured us that the new space, which will be 4,000 square feet, will continue to have “a lot of what we had at the old bar.” All prior performers are set to return, and the location will continue hosting drag shows and themed parties. The bar will also bring back about 90% of its staff when it reopens.

see LUMBER YARD page 11

Photo courtesy of Nathan Adams
RAINBOW RECREATION

PROGRAMS FOR LGBTQ+ ADULTS 50+

SPRING 2023 PROGRAMS
CLASSES RUN APRIL 4 THROUGH JUNE 23, 2023
- Pre-registration and account with Seattle Parks and Recreation required.
- Visit www.seattle.gov/parkRec, click on "Register for Classes and Programs" and follow on-screen instructions, or call your local community center, give them the six-digit activity number listed and provide payment.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE!
Seattle Parks and Recreation strives to create respectful and safe environments in order to enhance health and well-being, and to welcome all community members. Rainbow Recreation was developed specifically to serve LGBTQ+ - identified adults who are 50+ and their friends and allies.
We want your involvement to design programming that meets needs and community interests as we bring programming back.
What would you like to see? Are you on a budget with skills to share?
Contact Debbie or 206-684-1600 for questions.

All Classes at Miller Community Center
330 19th Ave E, Seattle, WA 98112 • 206-684-4733

Gentle Yoga
Sweat and breathe with awareness, correct alignment, and a focus on breath to increase strength and stamina, improve flexibility, and develop better balance, posture and peace of mind. Chair seated participants are welcome. For LGBTQ+ identified ticket and Bail.

SESSION 1
- Begin March 20
- 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Fri
- $40
- 3466 69th Ave NE
- 206-684-0684

SESSION 2
- Begin April 3
- 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. Fri
- $40
- 3466 69th Ave NE
- 206-684-0684

Tai Chi Chi Kung
A slow-moving meditative exercise of qi (life energy) and mind and body. Qi is the life energy that flows through the body and makes us who we are. These movements circulate and balance the internal energy (Qi). All ages welcome. No experience necessary and their seated students are welcome.

SESSION 1
- Begin March 27
- 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- $40
- 3466 69th Ave NE
- 206-684-0684

SESSION 2
- Begin April 3
- 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
- $40
- 3466 69th Ave NE
- 206-684-0684
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Same woman charged with first two local anti-LGBTQ hate crimes of 2022

by Hannah Saunders
SGV Contributing Writer

The King County Prosecuting Attorney's Office (KCPA) has filed two hate crime charges relating to gender identity and sexual orientation this year. Both charges were filed against Destiney Marie Freeman, 42.

The charging documents state that Freeman maliciously and intentionally caused the physical injury of the victim due to her perception of her sexual orientation.

On Dec. 12, 2022, Freeman hanged on the door of a tenant who resided in the same apartment building as her and called him an "HIV-positive faggot." The documents also state that Freeman yelled numerous homophobic slurs during the incident, which escalated to physical violence: when the victim opened his door, Freeman pinched him in the face as she called him a "fucking faggot."

Once officers arrived, Freeman continued with homophobic statements and told officers that the victim "wants to be a girl" herself.

On Jan. 2, 2022, Freeman and the victim were both in another tenant's apartment in the same building. Freeman was sitting in a chair while the victim, who identified as a Transgender female, was standing next to her.

Nightlife

Issa Man and Kylie Mooncakes curate a perfect Thursday night at Kickback

by Nick Rapp
SGV Contributing Writer

A good performer makes the audience feel like they’re in on it — "it" being some essential character of the show, a connective thread that pieces everything together. At Kickback, a monthly drag showcase hosted by the lovely duo of Kylie Mooncakes and Issa Man, that thread is friendship.

The show takes place on the second Thursday of every month, breaking itself with the tagline “Your new super chill, super lit Thursday night.” They deliver on that promise, creating a diverse lineup of performers that don’t take themselves too seriously but whose contributions showcase each one’s individuality.

As hosts, Kylie and Issa bounced off each other’s energy. You could tell they loved sharing a stage. They opened with a duet, wearing matching pink outfits (each with its own hair) and using all of the space possible on the runway stage. Later, they jokingly asked the audience how many people actually knew the song they lip-synched to in their opener. Kickback thrived in moments like these; the hosts’ love for each other, bubbly banter, and all the performers in the lineup was so fun to watch that you didn’t need to know what song was playing.

Others performers included Sani Ahmed, Viper Feng, The Fab Boiz, Baby, and Stanis Costa, all Northwest locals and all distinct in their talents. There was prop work and duets, solo lip synchs and pseudo-performance art. Everyone’s style shone through, with Kylie and Issa bookending the night together in stunning get-ups.

I left Kickback still marveling at the talent and liveliness of all the performers and had to ask the hosts a few questions about how they put it all together.

Nick Rapp: How did y'all decide on a monthly Thursday evening show?

Kylie Mooncakes: When I started doing drag, all of my favorite shows were on the weekends. Then, when I traveled to other cities recently, it felt like all the great drag that was connected to the local queer community were on the weekends, while weekend gigs were reserved for Drag Race girls coming to town, or for your standard diva-heavy crowds.

Issa Man: If I’m being honest, I was just being a drag boss. I wanted a consistent gig and also wanted to leave my Fridays and Saturdays open for bookings.

NR: What is the inspiration behind Kickback?

KM: The vision for Kickback was just to be a show that performers would feel safe at home. We urge them to get high (if that’s their jam) and just get loose and have fun with whatever they pull out — whether it’s the experimental numbers they’ve been wanting to show or their face/male school anthem. IM: I think we also just wanted a space to be best friends onstage. We both admire each other so much and have a lot of crossovers in our drag tastes, so working together just seemed like a must!

NR: When did you two meet and start performing together?

KM: Me and Issa met in 2019 when they first moved here from Alaska. I was so immediately taken by their talent and aesthetic, and we bonded over our style, our humor, and our passions immediately. We cooked up a couple fun drag numbers here and there, and even though we took a while to get there, the end result is always [feels] so fulfilling that continuing to do this felt like no-brainer.

IM: Tesla

NR: You’re both so tall in heels. Are you ever scared of hitting the beam at Krenwerk?

KM: Every moment of my life.

IM: Well, that was actually a big reason we decided to have the runway stage! So we actually have space to dance! That, and we wanted to pay homage to ballroom! IM: I still hit it though.

NR: Did you sew the floral outfits for your final number?

KM: No! Issa’s an indie fashion fiend, and she put us on to House of Aris, this super dope independent brand made by this one Black girl based in Vietnam. Both looks from our first number are Issa’s fits that she made too! We bought them at different times, but they ended up fitting kind of perfectly together for the number.

IM: I love House of Aris so much! Working with her is always such a joy, because I have very few boundaries when it comes to fashion! I’ll be tired and uncomfortable if it means I get to serve a look, so our looks are always so wild! Definitely a designer to look out for!

The next iteration of Kickback is on Thursday, April 14 at Krenwerk, 1809 Minor Ave., Seattle.
THREE TIPS TO FIND COVID TESTS

1) Order from COVIDtests.gov to get a free test kit shipped to your home

2) Check your local pharmacy or retailers

3) Find a testing location near you at DOH.WA.gov/TestingLocations or by calling 1-800-525-0127 (language assistance available)

If you have health insurance, your insurer will now cover up to 8 at-home tests per month for every person on your plan. Check with your insurer for details.

Learn more about when and how to test at doh.wa.gov/testing
That’s a wrap on our winter book club!

By Lindsey Anderson
SGW Contributing Writer

The Seattle winter can be a rough and hopeless time. Skies are endlessly gray, the rain makes the perfect backdrop for an imaginary cozy, rainy video, and love seems to have fled the city as quickly as the sunshine.

A hopeless romantic, I have found that the best way to thaw my frozen heart is with a good rom-com. From the incredibly cheesy Hallmark Christmas specials to blockbuster meets-cutes, my winter months are always full of cheap, fabricated love.

One book that brought the glorious art form of the rom-com is that genre is overwhelmingly white, straight, and cis. For Queer readers, happy endings are hard to find on the pages of literature that loves to capitalize on the pain and struggle of the LGBTQ+ community. So for our winter book club, I was determined to find the quintessential, queerest, and most cliché rom-com novels and share them with our loyal readers.

May the Best Man Win
We started the season off with a classic lovers-to-enemies-to-lovers story set against the timeless backdrop of a prep school. Mary the Best Man Win followed Jeremy, a Trans boy trying to prove his masculinity to the world, and Luka, the only one left behind in the dust. As their senior year begins, the boys find themselves in a heated battle for homecoming king.

As for R.L. Eikler wrote this hilarious romantic novel to bring some light-hearted joy to the Queer literary community. "We are still very much a period where Queer teenagers do not have access to that kind of representation in their reading life," Eikler said. "When I was a teen, the few pieces of Queer media I had weren’t written for me. They were specific, sensationalized, and tragic, written in a way that didn’t make me understand who I could be. Queer and that label could be accessible to me. I think it is important to have Queer rep in media, for Queer teens who are looking to find a sense of themselves and the world they live in." the Queer Princlus of Kitt Webb

For our next romance read, we took a trip back in time with author Cat Sebastian to a steamy 18th-century coffee shop for an even steamier romance. The Queer Princlus of Kitt Webb tells the story of the titular Kitt Webb, a hermit and a womanizer, Percy, who hires him to fight a wrong.

Sebastian is best known for her historical fiction, which often features Queer hero characters. She says she prefers to read historical fiction because it functions as great literary escapism but has found that most people are unaware that Queer characters can, and did, exist in historical contexts.

When it comes to Queer historical fiction, we have this tendency in culture to be like, ‘Queer people must not have existed,’ but we don’t see them in the historical record,” she said. “We do see them in historical records, and when we don’t, there are many good reasons for this. Queer people have been systematically erased from so many narratives that putting them back in, especially putting them back in settings where we have been deliberately kept absent, is satisfying to me as a writer.”

Man of Honor and Mistletale
As Christmas rolled around, we found the best Hallmark-esque Queer holiday romance! We read Adriana Herrera’s hot LLW Man of Honor and Missy and Mistletale. The story follows two Dominicans, Kirossa and Sandy, who compete in Scotland’s biggest holiday bake-off. The tasty rivals-to-lovers romance is unique in that it is one of the only LLW relationships that features two women of color in the lead.

“You don’t often see sapphic books where both leads are women of color,” said Herrera. “With Man of Honor and Mistletale, they’re both Dominican, but they have different stories one is born in the US, the other… in the Dominican Republic, so their approach to their culture, how they see themselves, is very different. I love exploring that.”

The Lights on Knobloch Lake
As the holiday season ramped up, we took a stroll down Knobloch Lake with author Brian Pattison. The Lights on Knobloch Lake is the jolly story of single dad Adam, his rambunctious daughter Gus, and their mysterious and very new neighbor Wes, as the three of them try to create the best Christmas light show ever.

“I love holiday stories, and this is a Christmas book,” gushed Parrish. “I’m Jewish, and people were like, ‘Why are you writing a Christmas book?’ Growing up, I always loved the Christmas movie and the holiday sensation with it. It’s just magical and snowy and cheerful. I wanted to write a Hallmark Christmas movie in book form, but Gay, Very Gay,” they laughed.

Written in the Stars
The holiday season wrapped up with a sapphic love letter to Seattle. Written in the Stars is author Alexander Bellfleur’s first novel in the her rom-com series of the same name. Branded as a LGBTQ+ Pride and Prejudice, Bellfleur’s story follows her sapphic Elle and cynical Darcy as they fake a romance at Christmas.

“My original inspiration was to give nods to Pride and Prejudice and Bridget Jones’ Diary, but not have a direct retelling beat for beat. I wanted to capture the archetypes and capture that same feeling, but I wanted to make it Queer. From the very beginning, I wanted to make it Queer,” said Bellfleur.

Fifteen Hundred Miles from the Sun
The SGW book club entered 2022 with a romantic bang! We started the year off with a fresh new romance from debut author Jenny Guerra Villa. Fifteen Hundred Miles from the Sun spotlights a year in the life of a closeted teen, Julian Luna, as he comes out, falls in love, and looks forward to his next steps in life.

Guerra Villa says the book was inspired by the film Love, Simon. But they also had a desire to see more BIPOC representation in Queer media. With the help of their friends, they were able to create a happy, romantic, and hopeful masterpiece.

“I hope that just anyone who knows what it is to be in Jules’ shoes is and is still existing in a place that is similar to Jules’ own experience of having to hide for his safety knows that anywhere you are within your coming out, you are enough,” said Guerra Villa.

“Your enough for this world, there’s no rush. You are loved, you are supported. And I hope [the reader] is ready for it, even if you’re reading it behind closed doors in your bedroom at night, you feel not so alone, you feel that you have Jules and Mat and all Jules’ friends and his sister there to support you.”

I Wish You All the Best
Following the theme of coming-out and coming-out stories, we meet next and 2022 with I Wish You All the Best, the touching story of Ben, a Nonbinary teen struggling to show the world their identity and cope with anxiety. The book gave all the feels as well as a touching and authentic friends-to-lovers slow-burn romance.

Dean says a big reason they wanted to write the book was to give accurate Nonbinary representation to a genre that has simply not seen any yet. “There were no Nonbinary characters in YA at the time. Trans representation as a whole left a lot to be desired,” they said. “Lots of cis writers creating harmful — or downright offensive — ways. Some triggers go into writing a Nonbinary character, things that cis charac- tors won’t experience or can’t understand.”

Girl Haven
As the gloomy winter weather dragged on, our book club took a field trip to the delightful fantasy land of Keretra. Inside the pages of Little Sturgis’ middle-grade graphic novel, Girl Haven, we met Ash, who travels to the mystical world where only girls are allowed. The only catch: Ash was born a boy. The whimsical adventure follows Ash’s journey to gender identity and self-discovery along with her new, delightfully Queer friends.

Not only is Girl Haven a special book for many QT teens and young adults, but it was also a special journey for Sturgs. “Girl Haven is a very special book to me, because it’s one of the first things I’ve ever written that came from a place of total honesty and vulnerability,” Sturgs said.

“I started working on it right after I transitioned in 2016, so a lot of feelings in there are very raw for me.”

Of Ice and Shadows
The book club continued to journey to distant and fantastical lands. Last week, we read Of Ice and Shadows, Audrey Coulthurst’s highly anticipated sequel to the fall book club read Of Fire and Stars. The novel picked up where readers had last left off, with star-crossed lovers Mare and Denna reuniting their kingdom and hoping to avoid a war.

For Coulthurst, part of the fun of writing a sequel was being able to put the charac-
Keep your eyes on the Shadows

by Terri Schlichenmeyer
Special to the SGN

SHADOWMAN: AN ELUSIVE PSYCHO KILLER AND THE BIRTH OF FBI PROFILING
RON FRANSELL
© 2022 Berkley
527.00
304 pages

It was toward the end of June, 1973, and it wasn’t quite morning when 14-year-old Heidi Jaeger was awakened by a breeze. Had she left the tent flaps open around midnight when she’d come back from an outhouse run? No, she’d been creeped out by something and had gone straight back to the tent, but she was sure she’d rapped it right up. All was well then — her siblings were asleep like a pile of poppies. But now, in this pre-dawn, the tent flaps had suddenly drawn away. Sisie, Heidi’s 7-year-old sister, was gone, and there was a neatly cut hole in the tent, as if somebody should have been there.

FBI Special Agent Byron Dunbar was called. He was a local who’d served under J. Edgar Hoover and was home in bed when his mother received a phone call that the FBI had been working on in Rainier.

The FBI was still relative, although the FBI had been working on in Rainier. It had already been established that some killers could be identified by their habits and personality quirks. Dunbar knew this, and with the bureau’s help, he’d severely narrowed the list of suspects. But he was frustrated — until it was suggested that he use a new method of crime solving.

Vocotorian, they said, was merely as individual and distinctive as a fingerprint.

So, you know that squashy-eyed face you make when the rest of your body cringes? Yeah, that’s what you’ll get when you read Shadowman.

You’ll recall, because these crimes were gruesome, and author Ron Fransell doesn’t candy-coat that. Instead, he gives readers an arachnid tour of an evil, depraved mind and the things it can do. Squirm and twist awhile, make that face, then let yourself be immersed in Fransell’s detailed account of the development of profiling methodology in the FBI. Yes, true crime fanatics, you’ll love his blood-stained, hair-woven together, especially if you’re already familiar with the bureau’s ways. Whodunit fans won’t exactly find mystery in this story, but the background will appeal to you.

If you’ve got books about the Body Farm on your shelf, or anything by John Douglas or Robert Ressler, Shadowman deserves to be right next to them. If you love a gruesome tale of crime-solving, wrap your head around this one.

Also: here’s another book for true crime fans: Bone Deep by Charles Bosworth Jr. and Joel L. Schwartz. It’s the story of Betsy Faria’s murder — she was stabbed 55 times! — and a miscarriage of justice that jailed an innocent man and left a killer to roam free.
Energetic Adam Project is a family-friendly, time-travel joyride

by Sara Michelle Fettes
SGN Staff Writer

THE ADAM PROJECT
Netflix

Pilot Adam Reed (Ryan Reynolds) has traveled from the year 2050 to right a grievous wrong. But his ship is damaged and he is shot during the unauthorized trip, and instead of arriving in 2018 as planned, he ends up in the middle of nowhere in a lushly forested 2022.

Or maybe he landed exactly where he was meant to? Intentionally or not, he’s come to the childhood home of his 12-year-old self. Young Adam (Walker Scobell) lives alone with his single mother Ellie (Jennifer Garner), the pair still grieving the tragic loss of the boy’s scientist father Louis (Mark Ruffalo) a year prior, even if neither will admit it.

This is the setup to director Shawn Levy’s The Adam Project, his latest collaboration with his Free Guy star Reynolds — and this star-studded bit of sci-fi silliness is even more entertaining than that 2021 box office hit was. Jennifer Garner’s Elle Fanning’s crew mates. The team is further bolstered by a cast of stars including Parks and Recreation’s William Shatner, whose take on the role of the scientist father Louis is one of the highlights of the film.

The book is that both Adams join forces to go back to 2018 to see their dad and convince him not only that he invented time travel, but that his wealthy tech-billionaire business partner Maya Soetan (Catherine Keener) will utilize this power recklessly when she gains control of his discovery after his untimely — and mysterious — death. This forces Louis into an ethical quandary: the logic-driven scientist has to decide whether to listen to two versions of his son from the future, or instead turn them away from the universe by changing set timelines without knowing how they’ll affect events still to come.

With four credited writers, there is a “scripted by committee” feel to some of what happens, mostly in how the narrative treats Soetan. There is an attempt during the 2018 section to show how the characters began as a selfish do-gooder who ultimately wants Louis’ invention to be a boon to humanity. But something transforms him into a murderous despot thirsting for power, and while Keener does a solid job differentiating between the two versions of her character, the mechanics of this descent into full-blown evil never rings true.

What does work is the interplay between Reynolds and Scobell. The two have incredible chemistry, and I got a big kick out of their rapid-fire banter. Scobell is especially terrific. The youngster has not only a pint-sized version of Reynolds but also emotionally navigate a path well outside of the one his older self insists is the only one available to him. It’s a tricky part, and the newcomer doesn’t just play it well, at times he’s downright spectacular.

There’s an engaging, albeit brief, supporting turn from Zoe Saldana as a character I choose not to speak more about, and a quick 13 Going on 30 reunion between Garner and Ruffalo right around the two-thirds mark is well worth the wait. The visual effects are excellent, composer Rob Simonsen’s (Ghostbusters: Afterlife) score provides a suitably exuberant score, and cinematographer Tobias Schliessler’s (Beauty and the Beast) gives the picture a magnetic visual aesthetic I was continually drawn to.

It all slightly runs out of steam near the end, but thankfully Levy and his screenwriters stay true to their characters and the foundations of the mythology they’ve created. Instead of taking the easy way out, the aftereffects of tragedy and loss are allowed to linger in ways atypical for genre fare like this, granting the film an extra layer of empathetic hopefulness that’s lovely.

I enjoyed The Adam Project. Its past, present, and future permutations were an exciting joyride fit for the whole family.

SATURDAY APRIL 9TH
HEKULIA • PEACHES CHRIST
The True-Life Tale
Of Surviving Life With
The World’s Most Abusive,
Fattest, Ugliest,
Drug Mother.

MARIO DIAZ
BROADWAY PERFORMING HALL
7:30 PM & 10:00 PM
Tickets $20 at the door
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MARCH 18, 2022
SGN
CELEBRATING 48 YEARS!
Northwest Black Restaurant Week Round Up

BY KYLIE BROWN
SGN CONTRIBUTING WRITER

From Feb. 25 to Mar. 6, Black Restaurant Week took over the Pacific Northwest. Dozens of African-American, African, and Caribbean eateries were celebrated across Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia. This year marked the second tour of Black Restaurant Week’s campaign in the Northwest. In total, 44 restaurants across Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia participated.

Through the summer and fall, the event will come to 15 US and Canadian markets, and over 1,500 businesses will participate. During BRW alone, the organization reports an average increase in sales of 15% for participating restaurants in each region.

“More Than Just a Week”

Unlike most such campaigns, BRW also includes panels, awards, and other recognitions for bars, catering, solo chefs, and food trucks. For example, its culinary showcase, “Nosh,” helps connect restaurants to consumers and to each other.

“I’m really grateful to [having gained] some prominence for what I do, and I don’t know if that would have happened without Black Restaurant Week,” said Atlanta-based chef Ed_Warner, the 2019 winner of BRW’s Power of the Plate award.

Black Restaurant Week (BRW) was founded in 2016 by Warren Luckett, Falaya Ferrell, and Derek Robinson, a trio of marketing and culinary entrepreneurs who sought to add the healing of Black communities through food.

For 2022, the chosen theme was “More Than Just a Week,” representative of all of the work the organization performs beyond the week-long campaign. BRW “goes beyond restaurants,” said Luckett.

Robinson is the BRW team’s marketing specialist. He and Ferrell co-owned Fade Media, a digital marketing firm in Houston, Tex. They discussed their passion for providing Black business owners with exposure, recognition, and connections in order to connect the greater Black community to better food.

“I thought [Black Restaurant Week] was the perfect opportunity to support small businesses in the community, which I’m really passionate about,” said Ferrell.

A lot of small businesses just don’t understand business from a marketing aspect,” said Robinson. “They don’t get the kind of exposure that we’re providing them.”

Robinson noted that when a business doesn’t have the resources for self-promotion, or its brick-and-mortar location is undesirable, the larger population might never find it.

Ferrell added, “In most urban communities, it’s like Popeyes, McDonald’s. There are a lot of things we eat on a community level just by seeing the restaurants and supporting the culinary space.”

Additionally, Luckett said the organization has set its sights on dispelling “misconceptions that people have about Black folks and about Black food.”

During the initial stages of the pandemic, the team found their in-person operations stymied. They remained dedicated to their continued expansion, however, knowing that there are hundreds of Black-owned businesses they have yet to reach, and they continued to make waves online.

In lieu of its traditional programming, BRW launched its #soulfood drive, the Feed the Soul Foundation. Through large corporate partnerships with companies like Maker’s Mark, Pepsi, GrubHub, and H&BMax, the foundation provided $25,000 to Black-owned culinary businesses in 2020. With ongoing grants, awards, and free business courses, the organization is busier than ever.

A Seattle Black restaurant directory

While the official campaign week for the Northwest region—which coincided with Black History Month—has ended, BRW encourages the public to support local Black-owned businesses and Black chefs all year long. Thanks to its sourcing of Afro-eats in Seattle, we have some new ideas on where to spend our “Flavor” budget next.

On Capitol Hill, Osteria La Spiga’s executive chef Sabrina Tinsley’s dishes are a gastronomic tribute to the Emilia-Romagna region of northern Italy, where her husband was raised. Her pasta is made in-house daily and paired with fresh seasonal ingredients from local market vendors. Tinsley is also a mentor and advocate for female chefs and chefs of color. Find out more or make a reservation at www.laspiga.com.

First Hill residents can enjoy a quick stroll to Jamaica at E. Jefferson’s Taste of the Caribbean. From 3 to 9 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, you can find a combo plate of authentic Caribbean food, culture, and music all in one. Find photos, reviews, and menus at tastefromthebelt分区seattle.com.

A trip down Rainier Ave, S will bring you to Lil Red Jamaican BBQ and Soul Cuisine. Located in last week’s SGN Q&A, you can find a unique array of specialties from Chef Ikem Pried (Beard semi-finalist) Ernest Jackson. To order takeout or take a peek at the current menu, visit lilredjamaican.com.

Continue further south to enjoy highly-rated Delish Ethiopian Cuisine. The menu says it all. It is known as “the best Ethiopian food in Seattle,” according to the restaurant’s website. Delish, the owner, and his wife also offer cocktails, vegetarian options, and a great ambience. Find their menu at delishethiouandfood.com.

Lastly, no need to travel to West Seattle for Black Star Kebab, even though it resides at the tip of Alki Beach. The Ghanaian food truck tours across Seattle, offering fresh, organic kebabs and sides, including vegetarian and halal options. Its current locations are posted daily at www.facebook.com/blackstarkebabs.

From West African jollof rice to potato fritters and Texas BBQ, Seattle’s lineup of Black Restaurant Week partners brings a comprehensive palette of Black culinary masterpieces to the table. And its partnership with local restaurants is only just beginning. African American, African, and Caribbean businesses are encouraged to register on the BRW website for free (or at the premium level) to be highlighted in next year’s Black Restaurant Week or if interested in year-round opportunities.

Learn more about BRW at blackrestaurantweeks.com/about. Find the Seattle directory, including an interactive map and links to all aforementioned businesses at blackrestaurantweeks.com/brew-campaigns/united-states/washington/seattle-3.
Broadway is second to none when it comes to food options. Every block has something for someone. But a few blocks west, at Thomas and Summit, lies a hidden gem serving breakfast food that stands out from the rest.

B-Side Foods is nestled in a cozy space alongside its sister café, Analog Coffee. This unassuming spot would be easy to miss without its corner easel sign — and the crowds lined up for breakfast fare. They’re there for a reason.

I am going on the record to say that B-Side is home to the best breakfast sandwich in Seattle (maybe even the Northwest). It is no mere bacon, egg, and cheese. The sandwich is comprised of an English muffin, a scrambled egg crepe with green onions folded in, pickled daikon, charred onion aioli, Beecher’s cheese, and your choice of numinous, ham, or both. You can also spice it up with some fermented hot sauce. (More on the sandwich below.)

Dani Haydon, co-owner of Analog and B-Side, filled the SGN on the café’s history and what makes B-Side’s menu so special.

Haydon explained that he and Tim Haydon “opened Analog in June of 2011, and B-Side in September of 2017.” There was a wall between the two spots until June 2020, when they were sure of B-Side’s success and decided to knock it down and combine them.

Haydon and Haydon’s approach to developing menu items is asking the simple question: “What do we want to eat?” It turns out that what they want to eat is not necessarily what you want to eat as well.

“We are inspired by everything that we get excited about eating,” said Hanlon. “Often we are trying to recreate a food memory or just a certain feeling with a new dish.”

The core menu consists of the egg sandwich and a rice bowl, along with an herby vegetable frittata that grew into a staple. Otherwise, they “try to keep the rest of the spaces on the menu somewhat open to change seasonally, to give us some room to create new favorites,” Hanlon said.

The egg sandwich

If the ingredients of the egg sandwich strike you as odd, you would be reasonable in your concerns. But trust that ratcheting thought went into combining unique flavors to create something delicious, if atypical.

“We knew from the very beginning that we wanted to serve an egg sandwich, and that we wanted it to be unique,” said Hanlon. “We worked with our friend and local cook Jake Voron to develop the original menu.”

The well-known chef Samin Nosrat popularized the four components of good cooking: salt, fat, acid, and heat. The B-Side sandwich finds its success in utilizing each of these categories to allow every ingredient the chance to shine.

On developing the recipe, Hanlon explained, “We like the English muffins as a base for the egg sandwich, because it’s easy to hold and eat, aside from being delicious.” The owners also “wanted a flavorful sauce, and wanted the crunch and acid from a pickle,” resulting in the use of charred onion aioli and a daikon pickle: a mild, radish, daikon provides a meatier crunch than a classic dill pickle and doesn’t overwhelm the palate.

If you like spice, the fermented hot sauce brings a flavor reminiscent of Korean cooking to the sandwich. This somehow pairs wonderfully with Beecher’s Flagship cheddar, the perfectly fatty addition that rounds out the sandwich. Additionally, all of the ingredients are super fresh. The egg sandwich sits less heavily in the stomach than a traditional breakfast sandwich, and every other menu item is equally as portable forward. B-Side sources its eggs from Siers Farm in Yelm, and its kale is local, from Franz. Hanlon noted that they aim to make local sourcing of ingredients as an even larger focus in the future.

If you’re sold on the sandwich (which you should be), B-Side and Analog are open for takeout from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. daily. They plan on eventually transitioning back to indoor dining as well, but they want to be cautious and be sure that it will be a permanent transition.

LUMBER YARD continued from cover

Adams described the new space as having two main parts — the Lumber Yard bar side and Loading Dock dance side — which together take up the same amount of space as the old location’s combined parts. Said Adams, “The larger side will be where we’ll be doing karaoke, drag shows, dance parties, and then the smaller side, which looks a lot like the footprint of the original Lumber Yard, is going to be more like the neighborhood, casual, sit-down dining experience.”

On the current state of rebuilding, Adams said, “The fun thing has been, this last month, we’re actually starting to see it come together. So the plumbers and the other contractors have started coming in and doing what they need to do, so that we can start putting the cosmic stuff in place and seeing what this space is actually going to look and feel like.”

Since the July fire, the bar has received ongoing financial support. In the first week alone, the community raised over $380,000 for the rebuilding. Adams is proud of “the support we’ve... have from the community to get the space back up and going.”

He is also proud of what the bar means to the LGBTQ+ community and Seattle. Said Adams, “There’s no way, after the fire, that we could have just let it go away. It just meant too much to too many of us, including my husband and I.”

Adams said the Lumber Yard plans to reopen at the start of June, depending on how fast construction moves forward. He looks forward to White Center’s Pride festival in early June.

“It’ll be, hopefully, fun that we can be a full part of that,” he said.

Follow the Lumber Yard Bar’s Facebook page for updates.

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If there's one thing Seattleites love more than good food, it's good companionship. Hailed as one of the most dog-friendly cities in the country, Seattle boasts several amazing dog parks, dog cafés, and even bars dedicated to dog lovers. So if you're looking for the perfect place to score a special treat for your best furry friends, look no further than these dog-friendly locations!

Pints and paws

Looking for a place to hang with Rover? Check out Dog Yard Bar in Ballard. For those 21 and older, Dog Yard Bar is the perfect place to make friends, sip pints, and mark your territory.

Each weekend, Dog Yard Bar hosts a breed-specific meet-up for one type of poodle, these “heavy beaters” to “mints” to “s care to and raise.” The events typically last a few hours and are exclusive to dogs that fit the event criteria.

Seattle Pride’s 2021 Doggie Drug Queen Champion, Pete “Patricia Chien-e,” had the pleasure of visiting Dog Yard Bar for its latest “Small Dog” meetup. Displaying his best attire, Pete enjoyed many treats, pets, and butt sniffs in a friendly and safe environment. Pete spent his evening lounging in the sunshine and making friends with other small breeds. The small-dog environment allowed him to let his guard down and enjoy the company of others without feeling the need to pretend to be a pit bull.

The staff was on the grounds at all times, monitoring the behavior of all those in attendance and making sure the yard remained clean and sanitary while owners enjoyed tasty cocktails.

After the meet-ups and on weekdays, the bar is open from 4pm to 10pm all dogs—so long as they (and their owners) can provide proof of vaccination. Dogs and their owners love the atmosphere there and relish the opportunity to hang out and make new friends and pet all the dogs.


Homemade for your hound

If you’re looking for a shop where you can pamper your pups with the finest treats and toys, check out the Seattle Barkery. Originally a food truck for dogs, it has quickly grown into a must-try for all Pacific Northwest pet owners.

“We’ve been in business since 2014, and we just recently opened up this location in Shoreline, in September,” said owner Ben Ford. “The first location was a mobile doggy-treat truck. That’s honestly what put us on the map because it’s such a weird idea. But we started driving that around town and built it up momentum and got a customer base.

“That’s such a foreign concept that a lot of people are hesitant and, like, ‘What is this?’ or confused. So it took a couple of years, honestly, for people to understand what we’re doing. We started with a truck, and we’re on our fifth location now.”

Ben and his wife Dawn started the business as a labor of love, dedicated to all the dogs in their lives. “That was all my wife, Dawn, that was her idea,” Ben said. “It was her brainchild, and she did some convincing to me that it was going to work, and here we are.”

Each Seattle Barkery location puts its dog customers first. The store sells toys, clothes, collars, and plenty of yummy snacks for each pooch who enters the doors.

The Fords, like many Seattleites, treat their dogs like their children and wanted to make sure the food they gave them was the best. “We know how much we value the dogs we’re spending our money on, so we know we probably won’t make any of them crazy dog people. This year, there are a lot of dogs in Seattle. So yeah, it works.”

The Seattle Barkery has twelve types of treats they make from scratch every day, and they make sure to source all their ingredients locally. “We make it all ourselves in-house. We have over twelve recipes, including our cakes, which are all registered with the Department of Agriculture,” Ben said.

“We also try to source locally in the Pacific Northwest, so all our elk antlers come from Montana, [and] any of our bags treats come from Portland and Vancouver, so we try to keep it as local as possible.

“Everything is freshly baked every day, so it’s not soft and fresh. I think that’s why we have such a good reputation in our treats. The dogs seem to like something fresh. A lot of times you’re giving them some store-bought treat that’s just dehydrated and it’s sitting on a shelf for who knows how long. So yeah, no preservatives. All of our treats have three to five ingredients, all very simple and easy to make.”

Giving back one bone at a time

Ben and Dawn also use their business to give back to the community. “My wife Dawn is on the board of Old Dog Haven. So we’ve been working with them for years,” said Ben.

The Barkery works alongside the elderly dog rescue to provide extra treats and donations every year. “We used to go to the Humane Society and donate there, too, but we’ve got it down so well now that there aren’t a lot of leftovers, but we donate a lot of different [things] to Old Dog Haven,” he said.

“We have a Barkery Box, each month it rotates and changes. It’s sponsored by one of our fan’s dogs, and each month they choose a different organization to donate to. Last month, for instance, it was Parkinson’s. So, a dollar of every Barkery Box goes to Parkinson’s. And that averages to about $300 a month. It’s up to whoever is sponsoring the box to choose what they want to do. Old Dog Haven seems to be about three or four months out of the year. We try to spread it out as much as we can. Kind of a fun and creative way to help get other people involved.”

The Barkery is also currently working to help dogs affected by the war in Ukraine. “We’re doing a benefit for Ukraine dogs, so for every Banana Bone, we’re donating a dollar, which is great. I know it sounds a little silly, but with the war and everything, but you know those people have dogs, too. They’re crazy dogs. They’re just the family, so we found a reputable rescue group and organization that takes in all the dogs that are having to deal with all of this too.”

Creative treats

It’s clear, from nose to tail, that everyone at the Seattle Barkery is dedicated to improving the lives of the dogs who love them.

“We’ve been doing this for many years, and like I was saying before, it was kind of a leap of faith as to whether it would work or not, and I think it taught me that we value our dogs here,” Ben said. “Not just in the sense that it’s a dog, it’s part of our family. My wife and I are childless—we’re not going to have kids. So we’ve put all of that love into our dogs. I realize that there’s a market for that here in Seattle, and hopefully, it spreads all over the place.”

Petye’s favorite part of the store was the “treat chest,” a whimsical dispenser that launches a tasty sample to every dog who comes by. His favorite treats were the fresh chicken hearts, perfect bite-sized snacks for dogs of all sizes and a delicious Ben and Dawn make every day. “We make those fresh each morning. We put a little coconut oil in them and air-fry them. Those seem to be everyone’s favorite,” Ben said.

Petye also enjoyed the cheesy doughnuts, a freshly baked snack from the downtown location, courtesy of dedicated employee Kenzie, who informed us that the store is getting ready for a new seasonal batch of Girl Scout-inspired dog treats. “We have some fun ones coming up with Girl Scout cookies and Easter candy and stuff. We try and do something for the holidays. For Valentine’s Day, we did a peanut butter-pumpkin pretzel heart, and then we did little heart-shaped peanut butter-banana bones. It’s really fun,” she said.

Clean dogs and clean ingredients

If you’re seeking a one-stop shopping experience with your dog, look no further than Queen Anne’s Wag N’ Wash. It offers a unique opportunity to use its in-store grooming equipment to make sure your pet is smell- ing just as good as their grooming treats!

Wag N’ Wash offers special grooming opportunities for the hands-on pet owner, a specialty nail trim service, and best of all, a deluxe pet bakery in the bakery. The bakery items are made fresh each day by an in-store baker, Peter, who loves to receive feedback from all his happy customers.

Wag N’ Wash’s most popular pet treats include “Muttballs,” “Pet Pies,” and special “Pup-Cakes” for all your most festive occasions. These treats are made from the same human-grade ingredients you might find in your birthday cake, except they do not include sugar, which can be harmful to pets.

The treat counter was a must-see for Petye, especially after a quick pedicure with Wag N’ Wash’s excellent grooming staff. His favorite treats were the Muttballs, a soft bread-like ball he could gobble in one bite! He couldn’t get enough of their soft and easy-to-eat texture and was begging for more as soon as he got home.

Wag N’ Wash makes sure to market all its treats at affordable prices so that everyone can get the chance to spoil their pets. The store also carries specialty items for dogs and cats, such as an iridescent CBD and catnip sprays, high-quality organic toys, and plenty of dog raincoats.

Our dogs are more than just pets, they’re our babies, our best friends, and sometimes our favorite drug performers. They deserve all the best treats, and thanks to Seattle’s dedicated dog-loving business owners, there are plenty of local options to choose from! Petye rates all the treats he tried at Dog Yard Bar, the Seattle Barkery, and Wag N’ Wash an 11 out of 10. If my Picky Chiweenie will eat them, your dog will love these treats too!
A la Mode
It’s never too late for Pi Day

BY DANIEL LINDSEY
SGN CONTRIBUTING WRITER

West Seattle is so isolated that, despite the bridge being closed for two years, it comes as news to many living elsewhere that the bridge is closed at all. Residents take pride in “never leaving, even if we could.”

Mind you, West Seattle has long been an island of sorts. The hillsides of Alki and North Admiral are a quilt of single-family homes, with only a few major roads home to businesses and pricey apartment buildings. Plus, there just isn’t the same density of things to do as in other districts.

Fortunately, to sample the menu of Queen-owned A la Mode Pie, those east of the Duwamish need not make the long trek to Phinney Ridge or Ballard. As I did, to take in the atmosphere and a few slices, they can visit A la Mode’s café branch at the Junction (California & Alaska).

I arrived at the place on a dreary Saturday afternoon, after a walk through the neighborhood alleys that run between backyards and garages. Despite the bustle of the street outside, the line was a single couple ahead of me, and nobody was dining in at the time (possibly because of pandemic concerns).

The staff were friendly. All the apparatus of the kitchen was visible behind the counter, and with the place’s high ceilings and dark, moody colors, there was a sense of intimacy at rest, since the kitchen itself wasn’t busy.

I tried a slice of each of the three pie varieties on the menu. The strawberry rhubarb, a personal favorite, had a melty-in-your-mouth filling with a strong, lasting tartness, fading nicely into its strawberry flavor and finishing with a hint of sweet vinegar.

The banana cream pie, another classic, had a good balance of its components. It made a statement without being too rich or too sweet.

A la Mode’s “signature dessert,” the Blue Hawaiian, was a blend of blueberry and pineapple filling, topped with toasted coconut. It had a mellow flavor, with the almost-whole blueberries, pineapple bits, and coconut shavings giving it a landscape of texture that might tempt the eater to chew more thoughtfully and savor the unique taste.

The crust on all three, which might have been appreciated on its own, was flavorful yet unobtrusive—firm enough to hold things together and soft enough to be cut with ease.

A la Mode’s menu also includes savory pies, various drinks, ice cream by the scoop or pint, and options for vegans and those allergic to eggs, nuts, or dairy. The price for one regular-sized pie is generally $35.

A la Mode can be found at 4225 SW Alaska St. in West Seattle, 5821 Phinney Ave N. near the zoo, or 2034 SW 56th St. in Ballard. Online, go to www.alamodeseattle.com.

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Idaho moves to pass anti-Trans legislation

by Lindsey Anderson
SGN Contributing Writer

On Wednesday, March 9, Idaho House Bill 675 was passed by the state House of Representatives. The legislation, which has been branded the “Genital Mutilation of a Child Bill,” will make it a felony for any adult in the state, including parents and doctors, to aid Transgender youth with age-appropriate, medically necessary, gender-affirming care.

The bill criminalizes operations such as top surgery or hysterectomy and also goes so far as to outlaw prescribing hormone blockers and HRT.

HB 675 coincides with other restrictive proposed legislation, including bills prohibiting discussions of gender identity and sexual orientation in public schools and a ban on transgender participation in sports.

The proposed law has many questioning the constitutionality of criminalizing the crossing of state lines to receive care that is legal elsewhere. The constitution limits restrictions on interstate travel, so HB 675 would likely be struck down on a federal level if it became law.

Idaho Democrats hopeful bill will die in committee

Despite HB 675 passing through the state House, the bill is not yet law. As with most bills, it will need to pass the Senate, and many lawmakers are confident the bill will not make it past the Senate. “Our Senate is not going to consider it. It’s too extreme even for the Republican-controlled Senate to consider,” he said.

Damage may have already been done

While the bill has yet to pass the Senate, transition advocates and lawmakers are hopeful the bill will not become law, other Idaho representatives say the damage has already been done.

“Just in the weeks since this law has been introduced, there have been three Trans kids in the area that attempted suicide. This risk is very, very real,” Rep. Innis Rubel told the SGN. “I am scared that this will result in the death of another child. This bill is uniquely dangerous in that it makes it [a] litigious-sentence felony [to leave] the state to receive gender-affirming care. It forecloses the option for families living in Idaho to even leave the state,” she said.

Many members of the Idaho state legislature find criminalizing citizens for crossing state borders to be overly extreme measure. Rep. Colin Bushnell believes the bill will result in families deciding to leave Idaho permanently in order to support their children. “I voted against the bill,” he said. “I believe it will increase the number of evidence-based medical care for Trans youth.”

Nash said, “I think it will have negative social injustice for Trans youth who were already at high suicide risk. People will not only seek care out of state but move out of state. It will also just not be trying to do the best they can for their children.”

“I think the whole law will be challenged,” added Rubel. “I think the whole law runs afoul of the Equal Protection Clause. If it becomes a law, it won’t survive a federal court challenge and will likely be struck down.”

When further questioned about her comparison to tattoos, which Idaho does permit minors to receive as long as they have parental permission, Nichols backed tracked. “Of course, a tattoo is something that does do something to your body, but it is not as invasive as taking parts of your body out. It is also not reversible,” she said.

“So, while that isn’t equal as far as that goes, it just shows that we’re not allowing children to make those decisions with a tattoo — now with their parent’s permission at 16 — why would we allow them to make major decisions and do things like that when they’re young?”

While the bill project itself onto Trans youth. For example, Rep. Ryan Kerby agreed with the harsh punishment of parents who seek to help their children transition because he would not have preferred this treatment in his youth. “If my parents would have done that to me, they would have deserved to go to prison,” he said. “What this needs to be is deterrent for people who want to do this stuff.”

Rubel responded, “Hormone blockers, you know, they get into your system, and it can take time to get out of your system. My concern is if you give those to young children, what kind of unintended consequences can happen when things don’t develop properly because the hormones are being blocked?”

“Within, first of all, puberty blockers are reversible,” countered Rep. Rubel. “When you stop taking them, puberty hits.” She explained that while some of the procedures do cause the bone structure to become irreversible, so is puberty. Forcing Trans kids to experience puberty is not only detrimental to their mental health but also makes transitioning later in life challenging.

Medical opposition to HB 675

“They’re forcing a young person into an irreversible situation and preventing them from taking reversible steps. It is a very difficult decision that is usually made with the family in concert with medical professionals,” Rubel said of the decision to take hormone blockers.

“I have several friends whose children have gone through gender reassignment as a youth. Those decisions were made after a lifetime of gender dysphoria. These are young people who knew they were in the wrong body since they were toddlers, and they would never make this decision lightly. These decisions are made after many years of deep certainty,” Rubel said.

Idaho Democrats believe that parents and doctors are best suited to make medical decisions about minors. Many choose to oppose the bill because it undermines the expertise of medical professionals.

Rep. Gunness was concerned about the bill’s disregard for medical practice. He said he voted against the bill because “it was too extreme and opposed by Idaho doctors [and] the American Medical Association, and it ignored accepted medical practice. This was so extreme that it was dealing with treatment that wasn’t surgical but was way beyond. It even purported to restrain treatment out of state.”

Mental health effects on LGBTQ+ youth

When asked about what the implications this “determinant” will have on the mental health of LGBTQ+ youth, Rep. Kerby said, “I don’t have a comment at all.”

Other conservatives, such as Rep. Nichols, were willing to consider the mental health impacts anti-Trans legislation has on kids. While she still supports the bill, Nichols did admit that children should have access to mental health resources, especially during puberty.

“I would say on the mental health part of things [that] children, when they’re growing up and going through puberty, are dealing with a lot of things that are transpiring with their bodies and the social aspect of society,” she said.

“Kids and teenagers have a lot of challenges, and there are a lot of issues that come about in the mental health [component], so we want to make sure that these kids are making decisions for themselves and that they are doing things after coming through this awful time of life. When kids [have] mental health issues, they need to be treated and talk to a therapist. I don’t think this constitutes permanent changes.”

Democrats like Rubel believe the bill is incredibly detrimental to LGBTQ+ mental health. “I think it is potentially catastrophically; there are situations where young people suffer gender dysphoria and require medical treatment or have a high risk of suicide,” Rubel said. “One of my colleagues said this bill puts a noose around the neck of Trans youth, and I don’t think he exaggerated.”

Furthermore, it is outrageous that puberty blockers are included in this bill. Those are reversible, but puberty is not.

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HRC launches Reality Flag campaign to raise Equality Act awareness

by Daniel Lindsay
SGN Contributing Writer

Florida: Disney employees force freeze on donations

Reuters reported on March 11 that Walt Disney Co. will be putting its political donations in Florida, after employees protested the company’s donations to Florida state senators who support the controversial “Don’t Say Gay” bill. The bill, which awaits approval by Gov. Ron DeSantis, would limit discussion of LGBTQ issues in schools.

Chief Executive Bob Chapek announced the decision in a memo to staff. “Speaking to you, reading your messages, and meeting with you have helped me better understand how painful our silence was,” he wrote. “It is clear that this is not just an issue about a bill in Florida but instead another challenge to basic human rights. You needed our to be a stronger ally in the fight for equal rights, and I let you down. I am sorry.”

Disney animation writer Benjamin Siemens, who publicly criticized the company for its donations, said of the announcement, “We have more to do as a company, in helping make Disney a place the LGBTQ+ community can be proud of again, but it’s a start.”

Arkansas: Trans models walk runway for rights

On March 14, NBC News put a spotlight on 13 Trans models that walked in a fashion show to protest Arkansas’ new anti-Trans laws, such as the ban on gender-affirming care for Trans minors (currently blocked by a federal judge), and the bill that limits Trans participation in school sports.

Trans activist Lisa Stuart organized the fashion show and participated. “We really want to promote this awareness and this visibility that Trans people are part of the community,” she said. “That we are everywhere, and that we are in every aspect of society, not just in some, nowhere, any other category.”

Clothes for the fashion show were provided by the Transition Closet, an Arkansas-based nonprofit that provides clothes for the LGBTQ community. The show’s proceeds went to the organization, which was formed in response to the state’s anti-Trans legislation.

“Luckily, we’re able to share our passion and the lack of visibility for the community,” Transition Closet founder Amaree Roush said. “Because that’s what we need right now.”

by Hannah Saunders
SGN Contributing Writer

The Human Rights Campaign launched its “Reality Flag” campaign on Feb. 23, to bring awareness and support to basic freedoms for LGBTQ+ Americans missing in 29 states.

“The Reality Flag campaign is designed to point out the inequalities LGBTQ+ individuals face every day — in our own voice,” said Joni Madison, interim HRC president. “From housing and educational discrimination to denial of government and health services, LGBTQ+ people are confronted by hurdles to simply exist every day.”

“Something is seriously wrong when state legislatures around the country are attacking LGBTQ+ rights for political purposes, forcing families to pack up their homes and move to another state so their children can have equal rights and legal protections,” said Madison. “This needs to change. The Reality Flag not only calls out the 29 states where basic freedoms are still missing for millions of people but stands as a symbol of hope that communities can rally behind to enact meaningful change.”

According to the HRC, about two-thirds of LGBTQ+ people have reported experiencing discrimination.

Millions of LGBTQ+ people in the United States are at risk of being evicted from homes, kicked out of businesses that are open to the public, and unable to access goods and services, and in many states, denied healthcare, home loans, taxi or car sharing, and government services.

The Federal Equality Act is federal legislation that would ensure comprehensive anti-discrimination protections for LGBTQ+ people in the United States across key areas of life, including housing, credit, education, public spaces and services, federally funded programs, and jury service. It was passed by the House of Representatives in February of 2021. Its fate now lies with the Senate.

What is the Reality Flag?

The Reality Flag is an altered version of the American flag, with 29 stars removed, which represents each state that lacks comprehensive protections for LGBTQ+ people. The Human Rights Campaign plans to unveil an 85-foot banner featuring the Reality Flag, which will be placed across the front of the HRC’s headquarters in Washington, DC — six blocks from the White House.

What to expect from the Reality Flag campaign

The Reality Flag campaign will feature content across traditional and social media platforms, including the video ad taken from footage of a protest and video testimonials created by the Emmy Award-winning director, producer, and creator of Amundson’s Transparent, Jenny Soloway.

Soloway’s videos will highlight real stories and lived experiences of LGBTQ+ people who have been impacted by discrimination. The videos will inspire and move audiences, while showing an urgent need for passing the Equality Act.

“When I was approached about partnering with HRC on this campaign, I jumped at the opportunity and immediately signed on,” said Soloway, “not only because of the important opportunity to help lift up stories and amplify the voices of LGBTQ+ people across the country, but because I believe this campaign has the potential to fundamentally shift the conversation around equality in a way that brings more people together than ever before, to ensure we are all equally protected and represented under the law.”

Just meeting and working with the amazing LGBTQ+ people who shared their stories of discrimination in front of the camera meant so much to so many of us behind the camera — especially since a majority in our production crew identify as LGBTQ+ and could relate to the experiences of the brave storytellers we worked with. It’s an honor to be able to do this work, and to be a part of this important campaign.”

Some of the stories Soloway will introduce through the Reality Flag campaign are:

• Laci J., a proud Lesbian Navy veteran who was released medical treatment by a Minnesota doctor because of her sexual orientation.
• Queenie, a Transgender woman, who experienced discrimination at the hands of her landlord in North Carolina. When Queen came home from a repair, he spotted a Transgender flag inside her home. He went on to harass Queen and she then filed a complaint with the Human Rights Campaign.

Soloway’s video vignettes will be highlighted through an advertising campaign that will include partnerships with 20 national media platforms, including TV, print, display, audio, social, search, and video, among others. HRC anticipates over 30 million impressions during the launch. For more information, visit www.hrc.org/campaigns/equality-act.
Pro-LGBTQ bishops should be reprimanded says Cardinal & convicted child molester

by Mike Andrew
SGN Staff Writer

Roman Catholic Cardinal George Pell—convicted in 2017 of molesting altar boys—called on the Vatican to discipline two of Europe’s most senior bishops for violating the church’s teachings.

In a statement released March 15, Pell asked the Vatican’s Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith (CDF) to “intervene and pronounce judgment” on Cardinal Jean-Claude Hollerich and Bishop Georg Bätzing, president of the German Bishops’ Conference.

Their crime in Pell’s eyes? They both made statements questioning Catholic teaching that same-sex relations are sinful.

Cardinal Hollerich, who presides over the Synod on Synodality that runs until October next year, said last month that Church teaching on same-sex relations was “wrong” and that the “sociological-scientific foundations” of Catholic teaching on what “one formerly considered as sodomy” was “no longer correct.”

Bishop Bätzing, the president of the German Conference of Bishops, said in a March 4 interview that same-sex relationships were permissible and not a sin and that the Catechism should be partially changed to reflect this.

According to Pell, such statements are “erroneous,” because they “not only reject the ancient Judeo-Christian doctrines against homosexuality but also contradict the Church, and reject the teaching on same-sex unions, the exclusive union of a man and a woman.”

The CDF is a powerful Vatican institution charged with keeping Church officials and the faithful in line with Catholic dogma. They may censure violators, prohibit them from preaching or publishing texts, or even excommunicate them from the Catholic Church.

The group was once headed by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, later Pope Benedict XVI. During his tenure, the CDF earned a reputation for suppressing progressive Catholic thought — especially on questions of sexual ethics and family relationships.

Cardinal George Pell — Photo by Gregorio Borgia/ AP

Pell was arrested for molesting children in 2017 and convicted by an Australian court in 2018, Australia’s High Court overturned the conviction in 2020 on the grounds that the jury “ought to have entertained a doubt” about his guilt.

A Vatican investigation into the charges against him was terminated after the High Court ruling. He was never disciplined by the Church, but the Pope allowed him to retire from his positions, as he was already 78 at the time of his arrest.

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International news highlights

by Daniel Lindsey
SGN Contributing Writer

Chile: First Gay marriage
Reuters reported March 10 that the two men in Chile, Javier Silva and Jaime Nazar, have become the first two men in the country to legally marry. A law allowing same-sex marriage that passed in December just came into effect.

Silva and Nazar have two young children, and have been together for seven years. They had a civil union for three years before the marriage, which did not provide the same benefits.

“Now we have the same rights as other families, and we will be able to have, we hope, a better future,” Silva told reporters after the civil ceremony.

“I think we’re putting ourselves at the level of the rest of the world in living in, which is great.”

Silva and Nazar said their children are “very happy to have this news.”

President-elect Gabriel Boric, who will take office on March 18, congratulated the couple on Twitter.

Bermuda: London rules Gay marriage ban constitutional
Reuters reported on March 14 that a London tribunal has ruled that Bermuda’s 2018 ban on same-sex marriage is constitutional in the British overseas territory. This comes three years after Bermuda’s top court ruled that the ban violates the constitutional freedom of conscience. The Bermuda government appealed the decision at the time, which brought the case to London’s Privy Council.

The legal challenge in the case against the ban, Roderick Ferguson, said in a statement by advocacy group OUTBermuda, “Our supporters of course say ‘love wins.’ This time it didn’t. Our work as a society is not done until everyone’s humanity is recognized both in law and in life.”

The organization has pushed for clarification on how the government will handle the lawful same-sex marriages that were performed since 2017.

Supporters of the ban, thousands among the Atlantic island’s population of 60,000, claim that legal domestic partnerships provide the same rights as marriage. Attorney General and Minister of Legal Affairs Kathy Simmons said in a statement that the government will “pursue an approach that guarantees the outcome of the appeal.”

The organization has pushed for clarification on how the government will handle the lawful same-sex marriages that were performed since 2017. SATURDAY MARCH 12, 2022

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