Summer Heat

The Return of CHBP

Beat the Heat!

Queen Style on Capitol Hill

Summer Travel to San Diego

Queen Hotspots in SODO

and The News!
CHICKENHEAD

Friends, thanks for coming out to the MUFF.

Tacos are two for one.

WHOO!

Please give a warm MUFF welcome to our band...

The Brutal Dildos

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Seattle Gay Horoscope

Lars Moroni, mysterious Capitol Hill mystic, gives you the weekly cosmic scoop. What do the stars hold for you?

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It feels like a decade since 2019 for live music lovers and local artists who rely on Capitol Hill Block Party, each summer to come together and dance away three days and nights in the middle of Pike Street.

With Charli XCX headlining Friday night and a slew of up-and-coming Queer favorites playing throughout the weekend, the festival did not disappoint. Let’s discuss the highlights of Capitol Hill Block Party 2022.

New and noteworthy:

To kick things off, Friday’s Vera Stage saw a near-genderless and colorfully-clad crowd flood the scene for highly-anticipated genre-bending collective MICHELLE. Having released their sophomore album only months ago, the predominantly POC and Queer New-York-based group had fans in a groove from the start of their set to the finish. Their warm, summery sound is both soothing and energetic—befitting a yearning, predominantly LGBTQ+ Seattle crowd.

Rock band Beach Bunny took to the mainstage to address the angst in the audience. After three years of built-up anxiety, their performance was much needed. Led by Lili Trillin's compelling vocals, jumping fans yelled, “Just up/Count your calories/I never looked good in mom jeans” and “I wanna be okay” from Beach Bunny's hit song “Prom Queen.”

The band’s guitar-forward crash-pop passion remained unwavering through songs such as “Sports” (“I’m tired of waiting/I was never good at sports/the games for the girls on the tennis court”) and “Clouds,” which can typically be found on playlists next to Queer artists like girl in red and Claud. On Saturday, before Danny Brown captured the mainstage audience with his high-intensity and un-sliced show of support for controversial Seattle rapper Rae Simone, other young artists swept diverse Seattleite listeners off their platform Convos—chilled. For now, for example, let it all out with their fans in passionate ballads “FUCK YOU HEATHER” and “mom i think im gay” in song for anyone who had a Pride month breakout. Early Saturday, the duo was born together since 2018, but have blossomed since graduating college in 2020. They go on tour for their recent praiseworthy EP My Friend Mica in September.

Cannon's brought funky electronics to life for the crowd on Saturday as well, inspiring 70s disco dreams with lead singer Michelle Joy wearing a leopard bodysuit and knee-high boots as she sang their hit about failed relationships, “Fire For You.”

Headliners to remember:

Whether you’re into DJs like Diplo and Jai Wolf or you’re more of a hyper pop Charli XCX gal, this year’s CHBP headliners made the festival return all the more surreal. While typically indie pop and rising pop artist headline the event, organizers at the parent company Daydream State opted to give CHBP the notoriety of a music festival this year, saving names like Mitski, MacDeMarco, and Japanese Breakfast for Day In Day Out Fest in two weeks.

On Sunday, Diplo brought down the house with endless mixing and smash hits. Similarly, confetti-accompanied future bass DJ Jai Wolf enthralled Saturday’s dancetools with dreamy hit songs like “Indian Summer” and “Moon Raider,” putting listeners in a trance.

Prior to the DJs’ finale, Reni Wolf and her bandmates balanced the crowd with repeat-after-me affirmations.Performing everything from the unwavering and formidable “Backlight” to fun songs like “Liquor Store” that showcase her unique voice and style, Reni Wolf brought authenticity and Queerness to the mainstage in a way no other artists could.

Charli XCX, an ally whose loyal fans are predominantly not heterosexual, came directly for the venue’s LGBTQ+ crowds as well. “This one’s for all the Gay boys out there,” she announced, giving a familiar-yet-shy-inducing dedication for her song “Boys.”

One thing was proven that night: Charli XCX is a bona fide star. As she nailed almost constant choreography with two mase, leather-wearing dancers by her side for a seemingly endless set, she appeared to switch her well-known alt-rock on and off to feature stunning vocalizations and harmonies.

Charli XCX is known to push creative boundaries, so seeing them play out in real time provided the audience with an opportunity to take part. Between songs, she tested the audience with teasing banter. Receiving the audience up for SPROBE—produced hit “Vroom Vroom,” she called out, “Who out here tonight is feeling cute? Who’s feeling sexy? Are you ever feeling like you’re cute, you’re sexy, like you’re dopey?”

CHBP’s crowds happily obliged by swaying their bodies and cheering on Charli XCX’s latest, more experimental hyper-pop anthems, but they were more enthused about hearing her breakout Icona Pop feature hit “I Love It” and tracks from her more recent, post-pandemic album Pop 2.

In the meantime, Charli and her dancers brought a production so high-quality that the Capitol Hill Stage, with gas prices almost twice as high as they were during the last Capitol Hill Block Party, disappeared behind the mainstage and the ecstatic music bellowing from it all.
HERE THERE BE DRAGONS
CHASING MY VOICE
JULY 28 - AUGUST 14, 2022

WRITTEN & PERFORMED BY FELICIA LOUD
DIRECTED BY MATHEW WRIGHT

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Aug 4 – 7
“Not the first band to ever use a horn section, but they are the first to use it with rock, jazz, and classic blues thrown in for good measure.”

Otis Taylor
Aug 9 – 10
“Raw and unfiltered blues in a style that’s all his own.” - Chicago Tribune

Poncho Sanchez
Latin Jazz Band
Aug 11 – 14
“Sinister and raw, Poncho Sanchez keeps the fires burning.” - Village Voice

Isaiah Sharkey
Aug 16 – 17
“Isaiah Sharkey is one of the great players of our time. His playing is honest, moving, and always beautiful.” - Downbeat

Fred Wesley
and The New JB’s
Aug 18 – 21
“Legends of funk, soul, and R&B, Fred Wesley and The New JB’s never fail to deliver.” - Rolling Stone

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One of the last places most people think of when they’re looking for a good time in Seattle is SoDo. At a glance it might seem like nothing but a wasteland of warehouses, passing trains, and loud trucks, but to the surrounding neighborhoods and any intrepid urbanites it offers a few choice queer and queer-friendly hangouts.

**The Comeback**

This venerable Queer bar, once known as R Place, re-opened in January this year and has been going strong since. On Thursdays it has Happy Hour from 4 PM to 9 PM, followed by the Amateur Strip Show (A.S.S.) hosted by dynamic drag duo LÜCHIL. On Fridays the Happy Hour is Disco themed, with a RedFunk’s Drag Race viewing party at 8 PM, and LASHES, Seattle’s longest-running drag show, closing out the night.

On Saturday, July 30, The Comeback will host TURN’T²: Black Sound Rewound, a celebration of 20 years of “raw Black and Queer music,” featuring Seattle Gay DJ legends Riz Rolffs and Almond Brown.

August 13th will see the bar’s, and the city’s, first Bollywood Night, an event series for LGBTQ+ South Asians, Desis, and their allies. Sponsoring the event is the Seattle chapter of the Queer Desi and South Asian (QDASA) group, a national organization working to create safe spaces to celebrate Queer Desi and South Asian identities.

**Supernova**

Though this inclusive nightclub launched just over a year ago, it sees huge lines on Friday and Saturday nights, and that’s no accident. As the home of Sapphire Seattle and BeautyBox, it has, by all accounts, redefined the Queer Seattle nightlife with free-flowing performance art that mingle well with the crowd. No two nights at Supernova are the same. Make sure to order tickets in advance; their shows sell out fast.

On Fridays the club hosts TCF, with classic party anthems, fresh hits, and drag performances, all choreographed by DJs. Saturdays there are for Stayin’ Alive, a blend of Disco both classic and Nu, with aerialists and the club’s in-house band, Universal Peoples.

**Sight of Hand Cellar**

For those less inclined towards late nights and loud music, this Queen-owned wine tasting room weathered the pandemic delays to now host occasional concerts and karaoke nights, in addition to its wine tasting events. Tastings can be made by appointment, but walk-ins are welcome as space allows.

Although no particular events are currently listed for the future, one can expect collaborations from the likes of life-long songstress Kate Barret and funk balladryan-comer Brittany Danielle. And conveniently, the upscale Nine Pines Pizzeria is right next door, for those who want to round off a tasting session with a tasty margherita (or something fancier).

**Queer-friendly spaces**

Although the Monkey Left Rooftop Lounge is listed as a “casual” spot, its parties can last up to 12 hours, featuring both guest and local DJs. It has hosted fundraising events for the entertainment nonprofit Nightlife Relief Fund, a “community-built network” for DJs, bartenders, and other music and arts professionals.

Meanwhile, the SoDo taproom of the Ghostfish Brewing Company is a lively, family-friendly space with award-winning, gluten-free beers, hearty food, and gender neutral bathrooms.
It’s no secret, Capitol Hill is one of the queerest and most fashionable neighborhoods in the world. Just taking a walk around the block can expose a baby-Queer to top-tier Gay fashion. Hoping to learn more about some of the most iconic and fashionable residents of the gayborhood, SGN took to the streets to find out just what’s trending this summer.

Isaac Hansen (hec/him)
Joel Curry (hec/him)

What are you wearing?
IH: The shirt is H&M and the shorts are Buffalo Exchange. The shoes are Nike.
JC: Burlington Coat Factory from top to bottom. It’s not Amazon. It’s Burlington.

What does fashion mean to you?
IH: It’s an opportunity to feel good. You’re like out and about but wearing a good outfit and you feel on top of the world today.
JC: I think fashion is fun. It’s a way to express your authentic self.

How do you describe your personal style?
IH: Gay. That’s the one word. I also need a print, at least.
JC: Loud. I love a big print, like toucans or I guess a giant Hawaiian shirt or striped or something. Not much of a solid print.

What is a staple for your closet?
IH: This shirt is kind of a staple. I feel like I wear this shirt a lot, and just a large, oversize button-up shirt, and then if I’m at home and no one else is around I’ll do a fuzzy pajama short.
JC: I love corduroy pants and I love button-downs, but I work in the corporate world.

What is a Queer fashion must-have?
IH: I feel like cuff-able pants.
JC: For shoes, you’ve got to have a shoe that you can just wear with everything and you can ruin it or whatever and that’s just these shoes, these are my “I don’t care about these” shoes and then also have a pair of shoes that you really care about and take care of.

What is the Gayest thing you’re wearing today?
IH: I like this little bow; I think it’s very cute and fun.
JC: The toucan shirt, it’s really out there. Everything else is pretty heterosexual, unfortunately.

Who are your biggest style icons?
IH: My roommate who just graduated in fashion merchandising, or random people I see on Instagram.
JC: Things I see on Instagram reels or the discovery page.

Emma (they/them)

What are you wearing?
These are a pair of velvet sweatpants I ended up cutting because they’re like medium petels and they were really short, so I just cut them into shorts. Then this got from a friend’s thrift sale, and then just Doc Martens and black socks.

What does fashion mean to you?
It’s just a way to get your point across and express yourself. That’s what everyone says, but it’s a way to communicate with the world.

How do you describe your personal style?
A little bit like “little boy chic” or just a stoner Lesbian because it’s just like that’s it.

How does your fashion reflect your Queer identity?
Androgynous in general. Being Queer isn’t just being Gay, it’s being outside of what you see in the windows, so it’s nice to be a physical representation of what you don’t see in the windows.

What is a staple for your closet?
I used to have this little pendent. It was a spider in resin with a glow-in-the-dark background, but I lost it. But that was a staple for me. Also, my cargo pants.

What is a Queer fashion must-have?
Confidence, that’s the most must. Wear what you want.

What’s the Queerest thing you’re wearing today?
My Tana Tape. I have my hoods taped up.

Who are your biggest style icons?
Dua Saleh, they’re a singer-songwriter. David Bowie. My buddy Zach.

Charly (he/him)
Sara (they/them)

What are you wearing?
C: I just kind of wear stuff that I thrift, I’m from Vegas, so Buffalo Exchange.
S: Right now I always wear these Adidas shoes, the superstars. A classic.

What is a staple in your closet?
S: My main piece that I like to wear is Calvin Klein boxers and a Calvin Klein bra. I like to have my boxers exposed almost always. They’re not super-exposed right now because I’m wearing high-waisted shorts and a belt, but that’s pretty much the staple. Also, silver necklaces, definitely. I think accessories are a huge part of an outfit.

What does fashion mean to you?
S: It’s feeling good about yourself and how you express yourself. Clothing can express so much more about a person.
C: Yeah, it’s expressing yourself and what you wear.

How would you describe your personal style?
S: Androgynous, but like kind of what I’m feeling. Whatever in the closet feels good together. I just try to look androgynous or just confusing, if that makes sense.

see STYLE page 8
What's a Queer must-have?
CA: I got most of this from the thrift store. The pants are from Urban Outfitters.
AL: I like to wear what I think is fun. That's what it's all about. What's my friend told me one time. I was going to buy something that was weird and was like, "Will I ever wear this?" And she said, "Fill your closet with stuff you like and then it will start to match."

Q: How would you describe your personal style?
AL: Gay. Sometimes a 12-year-old boy, sometimes fashionable, sometimes pink.
CA: Mine, I guess, is cottage-core but also like a little skater boy.

What's a staple of your closet?
AL: Well, I don't want to be nude but I think straight people can dress kind of boring. I think that people who are part of the community dress with more color, more patterns, and it's sort of like an identifier. Not always, some straight people just dress cool and have good fashion, or bad. I don't know. Depends on what you think of it, but it's sort of like an identifier, like, you Gay? Me Gay.

What's the Gayest thing you're wearing today?
CA: I bought it from the thrift store. The pants are from Urban Outfitters.
AL: I like to wear what I think is fun. That's what it's all about. What's my friend told me one time. I was going to buy something that was weird and was like, "Will I ever wear this?" And she said, "Fill your closet with stuff you like and then it will start to match."

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How do you reflect your identity through your outfit?
AL: Well, I don't want to be nude but I think straight people can dress kind of boring. I think that people who are part of the community dress with more color, more patterns, and it's sort of like an identifier. Not always, some straight people just dress cool and have good fashion, or bad. I don't know. Depends on what you think of it, but it's sort of like an identifier, like, you Gay? Me Gay.
What are you wearing today?
I am wearing a Sky blue blouse with a black skirt. It is a simple design but still chic. I usually go for comfortable and casual outfits.

How are you feeling today?
I am feeling good and energized. It's a nice day and I feel motivated to enjoy the day.

What's your favorite thing about this outfit?
I love the simplicity and elegance of the outfit. It's perfect for a day out or a casual event.

What do you plan to do today?
I plan to spend some time outdoors, maybe go for a walk or have a picnic with friends. I also want to catch up on some reading and maybe do some light exercises.

What's your favorite way to relax?
I love taking long walks in nature or spending time with my pets. They always help me unwind and feel refreshed.

What are you looking forward to today?
I am looking forward to spending time with friends and maybe trying out a new restaurant in the city. I am also excited to get some fresh air and enjoy the beautiful weather.

What's the most important lesson you've learned about fashion or style?
I think the most important lesson is to be true to yourself and your personal style. It's about feeling confident and comfortable in what you wear.
Citizens of the Emerald City are willing in the sun and the polar ice caps aren’t going to stop melting anytime soon. Less than half of Seattle residents have access to air conditioning, the lakes are getting crowded, and the planet’s burning while we sip iced coffee and argue about plastic straws. Here are some simple solutions to beat the summer heat!

Stay hydrated. Luckily for Seattleites, we’re in a location that hasn’t been as affected by the droughts and subsequent famine causing strife in many parts of the world. Drink up! However, there will be a drought-related food shortage affecting things like ham, rice, and olive oil this year, so expect prices to rise higher than they already have.

It’s not going to get better. In fact, according to ReliefWeb International, within the next few decades it’s predicted that 129 countries will experience drought exposure mainly due to climate change alone, with Mediterranean and Atlantic European countries being affected the most. Meanwhile, our close neighbor California’s fire season starts earlier and lasts longer each year. Really makes you appreciate the water features in all of our parks, doesn’t it?

Get rid of your lawn! Lawns are a waste of water. They look nice, sure, but most of that sod soaking up sun in suburbia is disrupting the local ecosystem drastically. They’re also a pain in the ass to maintain and constantly need trimming and maintenance to stay pristine.

What can you have instead of a grass lawn? I’m so glad you asked! Try these:

- PNW native wildflowers
- Locally sourced moss
- Clovers
- A vegetable garden
- Creeping thyme
All of these options are more sustainable and more beneficial to you and yours in the long run. When done correctly, they’re also more interesting and, in my opinion, more beautiful than your average Kentucky Blue or Bermuda grass plugs. Creeping thyme smells amazing on a summer evening, to boot.

Dismantle megacorporations! 100 companies are responsible for 71% of the world’s CO2 emissions, and they’re not slowing down. Look, it’s convenient to have your orders arrive at your doorstep in two or three days, but our unchecked consumerism is part of the reason it’s gotten so damn hot.

Factories pumping out chemicals to mass produce products that are wrapped in non-recyclable plastic or Styrofoam and shipped across the country at breakneck speed may seem like an easy, convenient way of getting about our day-to-day lives. I’m guilty of it. We all are. But the emissions from that type of convenience economy are slowly burning us alive.

You don’t have to be Captain Planet to notice it’s hotter in parts of the city with more cars and delivery trucks. Apply that observation to a global scale.

Throw in some human rights violations and regular space flights that emit more CO2 in 11 minutes than the average family van does in a year, and I’d say you’ve got a pretty solid case against keeping some of the biggest companies in the world.

Stay in the know. Knowledge is power. The adage is treated as cliché, but it remains relevant for a reason. Staying abreast of the climate crisis is a way to fight it. Here are some resources and organizations you can turn to for news, volunteer opportunities, and ways to make your life more climate-manageable.

- www.scientistrebellion.com
- Beacon Hill Food Forest
- The Poor Pride’s Almanac Podcast
- www.climatesolutions.org
- www.greenscattle.org
- National Park Foundation
- NRDC.org

This list doesn’t even scratch the surface, but it’s a start. It’d be unorthodox to say it’s just the tip of the iceberg, but there you have it. Don’t forget to recycle this newspaper when you’re done with it. Stay cool out there. Be thankful for the shade. Climate action starts with you.
San Diego, the 3rd largest city in America and the 2nd largest in California (at least according to LGBTQ+ Mayor Todd Gloría), is a city of interesting neighborhoods in valleys and mesas on the Pacific Ocean at the southern tip of California (on the border with Tijuana, Sonora, Mexico).

I had the pleasure of visiting during Pride weekend where over 85,000 persons attended the parade and festival held in Balboa Park, the iconic park just east of downtown which features the world-famous Zoo, Museums, and other attractions. Don’t miss the Museum of Art. San Diego has a perfect climate – very mild year-round with 10+ inches of rain so it is not as desolate as hot as nearly Phoenix or Las Vegas. And you are just a short drive to Los Angeles in the big city attractions. However, the water temperature is cool (in the mid-60s) compared with coastal beaches.

**What to do**

Don’t miss the Little Italy neighborhood which features the world’s best farmers’ market on Saturday. It is full of great restaurants like Ironside (try the salmon and finish it off with banana pudding). Or have desert at the Portland ice cream chain, Salt and Straw. The Little Italy Food Hall is also great with 7 food court options.

After that catch the light rail (known as the MT Transit Trolley) up to Old Town State Historic Park, site of California’s first settlement the birthplace of California. You will learn about the history of this interesting state. Don’t miss the Casa de Estudillo. The area has several excellent Mexican restaurants.

Next head to Santa Fe Station and catch a bus up to Balboa Park, and then onto the gayborhood, Hillcrest (where the boys are). The Gaslamp Quarter just south of downtown is also worth a visit. You can also head out to Coronado Island and the one and only Hotel del Coronado. Then hit one of the beaches (Pacific Beach, La Jolla, Torrey Pines, and more). The beaches from Coronado south were polluted when I was there due to pollution from Tijuana. You don’t need a car since they have a great transit system (seeTransit.com).

Speaking of Tijuana, although the light rail runs south to the border, friends discouraged a day trip. I was disappointed since I had some left-over pesos to spend from a previous Mexican vacation. Check when you arrive and make your own decision, but it is tempting.

**Nightlife means the Hillcrest**

Most of the bars are in the Hillcrest gayborhood which is just up the hill northeast of downtown. The Uptown Tavern is fun as is Gossip Girl. Try the iconic Flicks for dancing or great people-watching (lots of floats). Urban Mo has great food and drinks and is always packed. The Number One Fifth is another option as is the very popular The Very Popular Bar. You will find them all on University Avenue in the Hillcrest. All feature outdoor seating or courtyard. Hillcrest is arguably the best gayborhood in North America.

**Where to stay**

I stayed at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel and Marina on Harbor Island. Just steps to the airport, there are great paths along the harbor, and it is a short hop to the gayborhood (Hillcrest) as well as Balboa Park, Old Town, and Little Italy ( beware of resort fees though). I refuse to stay at hotels that charge them.

There are many hotels downtown, but I could not find any in Hillcrest proper. I have also stayed at La Pensione Hotel in Little Italy which I liked. Rates for hotels have gone up dramatically so check the hotel rates before you book your flight. There were several conventions in town as well as Pride going on when I was there, and the hotels were quite expensive.

**Getting there and getting around**

The MTS Trolley and bus system is great. You can take American Airlines to San Diego. I took Southwest through Denver on the way out which was fine although they have no chargers for your phone in the seats. My 3-hour Denver wait became a 4-hour wait due to a delay.

I took United on the way back which was also nice except you must download your credit card before the flight to purchase a snack box or liquor which is a hassle. Other than that, I was surprised how pleasant the flight was – especially since we flew over the Grand Canyon, Utah National Parks, and the Rocky Mountains.

Alaska is my favorite airline and they also have a lot of flights to SAN. The nearby Tijuana Airport is another option and they have a new cross border connector option where you walk over a bridge to the airport to clear customs and catch cheaper flights to Mexico and other destinations.

San Diego airport, the largest single runway airport in the country, is close to downtown. Catch the MTS bus and save on Uber or Lyft fare. The bus is free in summer.

I could walk to my hotel, the Sheraton, which is across the street. I loved watching the planes descend over Balboa Park into the airport. You can almost touch the tines. San Diego has one close in airport.

Note: Don’t bother with a rental car. You won’t need one to get around and they are very expensive these days.

**For more info**

Check out the LGBTQ+ news at LGBTQ+ San Diego County News (http://www.snd.org) or read the print edition. Rage Monthly is the Southern California LGBTQ+ magazine which covers San Diego.

The San Diego Reader is the alternative weekly. The Union Tribune is the daily.

Put San Diego down as an awesome destination for your next vacation. Whatever the season, you won’t be disappointed in this interesting and fun city. There is nowhere else like it.

Bill Malcolm is America’s only syndicated LGBTQ+ travel columnist. His column is now carried in LGBTQ+ publications in Toronto, Seattle, Chicago, and Washington D.C. His opinions are his own. He received no free meals, hotel stays, etc. during his trip making him one of America’s truly independent and unbiased travel writers.
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Adventures in Babysitting and RoboCop: Searching for humanity, self-acceptance, and identity while singing the blues with the babysitter and enforcing the law in a cybernetic shell

by Sara Michelle Fetters
SGN Staff Writer

I watched Chris Columbus' Adventures in Babysitting and Paul Verhoeven's RoboCop back to back in July 1987. An unconventional double feature, but they were playing at Spokane's North Division 6 at the same time, and as the staff wasn't the most observant bunch, it was easy to go unnoticed coming out of the former movie and sneaking into the latter. It helped that RoboCop had just been released and was doing boffo business, so disappearing into the crowd wasn't difficult.

By the time that summer rolled around, I was certain my life would not turn out the way I fantasized. I had recently finished my first year of middle school — still known at the time as “junior high” — and it had been a massive wake-up call. I'd been called out for being too effeminate on the football field, even though I was a star player. I got laughed at in the hallways for carrying my books close to my chest like a girl. My hair was too long, my clothes too colorful. It was exhausting. It was humiliating. I hated it.

Each drop in this hellish peer pressure bucket convinced me that I needed to eradicate every feminine trait I possessed. I cut my hair short in a military-style buzzcut. I started carrying my books in a backpack haphazardly slung over my shoulder so I would never again hold them in my arms like a woman cradling an infant. I started dressing exclusively in athletic wear unless forced to do otherwise.

It was all an illusion, of course, and I was feeling myself if I thought I'd be able to subjugate who I was inside forever. Though middle and high school cracks in this façade would show, and no matter how hard I worked to smooth one out, another would quickly take its place. This was a battle I was destined to lose, and by the time I hit the University of Washington campus, I knew I needed to start dealing with my gender identity issues or else.

What does any of this have to do with Adventures in Babysitting and RoboCop? They are both stories of transformation.

That’s obvious in the case of RoboCop. Verhoeven’s classic sci-fi action satire that wears its Mary Shelley origins on its shiny, nearly indestructible full-body metal prostheses for all the world to see. But it’s equally true of Columbus' directorial debut, his journey into late-night teeny-bopper comedic madness an opportunity for its young protagonist to find her voice and take charge of an impossible situation.

My connection to Adventures in Babysitting was immediate. The opening credits feature star Elizabeth Shue dancing around her bedroom lip-syncing to the Crystals’ 1963 classic “Then He Kissed Me,” a moment I remember in secret on multiple occasions. She plays Chris Parker, a 17-year-old high school senior who is getting ready for a date with boyfriend Mike (Bradley Whitford) when he cancels on her to go supposedly watch over a sick sister.

Adventures in Babysitting and RoboCop? They are both stories of transformation.

This suddenly makes Chris available to babysit for the Andersons. They’re going downtown Chicago for a business party and need someone to watch their 10-year-old girl, Sara (Maia Brewton). But instead of one kid, Chris finds herself inexplicably in charge of two more: Sara’s older brother Brad (Roth Coogan) — a freshman who has a crush on Chris, his former babysitter and now current classmate — and Brad’s goofy best friend, Daryl (Anthony Rapp). Things go off the rails when the group is forced to donCtx.

While the world of Babysitting is set in a fast-paced, technologically advanced society, the world of RoboCop is set in a dystopian future where the city is run by a corporation that uses advanced technology to control its citizens. Despite these differences, the themes of identity, self-acceptance, and the search for humanity are central to both films.

The film's unique double feature format allows for a fascinating comparison of the two films, as they both explore the same themes in unique ways. Columbus' film is a coming-of-age story, while Verhoeven's film is a science fiction action thriller. However, both films are also about the search for identity and the struggle to find one's place in the world.

As Weller has the shiniest part, it’s no wonder Allen’s turn as fellow actress Anne Lewis is frequently overlooked when discussions of the film’s performances are focused solely on the scientists, but creating a believable character who takes charge in ways women weren’t often allowed to in the 1980s, and does so with a quiet, take-no-prisoners confidence that still feels slightly ahead of its time even now. Much like Sigourney Weaver in Aliens a year prior, Allen isn’t afraid of her femininity. Yet she also is not beholden to it. Lewis can stand toe-to-toe with anyone, and she doesn’t have to change who she is or the image she wants to present to the world while doing it. As Weller is a real one for Brian De Palma in classics like Blow Out and Dressed To Kill, for me, this is her finest hour, and I do not believe RoboCop would have achieved its iconic status without her.

Of the two, Adventures in Babysitting is the one that has the most elements that have aged the worst, most notably an egregious homophobic slur that gets uttered on multiple occasions. But RoboCop has its share of triggering moments as well, though the bleak opening 15 pages of the pitch-black bleakness of the satire do a lot of the heavy lifting to help push those components into the background. Yet each picture is more than the sum of these missteps — far more — and the fact that we’re still quoting lines and referencing signature moments 35 years later speaks volumes.

For me, these two films sit on the edge of the 1980s, highly personal. They will be eternally linked together, Chris Parker and Anne Lewis’s each an important influence on my journey to self-acceptance. They’ve helped me find strength I didn’t know was there. They’ve inspired me to take risks I never would have otherwise dared to think about, let alone attempt. These women are forever part of me, and I don’t have to sing the blues or buy anything for a dollar to admit it.

Now celebrating their 35th anniversaries, Adventures in Babysitting and RoboCop are both available on Blu-ray, the former from Buena Vista Home Entertainment and the latter via Arrow (including a spiffy new 4K Ultra HD release). Each is also available to purchase digitally on multiple platforms. Adventures in Babysitting is currently streaming in an edited version on Disney+.

VISIT US ONLINE SGN.com JULY 29, 2022 SGN 15
Peele’s monstrously entertaining *Nope* flies high

by Sara Michelle Fletters  
SGN Staff Writer

*NOPE* Theaters

There’s something in the sky. It’s spooking the horses at the ranch owned by siblings OJ (Daniel Kaluuya) and Emerald Haywood (Keke Palmer). After the mysterious death of their Hollywood legend father, Otis Haywood Jr. (North Daniels), they’ve been trying to carry on his legacy of training the best animals in the business — to mixed results. Just to keep the lights on, OJ has even been forced to sell some of their prized stock to theme park and petting zoo operator Ricky “Jape” Park (Steven Yeun), a former child star whose career ended in bloody calamity in front of a live studio audience.

But there is still something in the sky. OJ is certain there’s an object hiding in the clouds, and Emerald sees a business opportunity if they can prove their suspicions are true. With the aid of bored electronics store technician Angel Torres (Brandon Perea) and the visual ingenuity of famed cinematographer Atkins Hohl (Michael Wincott), the Haywoods will get to the bottom of this bizarre mystery. They believe they’ll discover whatever it is to take dramatic proof of their invisible aerial visitor, not realizing the price of the truth may be their lives.

Jordan Peele’s *Nope* has a lot going on. At heart, the film is really nothing more than a freakily little bit of thrillers about a small group of outsiders banding together to face down an unstoppable opponent. While there are thematic elements that attempt to lap into the Hollywood’s world history involving race, gender, age discrimination, and the industry treatment of child actors, pieces never entirely fit together. But Peele’s grasp on the material remains electrifying throughout, and even if his latest doesn’t have the staying power of either *Get Out* or *Us*, when taken on its own modest terms this bit of throwback Jack Arnold meets Steven Spielberg meets Larry Cohen terror remains a lot of fun.

There are some seriously great moments. The opening prologue, where we see what happens to the elder Haywood, is chilling in its minimalism, the way Peele focuses on father and son throughout a great hook that immediately made me excited to discover what was going to happen next. It’s immediately followed by the humorously awkward introduction of Emerald. The young woman arrives late for an important shoot involving one of their horses only to blow everyone away with her monologue right before allowing things to fall disarray apart due to her flippant indifference.

Another great scene is a flashback to Jape’s popular 1990s sitcom. This initially feels slightly out of place as it shows a gruesome tragedy seemingly disconnected from the larger mystery hiding in the skies above his Western-themed amusement park and the Haywoods’ spooking ranch. But the broader implications of this sojourn into the former actor’s past link to the primary plot beautifully. Jape’s backstory adds a layer of heartbreak that spurs a desire for payback, and achieving that payback will require almost as much selfish foolishness as it does selfish heroism.

The revelation as to what is actually going on elicited a few unexpected jiggles. From the packed venue audience I saw the film with. Some of those laughing were doing so to ease the aura of anxiety and dread Peele was working to create. Yet it was equally clear others were laughing in disbelief at the manner the filmmaker had taken things. Even if it’s profoundly telegraphed early on, it is a silly reveal, and while my retro horror-loving heart loved it, I could see how some may have been expecting something more substantial from Peele and thus felt a minor sense of disappointment.

I wish to say more, but even hinting at what happens during the last act would be unnecessarily evil as audiences deserve to find out on their own. What I can say is that Kaluuya is as wonderful as ever, Wincott is a great tease, and Yeun gives a quietly harrowing revelation. And Yon brings to his few scenes a soulful melancholy.

The film is also magnificently shot by the great Hoyte Van Hoytema (*Dunkirk*), the veteran cinematographer an ace in the hole who helps give Peele’s shocker its haunting, painterly appeal.

Yet it is Palmer who makes the lasting impression. After breaking out in 2020’s *Ma* and *The Forever Purge*, she’s further proving a name for herself as she grows up on camera for all the world to see. She’s a star, and she’s got the talent to shine. Emerald has all the best lines. She has almost all the memorable moments.

The character is front and center in several unexpecting ways, and Palmer grooves along with the growing craziness to her own idiosyncratic beat. I couldn’t take my eyes off of her.

The more I think about this one the more I smile. It doesn’t have the complexity or resonance of Peele’s first two efforts, and because of that, I doubt the film will achieve the same level of acclaim or success as many others. But the awe is just too enjoyable. Its final 30 minutes are a masterclass of energetically kinetic moovie remniscent of Spielberg’s *Jaws*, *Tobe Hooper’s Lifeforce*, or John Carpenter’s *In the Mouth of Madness.*

If *Nope* doesn’t have the disquieting staying power of *Get Out* and *Us*, it truly couldn’t care less. Peele is riffing in imaginative ways and is helmed by a director who kept me engaged and eager to see what all the fuss was about. His latest is monstrously entertaining, and I cannot wait to see it again.

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Just a few minutes’ drive from Alki beach sits a quaint little bookshop bursting at the seams with everything a Seattle reader could ever need. Pegasus Book Exchange, one of the city’s oldest bookstores, has been offering readers some of the best and fairest-priced beach reads since the 1980s. Pegasus Book Exchange is a quintessential Seattle business, operating with a chill vibe and friendly demeanor. Everyone who enters the store feels like an old pal, and even the owners refer to themselves as “businesspeople.”

“The books have had it for years. There are three owners here, and I’m the other person,” joked jack-of-all-trades Eric Ogrisec. “So, I’m the guy who does all the stuff they don’t have time to do. They’ve never given names, they don’t even like being called ‘owners.’ We all try to take care of the place the best we can.”

A magical history
For Ogrisec, who has worked at Pegasus for nearly a decade, bookselling is a calling. “I’ve been doing it for many years. Honestly, this will be my twentieth year bookselling—coming up. I’ve done various other things from being a teacher to working in big business in Manhattan, but this is what made me happiest,” he said. “No two days are ever alike. I get to see cool stuff that I’d never see if I didn’t work here. It’s just exciting. Ultimately, I can make enough money to live on it, and I can make myself happy and be a good partner to my lady at home, and that’s ultimately super important.”

While Pegasus Book Exchange moved a few times in its 40-year history, the store has always been located on the same West Seattle block. “It’s been in two, three locations, but all on this street, always,” Ogrisec said. The location has molded the store into what it is today. “It’s hectic and wonderful. We see so many books, we’re such a small shop that some people just come in, and they’re like, ‘How do you guys have so many books?’” As you can see, it’s small, narrow, but we have so many things coming through.”

“Honestly, we get compliments from people who go to the bigger shops all the time and say how great our stock is. It’s unique for its size, but it can be so hectic because it is small. We’re in the busiest part of West Seattle, too. Right near Easy Street, that’s the corner of the junction itself, it’s always lively,” he continued.

Becoming a hybrid store
Pegasus Book Exchange is a “hybrid” store featuring new and used books. Originally the shop exclusively sold used books. “We started only used, probably for about 27 years, and then with Twilight and Don Vito Code, those were the two big books that made us reconsider that. So, we started ordering new around that point, and we’ve always kept doing that,” Ogrisec said.

Today, the store is still mostly used books, but the influx of new books means readers can find just about anything they want. “Now it’s about 40% of our store, when I started it was only about 10%. Especially with the pandemic now, people buy what they want regardless of if it’s new or used. Of course, they always want if it used.”

Ogrisec says the pandemic has changed how some customers buy books. The store has had to adapt, too. “Back in the day, it would have been harder to sell some of these hot things now. Now people are like, look that’s the way to get it. The store has had to adapt, too.”
by Terri Schlichenmeyer
Special to the SGN

MAGIC SEASON: A SON’S STORY
WADE ROUSE
©2022, Hanover Square Press
$27.99
304 pages

You’ve always looked up to your dad. Sometimes it happened literally, like when you were a child and “up” was the only way to see his face hovering over yours. You’ve looked up at him in anger, embarrassment, dismissal, and yeah, you’ve looked up to him in the best ways, too—never forgetting, as in the memoir Magic Season by Wade Rouse, that sometimes the hottest thing is seeing eye to eye.

Wade Rouse threw like a girl. He couldn’t catch a baseball, either, and he wasn’t much of a runner as a young boy. He tried because his father insisted on it, but Rouse was better with words and books and thoughts. He was nothing like his older brother, Todd, who was a natural hunter, a good sportsman and an athlete, and their father never let Rouse forget it.

And yet, curiously, Rouse and his dad bonded over baseball. Specifically, their love of Cardinals baseball became the one passion they shared. The stats, the players, the idea that “anything can happen,” the hope that there’d be a World Series by the end of every season — this was the glue they needed. It was what saved them when Todd was killed in a motorcycle accident. When Rouse came out to his father, Carls baseball was what brought them back together after two years of estrangement.

In between games, though, and between seasons, there was yelling, cruelty, and all the times when father and son didn’t communicate. Rouse accepted, but didn’t like, his father’s alcoholism and his harsh life-lessons; his father didn’t like Rouse’s plan for his own future. Rouse admits that he cried a lot, and he was surprised at the rare times when his father displayed emotion — especially since an Ozark man like Ted Rouse didn’t do things like that.

Until the time was right.

Love, Wade Rouse says, “is shaped like a baseball.” You catch it, throw it or hit it out of the park, but “you don’t know where it’s going.”

Just be sure you never take “your eye off, from beginning to end.”

Oh, my. Oh, my, but “Magic Season” is a ten-hankie book.

First, though, you’re going to laugh because author Wade Rouse is a natural-born humorist and his family is a great lunching-pod for him despite the near-drowning despair of the overall theme of this book. That sense of humor can’t seem to let a good story go, even when it’s obvious that there’s something heartbreaking waiting in the half-penny.

Which brings us to the father-son-baseball triple play. It may seem to some readers that this kind of book has been done and done again, but this one feels different. Rouse excels at filling in the blanks on the other essential teammates in this tale and, as any big skirmish, readers are left breathless, not knowing the final score until the last out.

If you like your memoirs sweet but with a dash of spice and some tears, here you go.

For you, Magic Season is a book to look up.

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Pegasus Book Exchange has a wide variety of books with something for every reader. “It’s a little bit of everything, when we first started, it was nonsense and mystery was our bread and butter. Without those two, we would not be here, and the New Age, at one point, was big. But now it’s the smaller subjects that aren’t necessarily big for people, it’s a good mix,” said Owner Grigsbee

Unlike many used bookstores, Pegasus Book Exchange has also an LGBTQ+ section. “We have one of the larger LGBTQ+ sections out there,” said Owner Grigsbee. “There’s a fair amount of them. We have a gender studies section with a lot of non-fiction, so that’s been a good section, and has been for a few years now,” he added.

While Grigsbee sees many of the benefits of having a wide LGBTQ+ section, he also admits it’s something the store employees go back and forth on. “We were torn on it, honestly. You want to have the books separated so people can quickly access them, but in a way, you might be doing them a disservice,” he said. “Like, someone who might not ever shop that section, won’t find it if it’s not in the section they normally shop. So, we’re kind of torn on it, but we do have that spin rack for you, know, Queer teens, and that section does well because the kids know they can go back there.”

For Gay-Mexican by Ana Castillo or Midnight Traffic by Anthony Lumley, there’s a table on Emily St. John Mandel’s beautiful book, very popular. Grigsbee said, “Next to it, Leprechaun by M. B. Stedman, I just finished re-reading both of those books, and they are incredible. Nonfiction, you know. Crying in H-Mart has been the hottest book in non-fiction for quite some time, and then good pickups like House in the Cerulean Sea by Knute; people need something nice and heartwarming and that book is that. Those four have been some of the hottest, at least in the last couple of months.”

Pegasus Book Exchange sells more than just books. “We have our T-shirts, we’ve got all these stickers,” Grigsbee said, taking a walk around the front of the store. He also sells special handmade jewelry, cards, and dehydrated mushrooms.

“Sea glass jewelry that my partner and I make. We go out to the beach, then put a lid on it. We sell mushrooms that we forage in the woods. I’ve got dehydrated mushrooms that I find in the woods year-round. We’ve been keeping our car to the ground to listen to what people want. People have been asking for cards for a long time, so this is one of our customers, he makes this. V. McMurray is his name. Just kind of, once again, selling what the customers want. We even have board games and puzzles,” he said.

Pegasus makes sure to listen to what the customers want, which Grigsbee says makes the store “Bookshoppers are kind of known to be stubborn and do what they want, and we’re the opposite of that. We listen to what the customer wants, but ultimately dictate what we carry,” he explained.

“Like, a lot of bookstores that are no longer around kept what they wanted. That worked for many years, but with the advent of the internet and Amazon, now everything can be purchased there immediately for cheaper than what we have. So, we’ve really got to keep one ear to the ground and listen to what the folks want, and that certainly is, even if it means carrying stuff you don’t think will sell,” he continued.

The store carries books of all types, from graphic novels to children’s books to dense academic texts on the science of writing. The store is also a must-stop shop for any Seattle book lover.

Pegasus Book Exchange is located at 4553 California Ave SW, Seattle WA 98116. The store is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Saturday, and from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Sundays.
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VISIT US ONLINE SGN.ORG JULY 29, 2022 SGN 19
National & International News

Squad goals
17 House Democrats arrested at abortion protest

by Lindsey Anderson
SGN Staff Writer

Seventeen House Democrats were arrested Tuesday, July 19, after gathering outside the Supreme Court to protest the ruling in Dobbs v. Jackson. The sixteen congresswomen and one congressman gathered near the steps of the Marble Palace to participate in a "green wave" protest arranged by the group Rising. Sporting custom "we won't back down" green bandanas, the congress members marched from the Capitol Building to the court, chanting.

Within moments of the congress members' arrival at the court, which had been blocked off by police since the June 24 ruling, police demanded protesters "cease and desist." In an act of civil disobedience, the protesters sat in the street, prompting police to make arrests. All lawmakers arrested were later released on scene. Among those arrested on Tuesday were representatives Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Carolyn Maloney, Ilhan Omar, Rashida Tlaib, Cori Bush, Veronica Escobar, Jackie Speier, Barbara Lee, Aayanna Pressley, and Katherine Clark.

Following their arrests, several congress members issued statements on social media, including Speier of California, who, at 72, was the oldest member of Congress to participate in the day's events. "I have never been arrested before, but I can hear the great Congressman John Lewis imploring me to make some noise and get in good trouble," she wrote. "We must be willing to speak out for patients who have the right to hope for health care and the fundamental right to bodily autonomy."

In a statement, Capitol Police said they made the arrests because protesters were "crowding, obstructing or inconvenying" public spaces. They also confirmed that the protesters were given three warnings to move out of the street before police action.

Just a PR stunt?
In the days following the D.C. protests and arrests, many conservatives look to social media to accuse members of the "squad" of "taking" their arrests. People pointed out that Congresswoman Ocasio-Cortez held her hands behind her back while being escorted away from the scene by police despite not wearing handcuffs, and they accused her of pulling a stunt for publicity.

Capitol Police records show that all seventeen arrests did occur, and Ocasio-Cortez posted her arrest paperwork and $50 fine on Instagram as proof. Addressing the rumors further, she explained her hand posture on Twitter, writing, "putting your hands behind your back is a better practice while detained, handcuffed or not, to avoid escalating charges like resisting arrest."

Tuesday's protests were not the first for Democratic members of Congress. Many have been actively protesting the overturning of Roe v. Wade since before the decision was even released.

Following the release of the ruling, 118 protesters were arrested outside the Supreme Court, including Rep. Judy Chu, who was the only member of Congress to propose legislation to codify Roe before the ruling. Unfortunately, the bill, which passed through the House in September, died in a filibuster on the Senate floor.

Further action
Rise Up 4 Abortion Rights has plans for future protests across the nation, and the group expects more support and action from Democratic leaders in Congress. "I will continue to do everything in my power to raise the alarm about the assault on our reproductive rights," Rep. Omar said following Tuesday's events.

While lawmakers are stirring up action outside the Capitol building, the American people just hope they can keep the momentum going on the inside. Only days before the protest, on July 13, the House passed yet another bill to federally protect abortion rights. If the bill can hold out until after the November mid-term elections, Democrats are hopeful it may have a fighting chance.

National news highlights

by Daniel Lindsley
SGN Contributing Writer

Bacon, Germaine star in Queer slasher flick

NBC News reported July 22 on They/Them (pronounced "they slash them"), a thriller film starring Kevin Bacon and No binary actor Theo Germaine, which is set to air on the streaming platform Peacock on August 5. In the film, Kevin Bacon's character runs a conversion therapy camp for queer teens; meanwhile, a masked killer stalks the campers. Theo Germaine's character, a Trans woman named Jordan, works with the other campers to stay alive and find out the truth about the camp's past. Germaine commented, "We really love the idea that our character Jordan doesn't have a very positive relationship with her parents, and they're like this is who I am."

"They want to legally emancipate themselves, and they make a deal with their parents," Germaine went on. "Which is that they go to this conversion camp for a week, and if it doesn't work, their parents will get out of the way and make it easy for them to separate." Of Bacon's character, Germaine said, "I think he represents the way that conversion therapy conditions you and tricks you and breaks your defenses down in order to try and get through to you to change who you are. He's kind of the southern most of that idea in this film."

They/Them will be screenwriter John Logan's debut as a director. "I've loved horror movies as long as I can remember," he said. "I think because monsters represent the 'other' and as a gay kid I felt a powerful sense of kinship with those characters who were different, outlawed, or forbidden," he said. "I wanted to make a movie that celebrates Queerness, with characters that I never saw when I was growing up."

Congressman attends son's gay wedding, votes against gay marriage

NBC News reported on July 23 that Republican representative Glenn Thompson of Pennsylvania attended his son's wedding just three days after voting against a House bill that would codify legal protections for same-sex marriage. Thompson's press secretary, Madison Stone, and his son confirmed the congressman's attendance.

"Congressman and Mrs Thomas were thrilled to attend and celebrate their son's marriage on Sunday night as he began this new chapter in his life," Stone said in an email. "They added that they were "very happy" to accept their son's now in-law "into their family."

In an email to Centre Daily, a local newspaper, Stone wrote that the Respect for Marriage Act was "nothing more than an election-year messaging stunt for the Democrats in Congress who have failed to address historic inflation and out of control prices at gas pumps and grocery stores."

The act is now being considered by the Senate. NBC added that 71% of Americans and a majority of Republicans support same-sex marriage, according to a July Gallup poll.
GOP selling out on marriage, says Christian right leader

by Mike Andrew
SGN Staff Writer

Congressional Republicans are preparing to sell out their Christian right supporters on the issue of marriage equality, hate group leader Tony Perkins warned in a July 26 email.

Perkins, head of the Family Research Council, took fright after 47 House Republicans voted with their Democratic Party colleagues to legalize same-sex marriage by federal statute on July 19.

The bill, titled the Respect for Marriage Act, was intended to protect same-sex couples’ right to marry from possible future Supreme Court decisions. It passed the House easily, with 267 votes in favor, against 137 against.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi was clear that the legislation came to the floor in response to the high court’s ruling reversing the established precedent of Roe v. Wade, and in response to Justice Thomas’ concern opinion challenging a number of prior court rulings, including Obergefell.

The future of the bill in a closely divided Senate remains in doubt, but MSNBC has reported that four or five Republican Senators are ready to support the measure: Susan Collins (R-ME), Rob Portman (R-OH), Tim Tillis (R-NC), Ron Johnson (R-WI), and possibly Lisa Murkowski (R-AK).

Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell is also reported to be open to passing the legislation, not because he favors LGBT rights, but because he wants the November election to be a referendum on the Biden administration and not on the GOP’s medieval social agenda.

Faced with seemingly good odds of passing a federal guarantee of marriage equality, Perkins apparently felt the need to step in and warn Republicans of the political risks of parting ways with the Christian right.

“Heading into November with the elections on a silver platter, the men and women who rebranded themselves as the forces of anti-womanism have suddenly gone soft on an issue that should be a political no-brainer: marriage,” Perkins wrote.

“If the GOP’s defectors are making a political calculus, it’s a terrible one,” he continued. “Conservatives who abandon marriage are only enduring themselves to two sets of people: radical Democrats who would never vote for them anyway, and moderates from both parties who would make marriage the deciding factor of any vote.

“Who they stand to lose, on the other hand, is far more significant this November. Not only do they risk undermining their evangelical base, but also other Americans who see same-sex marriage as the gateway drug to all of the transgender, LGBT, sex-ed chaos we’re experiencing in society; by not believing an activist court should usurp the democratic process, and c) disgruntled Democrats who thought the Republican Party would be the counterweight to the Left’s extremism.”

Perkins may be overstating the case, however. Polling, even among mainstream Christians including Roman Catholics — universally shows large majorities in support of marriage equality.

International news highlights

by Daniel Lindsay
SGN Contributing Writer

Budapest Pride swelling hot this year

Reuters reported on July 23 that thousands of people endured temperatures of 104 degrees Fahrenheit to march in Budapest Pride, which was in part a protest against the country’s anti-LGBT IQ laws.

“I am queer myself and it’s important that we show ourselves, especially in a country where the political sentiment is linked to anti-LGBTQ+ people,” said one participant.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban gave a speech before the rally, saying that Hungary’s greatest challenges were demographic, migration, gender politics, and economic problems. Orban’s Christian Democratic government has argued that being able to marry or adopt children is fundamentally a state matter, not a national government’s, not the European Commission, whose president has named the anti-LGBT IQ laws of Hungary a “disgrace.”

Before the Pride event, dozens of embassies in Budapest made a joint statement in support of the LGBTQ+ community. The U.S. Embassy’s statement said, “We express our full support for members of the LGBTQ+, cisgender, queer, and Intersex community and their rights to equality and freedom of expression peace and protection.”

Cuban referendum could allow gay marriage, adoption

Reuters reported on July 22 that Cuba’s National Assembly has approved an update to its Families Code, which if passed in a referendum vote could pave the way for Gay marriage, adoption of children by same-sex couples, stronger women’s rights, and better protections for children, the elderly, and people with disabilities.

Organizers of community meetings said 62% of participants expressed support for the change, a loss portion compared to previous amendments, which have garnered up to 96% support.

Opponents of the change include church leaders like Methodist pastor Henry Nurse, who argued, “What has been happening in is so sickening. It’s going to bring confrontation. It goes against what has been taught for many generations of years throughout the world about the true traditional marriage that is between a man and a woman.”

A Havana couple, Acosta and Gabriela Alfonsa, women who have lived together for years but haven’t been able to marry legally, said, “We want things to be with us.”

“Two people are getting married, two people are getting married. What’s so different?”

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said the change was necessary to reflect changes in society.

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Greek Orthodox Church protests Gay celebrity baptism

by Mike Andrew
SGN Staff Writer

The Greek Orthodox Archbishop of America, Elpidophoros, touched off an ecclesiastical international incident when he baptized the two children of a Gay couple on July 12.

The couple, Evangelos Bousis and Peter Danduras, are internationally known designers, and being of Greek descent, they wanted their children baptized in a Greek Orthodox church in Greece, where they sometimes reside.

The couple’s children, Alexios and Eleni, were baptized in the Fanagria Feneros monastery of Mount Athos, the fashionable Athenian suburb of Vouliagmeni.

Because the two parents are Gay and celebrities at that — what is usually an ordinary event in church life received worldwide media coverage.

As head of the Greek Orthodox Church in North and South America, Elpidophoros can do pretty much whatever he wants in his own jurisdiction, but protocol requires that he ask permission to administer sacraments like baptism in another bishop’s church.

Enter the Metropolitan Bishop of Glyfada, in whose jurisdiction the baptism was performed. Metropolitan Antonios claims that when Elpidophoros wrote for permission to perform a baptism in one of Antonios’ churches, he did not disclose that the children were part of a family headed by a same-sex couple.

“The Archbishop of America acted of his own accord, arbitrarily, and uncanonically within my metropolis, inasmuch as, while he was well aware that the children do not belong to a family according to the institutions of the Church, he did not inform me of anything to me,” Antonios wrote in a statement.

The Greek Orthodox Church does not approve same-sex marriages and does not recognize families of same-sex partners. Many Greek bishops are notoriously homophobic. Consequently, Antonios — and by extension, the whole church in Greece — was scandalized by Elpidophoros’ action.

As soon as the baptism became public, the Holy Synod, the Greek Church’s governing body, made all of its bishops and abbots, announced it would send a letter to protest to Elpidophoros. And, because the American Archbishop is under the jurisdiction of the Patriarch of Constantinople, not the Church of Greece, the synod also sent a protest letter to Patriarch Bartholomew of Constantinople at his headquarters in Istanbul.

Elpidophoros was born in Istanbul and would have to be well connected with high church officials in the Patriarchate to land a plum job in America, so, not unexpectedly, Constantinople defended him.

The Reverend John Chrysaysig, a theological advisor to the Patriarch, published an editorial in Religion News Service in which he argued that no one would expect a desire to go into detail about the family life of the parents when a child needs to be baptized. “There should be no controversy over a baptism, to which all children are entitled,” Chrysaysig wrote. He did not hesitate to call out by name Greek bishop who criticized the baptism and suggested it was time for “a frank discussion about sex and gender in the church.”

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