

Youngstown  
Chapter  
Winter  
2021

# PFLAG Rag

Visit our website at  
[www.youngstownpflag.org](http://www.youngstownpflag.org)



## Virtual Support Group Meetings Continue

February 9, 2021, at 7:00 pm

March 9, 2021, at 7:00 pm

April 13, 2021, at 7:00 pm

May 11, 2021, at 7:00 pm

Contact [youngstownareapflag@gmail.com](mailto:youngstownareapflag@gmail.com) to register for the meeting, and you will be sent the zoom invitation.

## Our Organizational Members



"Help for Today ...  
Hope for Tomorrow."



## Youngstown Area PFLAG: How We Got Here

—Jan Baharis

Join us for a trip to our past at our next virtual support group meeting on February 9, 2021. We will welcome as our guest Barbara Pagani, LPCC-S, a well known local counselor, currently employed at Alta Behavioral Health.

As a young YSU graduate student in the 1980's, Barb became interested in the influx of people experiencing AIDS/HIV in the Youngstown area. This interest led to her participation in a field project with Joe Bordo, then the Youngstown Health Department's Gay Health Consultant. The result of the project was the beginning of our PFLAG chapter.

We welcome Barb to share her memories and experiences from this early, little known chapter in the history of Youngstown Area PFLAG. We hope that our readers will join us! To join the support group, Email us at [youngstownareapflag@gmail.com](mailto:youngstownareapflag@gmail.com) and request an invitation to the meeting.

Hope to see you then!

## What Happens to Some L.G.B.T.Q. Teens When Their Parents Reject Them

— Amanda Rosa, *NY Times*, 11/11/20

Over a third of young people in foster care in New York City identify as L.G.B.T.Q. and are struggling to find the support they need, according to a new survey.



Our Meeting Place  
St. John's Episcopal

### Disclaimer

The views expressed in these pages are not necessarily those of the executive board, editor, or chapter.

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# What Is PFLAG?

## *Our Vision*

We, the parents, families, and friends of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, celebrate diversity and envision a society that embraces everyone, including those of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities. Only with respect, dignity, and equality for all will we reach our full potential as human beings, individually and collectively. PFLAG welcomes the participation and support of all who share in, and hope to realize this vision.

## *Our Mission*

PFLAG promotes the health and well-being of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons, their families and friends through support, to cope with an adverse society; education, to enlighten an ill-informed public; and advocacy, to end discrimination and to secure equal civil rights. Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays provides opportunity for dialogue about sexual orientation and gender identity, and acts to create a society that is healthy and respectful of human diversity.

## *Our Strategic Goals*

1. Build the capacity of our organization at every level so that we may have all the resources, in the form of information, people, and funding, necessary to move forward in our work with the greatest possible effect.
2. Create a world in which our young people may grow up and be educated with freedom from fear of violence, bullying, and other forms of discrimination, regardless of their real or perceived gender identity or sexual orientation or that of their families.
3. Make our vision and our message accessible to the broadest range of ethnic and cultural communities, ending the isolation of families with lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender family members within those communities.
4. Work toward full inclusion of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons within their chosen communities of faith.
5. Create a society in which all LGBT persons may openly and safely pursue the career path of their choice, and may be valued and encouraged to grow to their full potential in the workplace.

6. Create a society in which all lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender persons may enjoy, in every aspect of their lives, full civil and legal equality and may participate fully in all the rights, privileges, and obligations of full citizenship in this country.

We welcome the participation and support of all who share in our Vision and Mission and who hope to realize our goals.

—See more at: <http://community.pflag.org/page.aspx?pid=237#sthash.WpB2s9T6.dpuf>

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## Join or Renew Your Membership

—Steve Schildcrout

These may be COVID times, but your PFLAG is still at work holding virtual chapter meetings, participating in coalition with other local groups on our shared educational and advocacy issues, and staying prepared for the future. We still need your support and participation. Our new fiscal year began last October 1, but if you did not yet join or renew for the 2020-21 year, we would still be happy to have you do so. Take advantage of paying electronically and securely by credit or debit card (or PayPal) from our Website <<https://www.youngstownpflag.org>>. At the foot of the home page, click on “Join/Donate,” and proceed, or consult membership rates on the “Membership” tab and donate there. If we don’t have your current contact information, please send an email to <[YoungstownAreaPFLAG@gmail.com](mailto:YoungstownAreaPFLAG@gmail.com)> with the information requested below. You may email us also if you have questions about dues or your membership status. As a benefit of membership, you will receive our quarterly newsletter by email. Please consider an additional tax-deductible donation, which will fund our local programs, brochures, and supplies. If it would be too difficult (because of COVID affecting your finances or other reasons) to pay at the regular \$25 personal level now, please choose the \$15 level for membership. Your confidentiality will be respected as always. Our local chapter is all-volunteer with no paid staff, and we depend on your continuing help in furthering LGBTQ equality. If you pay by check, please include the information requested below, although printing the form is not necessary.

Membership levels:

- ( ) \$25 Household (includes membership in National PFLAG)
- ( ) \$15 Student/Low Income (includes membership in National PFLAG)
- ( ) \$45 Nonprofit organization
- ( ) \$75 Corporate sponsorship
- ( ) \$\_\_\_\_\_ Additional donation

Total payment \$\_\_\_\_\_

(Make your check payable to Youngstown Area PFLAG.)

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Address \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_ Phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

Mail to

Youngstown Area PFLAG, 2201 Goleta Ave., Youngstown, OH 44504.

## Three Steps to Being a Better Educator of LGBTQ+ History (While You're Stuck at Home)

—Team PFLAG National E-mail, 1/12/21



Your learning should slow down just because you're staying in! So, stay safe and take these steps to engage:

Learn: Check out [pflag.org/lgbthistory](http://pflag.org/lgbthistory), which includes websites,

films, books, and other resources that will help you learn more about LGBTQ+ history, no matter where you are on your learning journey.

Watch: PFLAG Academy On-Demand includes multiple sessions for those who would like to learn more about LGBTQ+ history and culture in the United States. . . . [Google the following title and scroll down till you find this or some other intriguing article:] *When LGBTQ Past and Present Collide! How LGBTQ History Can Illuminate Today's Challenges.*

Share: Use social media to elevate the more than 450 LGBTQ+ icons that have been featured at [lgbthistorymonth.com](http://lgbthistorymonth.com) all year long!

### Amazon Shopping Supports PFLAG

Help Youngstown PFLAG while shopping on Amazon.com by clicking the “Shop” button at <[www.youngstownpflag.org](http://www.youngstownpflag.org)> for an active link to the Amazon site or by using this link: <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/34-1783833>. Amazon will make a donation to our chapter for every purchase you make, with no extra cost to you or to us.



Ohio, like 29 other states, has no explicit statewide nondiscrimination laws protecting LGBTQ people, and opponents of LGBTQ equality continue to file discriminatory bills nationwide. The best solution is the federal Equality Act.

—Jody Davis, *Equality Bulletin*, 12/4/20

## Submissions

The Youngstown Area PFLAG Rag needs your input. Deadlines are February 1, May 1, August 1, November 1. Send submissions (including pictures) to [tcopeland@neo.rr.com](mailto:tcopeland@neo.rr.com) or to

Youngstown Area PFLAG  
313 N. Belle Vista Ave.  
Youngstown, OH 44509



## Elections

—from “Looking Down Ballot.” *Church and State*,  
December 2020, p. 6

2020 turned out to be a good year for LGBTQ candidates. In Oklahoma, Maruee Turner will be the first non-binary member of the state house of Representatives. Turner, who is Muslim, won the seat easily, defeating Republican Kelly Barlean with 71% of the vote. In Delaware, Sarah McBride, who is transgender, won a seat in the state senate. McBride will be the highest-ranking transgender elected official in the United States.

## Sperm Banks Overdrawn

—Nellie Bowles, “The Sperm Kings Have a Problem:  
Too Much Demand,” *New York Times*, 1/8/21

. . . About 20 percent of sperm bank clients are heterosexual couples, 60 percent are gay women, and 20 percent are single moms by choice, the banks said.

To meet this demand, men provided sperm at a steady rate for years, some banks said. But the coronavirus changed things. Existing donors were scared to go in. New donor sign-ups stopped for months during lockdown and never really bounced back at some banks.



## The Most LGBTQ-Friendly Liberal Arts Colleges in Ohio

—PFLAG-National, “Media Matters,” 10/18/20

PFLAG National’s partner Campus Pride released its annual list of the 40 most LGBTQ+ friendly American college and university campuses. To qualify, schools must score highly on the Campus Pride Index and feature inclusive policies, programs and practices. The full list is free and publicly available at <[www.campusprideindex.org](http://www.campusprideindex.org)>. In descending order of “friendliness” these are

1. Kenyon College
2. Oberlin College
3. College of Wooster
4. Dennison University
5. Heidelberg University
6. University of Findlay
7. Ohio Wesleyan University

## National Black & White Men Together Caucuses

### The Black Caucus

Tuesday, January 26, 2021 - 6PM PDT

#### Join Zoom Meeting - Video

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83838926727>

#### Join Zoom Meeting - Audio

Dial by your location

+1 301 715 8592 US (Washington D.C.)

+1 929 205 8099 US (New York)

+1 312 828 6798 US (Chicago)

+1 253 215 8782 US (Tacoma)

+1 348 248 7799 US (Houston)

+1 689 900 6833 US (San Jose)

Meeting ID: 838 3892 6727

### The White Caucus

Will be on Wednesday, February 10, 2021  
6:30PM PDT



Email your Co-Chairs Gavin and Scott:  
[mailto:nabwmt@nabwmt.org](mailto:mailto:nabwmt@nabwmt.org)

# Trump's Judicial Legacy

—Kevin Jennings, email, Lambda Legal, 1/5/21

In just four years, President Trump has ushered in a judicial landscape that is significantly more hostile toward LGBTQ people, with nearly 40% of Trump's confirmed federal appellate judges having demonstrated anti-LGBTQ bias according to our new report released today. . . .

Almost one-third of the circuit courts judgeships are now Trump judges (54 out of 179). . . .

The Trump Administration has outpaced the last five administrations in number of appellate judges confirmed—the Trump administration has confirmed 54 circuit court judges in four years, just one less than the Obama administration had confirmed in eight years. . . .

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## Justice Gorsuch Champions LGBTQ Employees

—Tom Copeland



The summer 2018 and the spring 2019 issues of the *PFLAG Rag* discuss the story of the firing of Aimée Stephens, a transgender embalmer. Although Stephens is now deceased, the funeral home where she worked has settled with her estate, leaving her widow \$130,000 the richer and reimbursing the ACLU for the legal costs of the suit, which culminated in the U.S. Supreme Court.

Liz Hayes, in “The Winter of Our Discontent,” quotes from the majority decision, drafted by Neil M. Gorsuch: “An employer who fires an individual for being homosexual or transgender fires that person for traits or actions it would not have questioned in members of a different sex. Sex plays a necessary and indisguisable role in the decision, exactly what [the law] forbids” (*Church & State* 74, No. 1 (1/2021): 17).

The Trump Accountability Project, by the advocacy group GLAAD, has recorded more than 180 anti-LGBTQ statements and actions by the Trump administration and those in the president's circle since January 2017, including a proposal that would allow homeless shelters to house transgender people according to their sex assigned at birth rather than their gender identity.

—Emily Wax-Thibodeaux, “Biden's Ambitious LGBT Agenda,” *Washington Post*, 1/11/21

## Alito Shows His Colors

from “AU Bulletin,” *Church and State*, December 2020, p. 3

Conservative Supreme court Justice Samuel A. Alito sparked controversy [in November] for delivering a highly partisan speech during which he asserted that religious freedom is under assault.



“You can't say that marriage is a union between one man and one woman,” Alito remarked during a Nov. 21 speech to the Federalist Society, a far-right legal group. “Until very recently, that's what the vast majority of Americans thought. Now it's considered bigotry.”

[According to] Rachel Laser, president and CEO of Americans United . . . [Alito] “signaled how he would vote on issues that are almost certain to come before the court, such as coronavirus public health restrictions on both secular and religious gatherings, and religious freedom being misused to justify discrimination against LGBTQ people and others. He's dropped even the pretense of the impartiality that judges are obligated to have.”

# SCOTUS on Marriage

—Amanda McKay, *Daily Kos*, email 10/7/20

[In declining to hear] a case involving Kim Davis, the former Kentucky county clerk who refused to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, [the Supreme Court issued statements that offer a preview of things to come.]

Justices Thomas and Alito used this opportunity to weigh in on the 2015 landmark decision, *Obergefell v. Hodges*, that gave same-sex couples the right to marry under the 14th amendment, writing that the decision “enables courts and governments to brand religious adherents who believe that marriage is between one man and one woman as bigots, making their religious liberty concerns that much easier to dismiss” . . . and by choosing “a novel constitutional right over the religious liberty interests explicitly protected in the First Amendment, and by doing so undemocratically, the court has created a problem that only it can fix. . . . Until then, *Obergefell* will continue to have ruinous consequences for religious liberty.”

[And then Amy Coney Barrett was confirmed.]

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## Trump’s “Religious Freedom” Legacy

—from “The Terrible Ten,” Rob Boston, *Church & State* 74, No. 1 (1/2021): 8-9

The “religious freedom” executive order Trump issued in May 2017 . . . called on then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions to “issue guidance” for all federal agencies on the scope of religious freedom protections to federal law. The goal was clear: sanction the use of religion as an excuse to roll back equality for LGBTQ people and [for] women. As AU [Americans United] Policy Advocate Samantha Sokol noted recently on AU’s “Wall of Separation” blog, “For the next four years Trump administration agencies relied on this guidance in justifying policy after harmful

policy—denying people access to health care, expanding taxpayer-funded discrimination, and attacking LGBTQ civil rights—all under the guise of religious freedom.” . . .

During a May 2, 2019, National Day of Prayer ceremony, Trump unveiled new rules that invited any health care worker—including doctors, nurses, paramedics, administrators, and even clerical staff—to deny medical treatment and services to patients because of personal religious or moral beliefs, even in life-or-death situations.

The vaguely worded “Denial of Care” rule was especially dangerous because it set no limits on what constitutes a religious or moral refusal, nor did it establish appropriate safeguards to ensure that patients get the treatment they need. This could discourage medical facilities from setting and enforcing their own nondiscrimination and emergency policies out of fear that they’d lose federal funding, while also tacitly urging them instead to let their employees arbitrarily deny care to patients on personal religious or moral grounds.

“It is clear that women, LGBTQ people, and religious minorities are the intended target, but it doesn’t stop there, AU President and CEO Robert Laser said. “The rule is so broad that everyone—including sick children, pregnant women, and senior citizens—is at risk.”

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## Supreme Court Supports Transgender Students

—Tom Copeland

The Associated Press reports that “The Supreme Court on Monday [12/7/21] declined to take up an appeal from parents in Oregon who want to prevent transgender students from using locker rooms and bathrooms of the gender with which they identify, rather than of the sex assigned them at birth” (“Supreme Court Turns Down Appeal Seeking Limits for Transgender Students,” *Los Angeles Times*, 12/7/20).

The policy, according to another source, “grants transgender students access to school bathrooms, locker rooms and other sexually

segregated spaces in accordance with their gender identity.

“A group called Parents [sic] Rights in Education opposed the policy, arguing that it violated the rights of other students. Among their arguments was a claim that allowing rights to transgender students would infringe on the religious freedom of students who are not transgender” (“Oregon School’s Transgender Policy Allowed to Stand,” “AU Bulletin,” *Church & State* 74, No. 1 (1/2021): 3).

The Associated Press offers more background: “A lower court refused to block the policy, and the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals affirmed that decision, writing that the school district did not violate students’ constitutional rights nor a law protecting people from gender discrimination in education programs” and adds that “Similar lawsuits have been dismissed by courts in other parts of the country. . . .”

The “AU Bulletin” affords a somewhat anticlimactic account of the victory: “Basic Rights Oregon, an LGBTQ group in the state, filed a petition telling the high court there was no reason to accept the case. The group noted that the transgender student who sparked the policy has since graduated. Since then, no other students at the school have identified as transgender. . . .”

## Trump Judges Support “Conversion Therapy”

—Alison Durkee, *Forbes*, 11/20/20



Alison Durkee

A federal appeals court struck down Friday local ordinances prohibiting licensed therapists from engaging in “conversion therapy” practices that aim to change a minor’s sexual orientation or gender identity—despite widespread consensus among experts that such therapy is harmful—arguing that banning the controversial practice is a violation of the therapists’ First Amendment rights. . . .

[Majority:] The judges cast skepticism on evidence provided by the defendants showing

conversion therapy is harmful enough to justify the speech restrictions, claiming there has not been enough



research done on the topic to show actual evidence of the danger it poses, and saying the court “cannot rely” on professional organizations that oppose the practice because organizations can “do an about-face” on their views, as the American Psychiatric Association did when it reversed its opposition to homosexuality.

[Minority]: In her dissent, Judge Beverly C. Martin pushed back against this argument and noted that performing the research that the majority judges requested “ignores the harm such studies would have on children,” and it “is ‘not ethically permissible’ to conduct” studies that could more conclusively prove the practice is harmful. . . .

[Majority:] “If there is a bedrock principle underlying the First Amendment, it is that the government may not prohibit the expression of an idea simply because society finds the idea itself offensive or disagreeable,” Grant noted in her ruling for the majority, quoting an earlier court ruling. “The challenged ordinances violate that principle.”

[External Critic]: “Conversion therapy is fraud. No matter how hard you try, you cannot change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity. This so-called therapy has only ever proven to produce negative mental health outcomes and increase the risk of suicide,” Amit Paley, CEO and Executive Director of The Trevor Project, said in a statement about the ruling. “This misguided decision sends a terrible message to the LGBTQ young people of Florida, who want nothing more than to be respected for who they are.” . . .

## What to Watch For

The conflicting court rulings on conversion therapy bans increase the likelihood that the issue could make its way to the U.S. Supreme Court, which now has a 6-3 conservative tilt with the recent confirmation of Justice Amy Coney Barrett. The high court previously declined to take up the issue in 2017, leaving California's law banning the practice in place.

### Canada's Bill to Ban Conversion Therapy Could Help LGBTQ2 Rights Globally

—Mike Blanchfield, *The Canadian Press*, 10/21/20

. . . Victor Madrigal-Borloz, the UN Independent Expert on Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, told *The Canadian Press* that bills such as the one tabled by the federal Liberals earlier this month are one of the most effective ways to protect and advance LGBTQ2 rights.

The bill aims to ban so-called conversion therapy, which involves forcing a person into therapy against their will. Among other things, the bill would make it illegal to profit from providing conversion therapy or to advertise it. . . .

Madrigal-Borloz said it is his job to examine how violence and discrimination manifests itself in the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and otherwise gender diverse people and to advise states on what they can do to end it.

"I use real examples of real states that are actually working on these issues, to bring about what has been proven to work in other contexts," he said. In the case of the proposed Canadian law, he said, "those practices and those parallels can be drawn to inspire other states."

Kingston [Ontario] city council voted unanimously [Jan. 5] to pursue bylaws that would prohibit conversion therapy locally, making it the first city in Ontario to make such a move.

—Alexandra Mazur, *Global News*, 1/13/21

## New Zealand Too

New Zealand's Labor Party, which was returned to power in October 2020 (Wikipedia), promised to ban conversion therapy according to a statement by then-leader Tāmami Coffey: "Conversion therapy has been linked to severe adverse mental health issues, including depression, anxiety and suicidal ideation—that's why it will be banned under a re-elected Labour Government" (Zoya Raza-Sheikh, "New Zealand Labour Party promises to ban 'fundamentally wrong' conversion therapy," *Gay Times*, n.d.).

### Excerpts from "Biden's Ambitious LGBT Agenda Poises Him to Be Nation's Most Pro-Equality President in History"

—Emily Wax-Thibodeaux, *Washington Post*, 1/11/21

. . . "Biden has made it clear that he intends to weaponize the law to crush dissent, in order to implement a far-left agenda," said Kristen Waggoner, general counsel for Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative legal organization that says it protects religious and moral convictions

and freedom of speech. "That impacts not just people of faith, but all Americans who want to live life according to their convictions. The government can't engage in religious bigotry."

Alliance Defending Freedom is representing Christian adoption agency New Hope Family Services in an ongoing legal battle with New York state over its policy to only place children in homes with married opposite-sex couples.

“We live in a pluralistic society,” Waggoner said. “The government should not single out and punish those who believe that the best home for a child includes a married father and a mother.”

A judge recently sent the case back to a lower court, ruling that it should be allowed to continue its faith-based approach to adoption as the case proceeds, a move Waggoner cited as a win for religious liberty.

Biden has said he will protect the rights of anyone who qualifies to adopt, regardless of religion or family composition. Biden, who is Catholic, has split from his church’s stance on some issues, saying he values “the dignity of every person.”

During a town hall meeting with voters, Biden surprised even longtime LGBTQ advocates when he addressed the killing of transgender women—largely of color. At least 43 transgender or gender-nonconforming people were killed in the United States in 2020, according to the Human Rights Campaign. Advocates praised Biden for bringing the issue to the national stage and vowing to direct federal resources to prevent and prosecute such homicides.

“There’s an opportunity here for a national discussion on transgender people of color who are often just left out of the national conversation,” said David J. Johns, executive director of the National Black Justice Coalition, a civil rights organization dedicated to the Black LGBTQ community. “Even though the transgender community may have more visibility in TV shows like ‘Pose,’ the vitriol at the policy level that exists within the system leaves no promise of justice.”

Johns said he hopes to see more LGBTQ leaders of color appointed in Biden’s administration.

“That way they can show up and craft policy which will ensure that people of color can raise the alarm about issues of mental health, safety, housing, or dealing with police in their communities,” he said.

Biden has promised that his administration will “look like America,” and has said he will provide anti-bias training for federal employees and offer incentives for states that adopt programs that help prepare transgender people for the workplace. . . .

Biden has credited his passion for LGBTQ issues to his late son Beau Biden’s close friendship with Sarah McBride, who is transgender. McBride worked on Beau Biden’s

reelection campaign for attorney general in Delaware, where they later collaborated to pass protections for transgender people in housing, health insurance, and employment.

The Biden family developed a close

relationship with McBride after Beau Biden died of brain cancer in 2015. McBride’s husband, Andy Cray, had died of cancer the year before.

“The president-elect has always been far out ahead on transgender issues. And I think all of us benefit from knowing people who are trans and organic agents of change in daily life,” said McBride, who was elected in Delaware in November as the first openly transgender state senator in the country. “But I know Joe Biden also wants to honor and carry forward his son’s work and legacy on this issue.”

Joe Biden wrote the foreword for McBride’s book *Tomorrow Will Be Different: Love, Loss and the Fight for Trans Equality*. In it, he calls transgender equality “the civil rights issue of our time.”

When he left the vice presidency, Biden partnered with other advocates to start the As You Are campaign to advocate for families’ acceptance of their transgender children. . . .

—Emily Wax-Thibodeaux, “Biden’s Ambitious LGBTQ Agenda,” *Washington Post*, 1/11/21

# Biden's Restoring What Trump Stole from LGBTQ Americans

—Allison Hope, CNN, 1/22/21

In the first hours and days of the Biden administration, something precious has been returned to us. That invaluable thing that has been restored to LGBTQ Americans—and many others—is hope.



Allison Hope

Among President Joe Biden's first actions in office was to issue an executive order barring workplace discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation or gender identity. Another was to end the Trump administration's policies denying the existence of systemic racism and barring diversity and inclusion training. Already, the relaunched White House web site contact form invites users to choose their own pronouns, a seemingly small but deeply significant reflection of the new administration's commitment to inclusion.



Dr. Rachel Levine

There is hope in the appointment of Dr. Rachel Levine to become the highest-ranking transgender woman nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary of Health at the Department of Health and Human Services in the Biden administration. "I am proud of the work we have done as an administration to address health equity, and the work I have done personally to raise awareness about LGBTQ equity issues," said Levine, who is a pediatrician, in a statement when she was nominated for the cabinet position.

Her presence bolsters Biden's promise to undo the Trump administration's harmful policies, including rules that allow health care providers to shut the door in the face of LGBTQ patients. There is hope in knowing there will be no more abominable amicus briefs on the wrong side of history—like the ones that aimed to deny us workplace protections, equal access to goods and services, or a right to open our homes to a child

without one.

There is hope in the anticipated confirmation of a gay man, Pete Buttigieg, to be transportation secretary and in the appointment of a Black gay woman, Karine Jean-Pierre, as deputy press secretary—to name only two of the most visible among the many LGBTQ Americans called to serve in an inclusive, diverse administration.



Karine Jean-Pierre

Levine's nomination alone is enough to make me want to dance in the streets. To at long last have someone who understands—intrinsically, deeply and personally—what LGBTQ Americans and particularly what transgender people face, carries the prospect of more inclusive policies and approaches. What a complete about-face from the previous administration, which actively worked to strip trans Americans, already trapped in a broken system that marginalized them, of health care access. . . .

I trust that Biden won't just undo Trump's damage and revert back to Obama-era policies. Biden will do better than that. After all, then-Vice President Joe Biden was a major force in moving the Democratic Party out of the closet on supporting the LGBTQ community. In May 2012, Biden declared his support for marriage equality, the highest ranking official to do so at the time. The move helped push President Barack Obama to also endorse same-sex marriage in a national TV interview a few days later, and, well, the rest is history.

Biden isn't perfect. He voted for the Defense of Marriage Act during the Clinton administration and to cut off federal funding to schools teaching acceptance of homosexuality. But he has evolved, and surrounded himself with forward-thinking people who embody and embrace LGBTQ inclusivity and will help push the needle in the right direction towards equality and justice.

What could that look like under the Biden administration? With a friendlier Congress now in place, it could mean passage of the Equality Act, which Biden has pledged to sign in his first 100 days and which would provide blanket protections against discrimination for LGBTQ

people. If adopted, the measure would mitigate the patchwork of state and local laws that leave roughly two-thirds of LGBTQ Americans, according to the Human Rights Campaign’s estimates, vulnerable to getting kicked out of their homes, turned away from school, or denied entry to a public space simply because of their sexual or gender identity.

LGBTQ Americans like me have shed a lot of tears over the last four years, but this week, I was weeping with relief. And, when this avalanche of emotions has subsided, when the pomp and circumstance settles, I’m hopeful we can start to let go of some of the anxiety and pessimism we’ve been holding onto. Only then can we allow ourselves to fully exhale into something that looks like the future, a brighter spot where our lives matter—Black and brown, gay and transgender, immigrant and citizen, rich and poor, young and old. We feel the sun on our skin again.

## What Buttigieg’s Historic Nomination Means to Him and His Community

—Marissa Higgins, *Daily Kos*, 12/20/20



Appearing on CNN’s *State of the Union* this Sunday morning, former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, and presidential

hopeful Pete Buttigieg spoke with host, Jake Tapper, about what it means to him to potentially be the first openly gay Cabinet secretary approved by the Senate, and first millennial Cabinet member, as well as his priorities for the Department of Transportation, and of course, his thoughts on a reportedly bizarre Oval Office meeting involving both Sidney Powell and her client Michael Flynn. . . .

“You’re going to be the first openly gay person to serve in a Senate-confirmed Cabinet secretary position,” Tapper stated. “You’ll also be the first millennial Cabinet member. Do these

milestones mean something to you personally?”

. . . “I can remember being a teenager,” Buttigieg stated. “I remember being in Indiana in the ’90s, watching on the news, as an appointee of President Clinton’s, James Hormel was put

On Jan. 27 Mayor Pete “received an overwhelming approval vote in the Senate Commerce Committee: 21-3,” according to a PFLAG National action alert 1/28/21.

forward to be an ambassador, couldn’t get a hearing in the Senate, was attacked relentlessly because he

was gay. I wasn’t even out to myself at the time, but I noticed that story.

“And, you know, over the weekend, having mentioned his story, I tracked down the former ambassador and called him. He did get to the serve in the end, though only by recess appointment. And he said that he made sure that he asked to be put forward for something that would have to go to the Senate, knowing full well what would happen. Because he knew that would chip away at that barrier for the next person to come along. So, I was mindful as that announcement came out that I was standing on the shoulders of people who came before me.

“And I understand that part of my responsibility, and my opportunity, is to make it a little bit easier for the next person to come along. And I hope there are young people who may have wondered if they belonged, maybe been given reasons to wonder if they belong in their own families and communities, understanding the message that is sent by the President-Elect when he creates a place of belonging at a place like the Cabinet table in the White House.”



# Covid-19 and Sexual Orientation

—Tom Copeland, with thanks to Lisa White

It's conceivable that LGBTQ+ people may be more or less susceptible to the virus or stand in some other special relationship to it as do persons in essential jobs like caring for the infirm, delivering health services, maintaining order, teaching; the aged; or any other especially vulnerable or valuable group. At least it makes sense to collect data about the rate of infection among LGBTQ+ individuals to see if it differs significantly from that of the general population. That is why in 2020 Senator Scott Wiener introduced Bill 932 in the California Senate, requiring the "collection of sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI) data around COVID-19 and other communicable diseases" (Brody Levesque, "COVID19 Vaccine Roll-Out—What's the Plan for LGBTQ+ Californians," *Los Angeles Blade*, 12/17/20).

In October this bill became law, but in December Senator Wiener complained that it was not being implemented. He wrote that "data collection isn't an academic exercise. Rather, it has life or death consequences. It is only because of data that we know, for example, that COVID is killing Black people at outrageous rates and that our Latinx communities have very high infection rates. And, it is only because of data collection that we understand COVID's impacts on different age groups. Yet, COVID's impacts on LGBTQ people are largely invisible due to the lack of data collection. We introduced and passed SB 932 to stop the erasure of the LGBTQ community" (Levesque).

The sorry state of California's general immunization plans, which likely mirror those of the entire country, may themselves be mirrored in the plight of one vaccine distribution site. In an email from Lorri L. Jean, Chief Executive Officer of the Los Angeles LGBT Center, told the

*Blade* in mid December, "The Los Angeles LGBT Center was approved by the federal government last week to serve as a vaccine distribution center. We also are one of the few community clinics in Los Angeles that already has secured the deep-freeze refrigeration units that are required to store the vaccine. We have the capacity to store 100,000 doses. But, we have no idea how many doses we will receive. And once we receive them, we will be required to follow government guidelines regarding who gets priority. So far no guidance has been provided, including what the definition is of healthcare workers who are prioritized for vaccines. So we don't yet know whether our own staff qualify. We have secured approval for our residents of Triangle Square (the nation's first affordable housing facility for LGBT seniors) to be among the first to get vaccinated. We hope to secure similar approval for our youth residents. We're doing everything we can to get prepared to vaccinate our community, which we want to be sure isn't left behind in this effort" (Levesque).

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## Hate Crimes Peak in 2019

—Tim Arango, *NY Times* 11/16/20

Hate crimes in the United States rose to their highest level in more than a decade [in 1919], while more murders motivated by hate were recorded than ever before, the F.B.I. said on Monday. . . .

In examining preliminary data from 2020, [Brian] Levin [executive director of the Center for the Study of Hate and Extremism at California State University] found overall declines in hate crimes, which he explained as a result of social distancing measures and business closures from the coronavirus pandemic, except in three cities: Los Angeles, Houston and San Antonio. He has also found increases in bias crimes this year against two groups in particular, transgender people and Asian-Americans; the latter, he said, was most likely affected by anti-Asian animus provoked by false claims about the pandemic.

## Sex-Abuse Claims against Boy Scouts

— Mike Baker, *New York Times*, “Monday Morning Briefing,” 11/15/20

The deluge of sex-abuse filings, coming ahead of a bankruptcy deadline, far surpasses the number of claims filed in Catholic Church cases . . . a decades-long accumulation of assaults at the hands of scout leaders across the nation who had been trusted as role models.

The claims, which lawyers said far eclipsed the number of abuse accusations filed in Catholic Church cases, continued to mount ahead of a Monday deadline established in bankruptcy court in Delaware, where the Boy Scouts had sought refuge this year in a bid to survive the demands for damages.

Paul Mones, a lawyer who has been working on Boy Scouts cases for nearly two decades, said the prevalence of abuse detailed in the filings was breathtaking and might reflect only a fraction of victims. . . .

The accusers range in age from 8 to 93. While the vast majority are men, some women have also filed complaints. . . .

Although many of the abuse cases occurred in decades past, some states in recent years have passed laws giving older victims a chance to pursue accountability in the courts. That includes New York, which approved a one-year window that opened last year, prompting a stream of new lawsuits. . . .



After more than 95,000 people filed sex-abuse claims against the **Boy Scouts of America**, the embattled youth organization said it must reach a settlement in its ongoing bankruptcy case by next summer — or it may no longer have the cash to continue operating. Nov 19, 2020

Washington Post · 2020/11/19

## A Transgender Woman Won Jeopardy!

— Bil Browning, *LGBTNation*, 11/16/20



Kate Freeman, a transgender woman from Lake Orion, Michigan became the *Jeopardy!* champion last Friday [11/13/20] but lost the title on Monday night. Freeman wore a trans flag pin to quietly represent the community on the show.

A financial analyst, Freeman took home \$5,559 in cash winnings.

“I spent a lot of time learning about and reflecting on my gender identity in grad school,

coming out as transgender and lesbian a few months before graduating,” Freeman told MLive. I’m proud to be out and I know representation is important.” . . .

Contestant Cody Lawrence wore a bi flag pin on his lapel earlier in the week.

In 2019, former contestant John Presloid won America’s heart and some serious cash after casually mentioning his husband while declining to bet big on a Daily Double. “My husband would kill me,” he said as he smiled brightly and the audience chuckled.

Presloid, who has been out for years, told LGBTQ Nation that “nobody who knows me personally was surprised at all by my statement . . . [but] The reaction was so much bigger than I thought it would be.”

Presloid pointed out former contestant Louis Virtel who, after becoming internet famous for giving a big circle snap after winning a Daily Double himself in 2015, admitted that his biggest regret was being recognized as a gay man from stereotypes, but never actually saying he is gay.

“If you watch the show, I’m slamming around on the buzzer with a wrist flicked up to heaven,” Virtel said. . . . “Before the closing credits, I posed

like Linda Evangelista with a ladylike arm in the air. . . . It all felt fantastic and organic, a reflection of my obsession with the show. But I hate, hate, hate that I didn't just say 'I'm gay' on air."

## Sad Day for Pence

Democrat Mark Kelly of Arizona [former astronaut & Gabby Giffords's husband] was sworn in as



senator on Wednesday [12/2/20], marking the first time in over 67 years that the state has two Democratic members in the upper chamber" (Grace Segers, "Mark Kelly Sworn in as Democratic Senator from Arizona," CBS News, 12/2/20).

Holding the Bible is bisexual Senator Kyrsten Sinema, whose "spokesperson . . . told *The Arizona Republic* that the senator is wearing the cheap wigs to show her solidarity with Americans who are practicing social distancing, especially hair salons, to avoid the spread of the coronavirus during the pandemic" (Kyle Hicks, "Here's Why Sen. Kyrsten Sinema Wore a Wig," *The DenverChannel.com*, 12/3/20).

## Pope Francis, in Shift for Church, Voices Support for Same-Sex Civil Unions

— Jason Horowitz, *NY Times*, 10/21/20

"What we have to create is a civil union law. That way they are legally covered," Francis said in the documentary *Francesco*, which debuted at the Rome Film Festival, reiterating his view that gay people are children of God. "I stood up for that."

Many gay Catholics and their allies outside the church welcomed the pope's remarks, though

Francis' opposition to gay marriage within the church remained absolute.

His conservative critics within the church hierarchy, and especially in the conservative wing of the church in the United States, who have for years accused him of diluting church doctrine, saw the remarks as a reversal of church teaching.

"The pope's statement clearly contradicts what has been the longstanding teaching of the church about same-sex unions," said Bishop Thomas Tobin of Providence, R.I., adding that the remarks needed to be clarified. . . .

Francis has a tendency for making off-the-cuff public remarks, a trait that maddens both supporters and critics alike. The comments shown in the film are likely to generate exactly the sort of discussion the pope has repeatedly sought to foster on issues once considered forbidden in the church's culture wars.

Francis had already drastically shifted the tone of the church on questions related to homosexuality, but he has done little on policy and not changed teaching for a church that sees its future growth in the Southern Hemisphere, where the clerical hierarchy is generally less tolerant of homosexuality.

The remark "in no way affects doctrine," the Rev. Antonio Spadaro, a Jesuit priest and close ally of Francis, told the television channel of the Italian bishops conference. . . .

The remarks in the documentary were in keeping with Francis' general support for gay people, but were perhaps his most specific and prominent on the issue of civil unions, which even traditionally Catholic nations like Italy, Ireland and Argentina have permitted in recent years. . . .

In 2010, as Argentina was on the verge of approving gay marriage, Francis, then cardinal archbishop of Buenos Aires, supported the idea of civil unions for gay couples.



Pope Francis arriving for the weekly general audience at the Vatican on Wednesday. Credit... Angelo Carconi/EPA, via Shutterstock

Elizabeth Taylor, Bianca Jagger, Andy Warhol, Rock Hudson, and Truman Capote, who is said to have based *Breakfast at Tiffany's* Holly Golightly on the petite, vivacious, and charming Littman.

## Pat Patterson, a Wrestling Star Who Came Out, Dies at 79

— Alex Traub, *NY Times*, 12/7/20



Pat Patterson, the first major wrestling star to announce that he was gay, died on Wednesday in Miami Beach. He was 79.

The cause of his death, in a hospital, was liver failure, said Bertrand Hébert, who collaborated with Mr. Patterson on his autobiography, “Accepted: How the First Gay Superstar Changed WWE” (2016).

After decades of working his way up through regional wrestling circuits in Montreal, Boston, and San Francisco, Mr. Patterson found fame in the late 1970s, when he joined the World Wrestling Federation, which later became World Wrestling Entertainment. . . .

As his career in the ring slowed in the mid-1980s, he joined the World Wrestling Federation as an executive, putting matches together and working with wrestlers on their shticks. He invented the Royal Rumble, a last-man-standing free-for-all with new competitors entering at regular intervals. That format is still in use today.

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## Farewell to the Real Holly Golightly

— Stephanie Linning, *Mailonline*, 10/30/20



Marguerite Littman in 1971

Socialite Marguerite Littman, founder of influential charity AIDS Crisis Trust and friend to the stars, died this month aged 90.

Born in Monroe, Louisiana, to one of the city’s oldest families, Marguerite described herself as a ‘zigzag’ socialite who charged up the ladder to the highest ranks of high society.

Her showbiz social circle of friends included

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## H.I.V. Death Rates Fell by Half, C.D.C. Says

— Apoorva Mandavilli, *NY Times*, 11/19/20

. . . [F]rom 2010 through 2018. . . the rate of deaths directly related to H.I.V. decreased by 48.4 percent. . . . But the data also highlighted some troubling trends: Gains among women, Black people, and those of multiple races were much smaller. And the rate of death was about twice as high in Southern states as in the Northeast. . . . “The fact is that a Black person living with H.I.V. in Mississippi is more than six times more likely to die of H.I.V. than a white person in New York — and that’s pretty astonishing, if you think about it,” said James Krellenstein, executive director of the advocacy group PreP4All Collaboration.

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## Women on Death Row

— Tamar Sarai Davis, *Daily Kos*, 12/16/20

While they have often committed shocking crimes, nearly two-thirds of the women sentenced to capital punishment experienced regular, ongoing abuse as children and as adults. In many cases . . . that abuse included sexual assault, intimate partner abuse, and other forms of heinous gender-based violence—violence that was ignored while it was happening, and dismissed by the criminal legal system afterwards. As for the women’s crimes, most were committed either against their abusers in acts of self-defense, or against others as a result of the psychological trauma incurred from years of unaddressed abuse.

. . . . Instead of investing in care for these women, the U.S. has chosen to greet their trauma and the acts that follow with incarceration and for some, execution. . . .

# Language as Weapon

—Tom Copeland

In responding to a question during her confirmation hearing, Amy Coney Barrett said, “I have never discriminated on the basis of sexual preference and would never discriminate on the basis of sexual preference.” Kerry Eleveld argues in *The Daily Kos* (10/13/20) that this avoidance of the term “sexual orientation” brands Barrett as a bigot: “*Preference* was not only a dog whistle to anti-LGBTQ conservatives, it’s also the legal basis on which they have sought to deprive gay and transgender Americans of numerous constitutional protections and will continue to do so moving forward.”

Pete Buttigieg found the word *preference* too weak and casual to describe anything so fundamental as sexual orientation, quipping on Twitter, “My \*preference\* is that the winner of this presidential election should choose the next justice” (Pennyfarthing, *Daily Kos*, 10/13/20).

Eleveld affords other interesting examples of how diction can not only indicate bias but serve as a tool in argumentation.

In discussing Barrett’s two speaking engagements at the Blackstone Legal Fellowship, sponsored by the Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF), Eleveld quotes from a *Rolling Stone* article by Sarah Posner. The ADF routinely sends speakers a “confidential ‘lexicon’ containing a list of phrases participants should and should not use when speaking,” illustrated in the following table:

Recommended Terms	Discouraged Terms
homosexual	gay
defending biblical, religious principles, convictions	bigotry, anti-tolerance
<i>demands</i> of/by the homosexual legal agenda	homosexual/gay <i>rights</i>
<b>demands</b> of/by advocates of homosexual behavior	hate-crimes <b>legislation</b>
special privileges	anti-discrimination laws

The ADF, says Eleveld, uses such language to frame “LGBTQ issues . . . precisely to avoid legitimizing the struggle of queer Americans to

gain equal rights under the law.”

There can be little doubt that people’s words arise from their opinions and maneuver their audience into a corresponding point of view. We must be constantly on guard against this kind of indirect persuasion.

## More Men Reach for Sewing Machines

—Hannah Steinkopf-Frank, *NY Times*, 12/9-10/20

A long-neglected home art is reclaimed during the pandemic, including by some eager to break gender stereotypes. . . .

Sewists (the increasingly popular gender-neutral term) have long worked to shake the old-fashioned housewife imagery often associated with their hobby. Collective creative efforts ranging from the AIDS Memorial Quilt to knitting pussy hats have moved the home arts into the political and public sphere. And with DIYers able to show their stuff on platforms like Pinterest and Instagram, sewing and other handicrafts are surging in popularity.

Quarantine has accelerated this trend, with what CNN reports is a significant rise in sewing machine sales (and not just to make face masks). In lieu of traditional crafting circles, makers are connecting on social media to build community and promote diversity and inclusiveness: #vintagestylenotvintagevalues is a popular hashtag, with retro-style sewists disavowing regressive gender politics and racism.

[See the complete article for a fascinating review of how the role of men in this craft has evolved since the Middle Ages, when men reigned supreme.]



An item made by fashion designer Mr. Norris Dánta Ford



Michael Gardner and his daughter, Ava

## Celebrities Who Came Out in 2020

—Frank Alito, “17 Celebrities,” *Insider*, 12/28/20 and Alexander Kacala, “National Coming Out Day,” NBC News, 10/11/20

Lili Reinhart  
Elliot Page  
Tana Mongeau  
Nikkie de Jager  
Jameela Jamil  
Braunwyn Windham-Burke  
François Arnaud  
Taylor Schilling  
Nikki Blonsky  
Nicholas Ashe  
Quinn  
Da Brat  
J. August Richards  
Madison Bailey

Carole Baskin  
Niecy Nash  
Tinashe  
Nikki Blonsky  
Chyler Leigh  
Justice Smith  
Auli’i Cravalho  
Rebecca Black  
Rosario Dawson  
Rick Cosnett  
DJ Qualls  
Aaron Schock  
Andrew Gillum  
Sara Ramirez  
Avery Wilson

## Death of Trans Journalist Monica Roberts



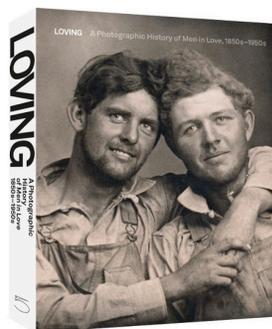
NBC News reported Roberts’s death on 9/10/20: “The pioneering transgender activist and journalist Monica Roberts, who spent her career covering Black trans issues, died earlier this week.” According to *Wikipedia*, her “death was initially reported as a hit and run case, though the medical examiner later stated that the cause of death was a “medical emergency”; her family reported that she was feeling unwell in the days prior to her death. The following week, the medical examiner reported the cause of death was complications of a pulmonary embolism. . . .

“In January 2021, Dee Dee Watters, another Houston activist and friend of Roberts, announced plans for a publication named *TransGriot* to continue the work Roberts had done to cover black and trans issues on her blog of the same name.”

## A Photographic History of Men in Love 1850s-1950s

—<https://www.fivecontinentseditions.com/en/p/loving/>

*LOVING: A Photographic History of Men in Love 1850s–1950s* is a visual narrative of rare sensitivity showcasing a unique collection of over 2,700 photographs taken between the 1850s and 1950s depicting romantic love between men taken in the most varied contexts (in domestic, military, or natural settings, such as parks and beaches). We all know what it means to fall in love, to manifest one’s feelings, and this awareness emerges with strength to anyone who leafs through *LOVING*. To love and be loved becomes the one paradigm uniting all humanity. The feelings and emotions that emerge from it are impetuous, all-embracing, and sometimes inexpressible.



Readers are introduced to the photographic narrative by the contribution of Paolo Maria Nosedà, as well as a text by Hugh Nini and Neal Treadwell, a Texan couple residing in New York who, for over twenty years, have been collecting photographs that bear witness to romantic love between men.

...  
In most cases, the couples are the sole subjects of the image, but there are many instances in which there are other characters with the not-so-subtly concealed role of witnesses. To these we must of course add the photographer, who is often the only person capable of immortalizing the scene that appears before their eyes. Readers will not in fact be able to disregard the chronologic [sic] contextualization of the shots, nor forget that behind each one is concealed an often forbidden love full of hardship and repressed emotions.

The over 300 images animating this volume also point to the innumerable transformations that took place between the 19th and the 20th century in the areas of fashion, hairstyle, and automobile design.

## Happiest Season

—excerpt from “Beyond ‘Coming Out,’”  
*New York Times* newsletter “The Morning,” 12/18/20

Last month, Hulu released one of the first major Christmas movies about a same-sex couple, *Happiest Season*. The movie broke records on the platform and received largely positive reviews from critics.



Kristen Stewart and Mackenzie Davis in “Happiest Season.” Lacey Terrell/Hulu, via Associated Press

## Hooked on Hawk

—Tom Copeland

A good roller coaster saves a few thrills for the latter part of the ride, but there is still some regret when one sees that the end is near. Having finished *Hexworld*, one of the last of Jordan L. Hawk’s series, I feel this regret but am more than satisfied with the latest thrills.



Hawk’s Twitter Photo

All of Hawk’s novels require the same willing suspension of disbelief as the Harry Potter books, but Hawk focuses on fewer kinds of magic. This series, as the title implies, involves no more than hexes—and witches to cast or break them. The witches have familiars who can appear in human or animal form and who are bound to them for life, rather in the manner of the “demons” in the world of Philip Pullman’s *The Golden Compass*. We are to imagine an alternate past in which the Inquisition only partially suppressed magic and the Enlightenment resuscitated it with clues from surviving fragments of Hellenistic hex lore, augmented later from Scandinavian sources. The stories take place in 1898 in New York City.

Many readers resent fantasy *per se*, but any reader who can take the first step will find this

series somewhat more “real” than some of Hawk’s others. This impression results not from more credible characterization but from the sharper contrasts between the two men at the heart of the story, each of whom begins as a stereotype and then erodes it until he becomes a person, in the eyes of both the reader and his lover.

Hawk develops the romance slowly and skilfully. It is complicated by greater distance between the lovers’ backgrounds than in any of the other series I have read. Hawk here explores the complexities of male-male power differential—in witch-familiar relationships; in conflicts among the police, the criminal underworld, and upper crust society; in class-ism; and even in top/bottom and S&M bonding. Moreover, whereas in the other series the lovers have been well matched in their need for or disregard of concealment, these lovers differ sharply in this regard, and each suffers also from divided loyalties. This romance, in short, faces far greater challenges than any other that I have seen Hawk treat, which makes the emerging compatibility of opposites all the more compelling.

There are, of course, the same offensive proofreading errors as elsewhere in this author: *effect/affect*, *principle/principal*, and *fewer/less* confusion, not to mention pronoun case errors like “. . . told Dominic and I” (shudder). They<sup>1</sup> put up a good struggle against vogue words, but once having yielded to *impact*, they work it for all it’s worth (= affect, bump, strike). Still, one can always hope for a second edition.

1 Hawk is nonbinary and prefers plural pronouns.



Harry Styles in a Gucci Dress on *Vogue*’s December Cover



Harry Styles in the Whole Shebang

**RITZ** a taste of welcome.

products

recipes

holiday campaign



## Ritz Crackers Celebrates LGBTQ Diversity

— Muri Assunção, *New York Daily News*, 11/12/20

Ritz, the popular circular salted snack, is celebrating the beauty in diversity with a heartwarming holiday campaign.

Themed “Where there’s love, there’s family,” the minute-long television spot features three non-traditional families who are getting ready to spend the holidays: one group of LGBTQ friends, a Latina grandmother who’s unable to be near her daughter and grandkid, and a homeless shelter, where a young girl forms a bond with a man sitting across the table from her. . . .

“Where There’s Love, There’s Family” challenges the definition of ‘family’ and the belief that it has to be defined by blood or marriage,” Patty Gonzalez, senior director of marketing at Ritz parent company Mondelēz, said in a statement. “At a time when our families may be strained as a result of social distancing, political tensions or personal orientations and identities, the Ritz brand’s campaign is intended to encourage Americans to help build a more accepting world,” she added.

## Sign Our Petition

— onemillionmoms.com/<sup>1</sup>

RITZ Crackers is attempting to normalize the transgender lifestyle by airing a commercial that has absolutely nothing to do with selling crackers. The company’s most recent ad features a man putting on lipstick like a woman and effeminately clinging to another man, to brainwash children and adults alike by desensitizing audiences.

The ad campaign titled “Where’s there’s love, there’s family” has been airing on HGTV and is featured on RITZ’s YouTube page. The company’s goal is to redefine family as something other than God’s biblical design for gender and sexuality. In its own words, RITZ says, “We’re encouraging people to rethink what it means to be family.” . . .

The company is collaborating with the “It Gets Better Project,” a LGBTQ+ program directed at promoting homosexuality and transgenderism to youth. RITZ’s website states it is also donating \$50,000 to help advance the LGBTQ+ agenda.

[On 1/18/20 there were 23,364 signatures to the outraged petition for Ritz to “suspend this campaign and stay away from social agendas.”]

1 Not the Million Mom March gun-safety organization