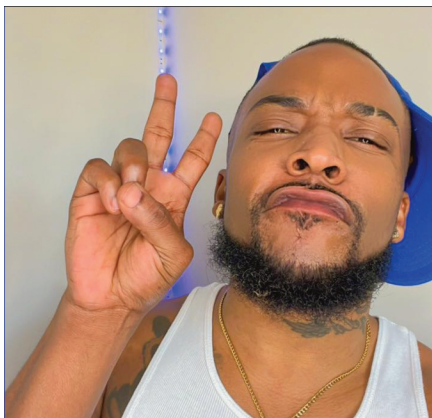


Our democracy is at risk!
If we are complacent it will FALL

Dixie Longate's final Charlotte Tupperware party



Charlotte gay man Booda Boo murdered

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Disney stands by LGBTQ+ community

-pg 6

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Mural of NC drag legend Brandy Alexander accidentally painted over

According to the new property owners, the mural at the rear side of a structure located at 1510 Central Avenue, an homage to the late drag legend Brandy Alexander, was painted over accidentally and was not a political statement. Community conversation and internet chatter suggests a new mural should include four performers, all of whom left an indelible mark on the city's community: Alexander, Boom Boom Latour, Kasey King and Toni Lenoir.

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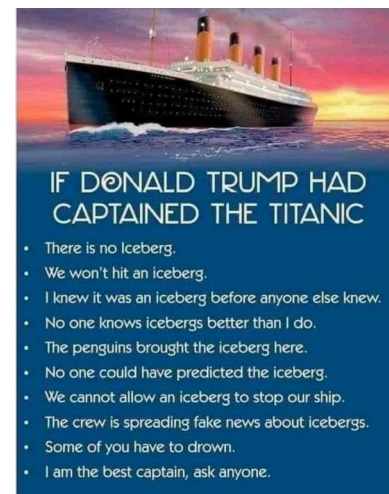


Thinking about leaving the United States?

Relocating abroad has become increasingly popular in our current political climate. Legislative action, fluctuating global tariffs and rising costs of living have prompted many individuals to seek opportunities beyond our borders. Americans are considering relocation for safety and security now more than ever and Qnotes has collected tips and planning advice for those thinking about taking the plunge. Be aware — there's much to consider.

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The People speak on Social Media



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By the People and for the People: how to organize your precinct

Rallying together is the best tool we have to combat anti-American policy



by Taylor Heeden Larkins
Qnotes Staff Writer

In the months following President Donald Trump's inauguration on January 20, individuals and groups from all corners of the country have been working to organize their communities to combat the administration's constant attacks on America's most vulnerable. Fear has permeated through these marginalized groups — from immigrants (regardless of legal status) who now fear leaving their homes to trans youth who no longer can access the lifesaving care they need.

The Trump administration and the overall "MAGA movement" is utilizing executive action to work around the democratic processes the Constitution guarantees. From executive orders cutting the federal funding of scientific research already approved and allocated by Congress to ending birthright citizenship — which directly contradicts the 14th amendment of the Constitution — it's clear Trump and his diabolical underlings don't care to understand the very foundation our country was founded on.

And it's that very foundation that will be the downfall of the MAGA mindset, so long as the American people remember the true power lies in them.

There's true power in numbers, and now, there's a call to rally together unlike any other point in history. In fact on April 5, over 1,200 locations in all 50 states came together to participate in a nationwide protest organized by more than 150 groups, including civil rights organizations, labor unions, LBGTQ+ advocates, veterans and elections activists. The "Hands-Off" was attended by millions across America, marking one of the largest demonstrations in the country's history.

However, these large movements start on the ground in individual precincts in communities of all sizes. From the small, rural towns to bustling cities and urban centers, precinct organizing is an effective tool we have in our toolbox as the American people to voice our opposition to such blatant attacks on what makes our country the United States of America.

What is a precinct?

Precincts are designated "districts" made up of folks who are eligible to vote. The process of designating precincts in North Carolina is laid out in the North Carolina's General Statutes in Chapter 163 Article 12:

"Each county shall be divided into a convenient number of precincts for the purpose of voting. ... the county board of elections shall have power from time to time, by resolution, to establish, alter, discontinue or create such new election precincts or voting places as it may deem



Thousands organized across North Carolina on April 5 to protest President Donald Trump and his makeshift advisor Elon Musk. CREDIT: Screen Capture/Facebook

expedient. Upon adoption of a resolution establishing, altering, discontinuing or creating a precinct or voting place, the board shall give 45 days' notice thereof prior to the next primary or election. Notice shall be given by advertisement in a newspaper having general circulation in the county, by posting a copy of the resolution at the courthouse door and at the office of the county board of elections, and by mailing a copy of the resolution to the chairman of every political party in the

Precinct chairs are one of the most critical working parts of these political organizations. They serve as the link between community members and elected officials, serving as a mediator, messenger and leader all at once. An active precinct chair engages with their community and knows what the needs of voters are, regardless of party — it's crucial for these folks to know what Democrats, Republicans, Independents and non-voters think.

North Carolina's Democratic Party has

ACLU of North Carolina
Campaign for Southern Equality
The Freedom Center for Social Justice
Southerners On New Ground (SONG)

There are also smaller, regional organizations across the state working to organize and fight against the Trump administration, such as these in the following lists.

Charlotte and surrounding communities

PFLAG Charlotte
Charlotte Pride
Union County Pride
Salisbury Pride
The Asian Community Center of Charlotte
Charlotte Black Pride
Time Out Youth

Raleigh and the greater Research Triangle

LGBT Center of Raleigh
LGBTQ Center of Durham
PFLAG Triangle
Raleigh's LGBT Chamber of Commerce
The Pauli Murray Center for History and Social Justice

Wilmington and the Cape Fear region

Women Organizing for Wilmington
NHC NAACP
Clean Cape Fear
LGBTQ Center of the Cape Fear Coast

Asheville and Western North Carolina

PFLAG Asheville
Blue Ridge Pride
Youth OUTright
Tranzmission
Tzedek Social Justice ::



county. Notice may additionally be made on a radio or television station or both, but such notice shall be in addition to the newspaper and other required notice. No later than 30 days prior to the primary or election, the county board of elections shall mail a notice of precinct change to each registered voter who as a result of the change will be assigned to a different voting place."

Can you 'officially' organize a precinct?

Only the county's board of elections chairs and the state board of elections hold the ability to create or get rid of precincts, but anyone with a cause can "organize" their precinct. Most county chapters of political parties have someone designated as their "precinct chair," meaning they are tasked with reaching out to constituents and voters in these districts and gauging what issues are affecting their lives the most.

a list of all precinct chairs, as well as their contact information, for folks in all corners of the state to connect and get involved. That can be found here.

Other ways to get organized

Working directly with a political party is just one way to get involved in helping to organize your community. Another method just as effective is working with third party organizations working to stand for the most vulnerable and truly fight for values aligning with your own.

In North Carolina, there are many organizations working to organize and rally residents against the administration's tyrannical and anti-American policies.

Statewide organizations

The North Carolina Justice Center
North Carolina Black Alliance
NC Congress of Latino Organizations
Carolina Jews for Justice

LGBTQ+ YouTube allies investigate Mike Johnson's possible ties to Grindr app

Rumored connection comes from TikTok reel alleging evidence



by Jonathan Golian
Qnotes Staff Writer

In a news commentary report put together by YouTube channel "I've Had It" this past weekend, podcast hosts and commentators Jennifer Welch and Angie Sullivan explore a rumor alleging that GOP Speaker Mike Johnson maintains a Grindr app account.

In the video, the hosts pull up what looks to be a conversation between Johnson and a visitor to the Washington D.C. area. During the conversation, after a compliment and a few offers from the account allegedly linked to Johnson, the other man points out the lack of photos to trade pleasantries with on the other side.

After adding the reasoning behind having no profile photo, stating "Very discreet here, married with a few kids, not trying to mess up my situation," a selfie possibly taken by the speaker appears, revealing himself on the chat log.

While the hosts make it clear that all of the information for the report, taken off of a TikTok video that went viral, is alleged, by the speaker's own actions against the LGBTQ+ community, there may be something to the possible Grindr connection.

"Now, I want to say I don't know if this is true or not, but I do want to say that I think that men, alleged straight men, that talk about gay people all the time, I personally believe that that's very Freudian, and I personally believe that they are probably gay or bi-curious," Welch reasons. "And so, it's important for us to dig into the psychology of ... Mike Johnson and his wife, Kelly."

Following her hypothesis, Welch brings up a headline from a 2023 Vanity Fair article, titled "Mike Johnson's Wife Founded a Company That Equates Being Gay With Bestiality and Incest."



Jennifer Welch (left) and Angie Sullivan (right) talking on their podcast, 'I've Had It.'
CREDIT: YouTube / I've Had It

After putting out a blunt statement about the couple, calling them "F*cking crazy," Welch then connects how Grindr crashed twice on the weekend of the most recent Republican National Convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin with the possibility of Johnson owning an account.

"But what married woman, that's getting laid frequently by their husband, thinks about gay sex and then equates it to bestiality, and then thinks that they are a normal person?," Welch asks her podcast partner.

"Well, obviously these two, because they are nutballs," quips Sullivan. "But interestingly enough, you know, you have the covenant eyes swapping porn and the kids. Everything is about staying away from sex [and] staying away from gay people. I'm with you, when you are talking about it all the time, you're trying

to convince yourself, there's just no question about it."

"When you're talking about it all the time, you're trying to convince yourself. There's just no question about it. People secure in their sexuality, whether it's homosexuality, heterosexuality, or bisexuality, they aren't talking about it all the time."

Around the same time as the Vanity Fair piece, Kelly Johnson had more than a few spotlight articles written about her. The website Americans United had published an investigative article surrounding Kelly and her Christian counseling organization, named "Onward Christian Counseling," which is said to specialize in conversion therapy among its practices. As is highlighted by the article, Kelly Johnson holds no medical certifications, making her center not one that provides accredited therapy.

Welch and Sullivan's YouTube podcast channel, "I've Had It," drops episodes Tuesdays and Thursdays, while their additional broadcasts under "IHIP News" run daily with shorter videos. The channel is known for its LGBTQ+ friendly content as well as the hosts' razor-sharp commentary on political pop culture. ::

Qnotes joins News is Out media collaborative

The groundbreaking LGBTQ+ media collaborative News is Out is proud to welcome six new affiliate members. This expansion strengthens the mission to amplify LGBTQ+ voices and ensure equitable, community-centered journalism across the country.

The six new affiliate members are:

- The Buckeye Flame (Ohio)
- Between the Lines/Pridesource (MI)
- Lookout (Arizona)
- OutSFL (Southern Florida)
- QNotesCarolinas (Carolinas)
- Watermark Out News (Central Florida)

"The addition of these incredible affiliate members to News is Out is a landmark

moment for the collaborative," said Dana Piccoli, managing director of News is Out. "After three years of growth, we're thrilled to take this next step and continue working for a more sustainable future for all queer media, alongside our new partners."

The affiliates, who are important sources of information for the LGBTQ+ community in their regions, will actively participate in shaping the collaborative's future impact. Affiliates will have opportunities to contribute to fundraising efforts, take part in branded content campaigns to grow revenue and collaborate on joint applications for philanthropic support. Affiliates will also act as ambassadors for the program, and play a key role in 2025 LGBTQ+ Media Day, both in fundraising and sharing in

the proceeds.

Penny Riordan, Local Media Association's director of Local News Fund and collaboration, said she is glad that the publishers were eager to expand the group. "These outlets are also leaders in the queer media space, just as our founding publishers are. It's a true sign of collaboration if the group votes to add more members."

The Buckeye Flame founder and affiliate Ken Schneck said, "There is such collective power to queer newsrooms working together, and that power is especially and acutely needed right now. The Buckeye Flame is proud to be a part of News is Out's vital efforts to amplify LGBTQ+ individuals and issues."

"Qnotes is pleased and excited to be a member of News is Out and looks forward to working with legacy LGBTQ+ media veterans throughout the country as well as a great group of media professionals at the Local Media Association," said Jim Yarbrough, publisher of **Qnotes** & *QnotesCarolinas.com*.



Leo Cusimano, owner of the Dallas Voice and a longtime member of News is Out is looking forward to expanding the collaboration's efforts and mission. "At a time when independent queer media is more vital than ever, expanding our collaborative means we can uplift even more voices, share resources, and strengthen the future of LGBTQ+ media. We're thrilled to welcome our new partners and excited for the impact we can make together." ::

—News is Out staff

Pitt County Deputies discover beloved Charlotte man slain Sunday morning

The Charlotte LGBTQ+ community is mourning one of their own this week as 36-year-old Rashawn Gray, known by friends as Booda Boo, was found dead on Sun., March 23.

The first call came in the early Sunday morning hours to the Pitt County Sheriff's office about suspicious individuals in the area. Upon investigating, deputies caught sight of two men leaving the woods around Abbott Farm Road and Rountree Road, just outside of Ayden. Both were detained on sight and questioned, right before the deputies said they found a body pinned underneath a vehicle by the road. At this point Gray was identified, pronounced dead on the scene and a likely homicide.

A preliminary investigation suggests that, shortly before 3:30 a.m., 27-year-old Matthew Warren, a man from Buffalo,

N.Y., and Gray were having a dispute before Gray was killed. Warren is currently being held without bond.

The other individual at the scene, 24-year-old Bobby Joyner, was also arrested at the scene and is currently being held on a \$250,000 bond. The Pitt County Sheriff's office has charged Joyner with accessory after the fact of murder, stating that Joyner helped Warren by not "promptly calling for emergency medical assistance or law enforcement."

Gray's murder came just hours after he and Warren, also known as Matty Milk, announced their new relationship online on Facebook. Gray posted "Found My Person" at 7 p.m. on Saturday night while Warren also expressed excitement at the union, writing "Okay Y'all I'm Happy Finally Yes I Have A Man" on his page around 9:18pm. As to how long the men knew

each other leading up to the incident is still being investigated.

The community around Gray have taken to the victim's social media, offering up tributes to Gray and his loved ones.

One friend, Jhalisa MzMonroe Spratt, shared memories while responding in disbelief at the reported crime. "Damn Shawn! Looking at your profile pic still don't seem real," the post reads. "From Reid Park all the way to Harding you was my round, one of my childhood bestie but we called each other family. I will miss hearing 'what's up cousin' when we catch up or reminiscing about our DC trip in the 5th grade. It's so strange to say rip bc its so final but may you sleep well friend, you will truly be missed."

Another friend, Aaron Reinhardt, wrote, "Man this is so heartbreaking. Booda was such a positive beacon of light in and out of the gay community. Definitely gone too soon. Rest easy love! You will be dearly missed."

As of Tues., March 25, an online fundraiser was set up for Gray's family to cover the Charlotte man's funeral expenses.

The blurb on the GoFundMe page reads, "Hi my name is Jessica Pierce. On March 23rd we got the devastating news that my cousin Rashawn Gray was tragically



Rashawn Gray, also known as 'Booda Boo' by friends and others in the community, was reportedly murdered in the early morning hours of March 23. CREDIT: Facebook

taken from this world. We as his family need some help taking care of the funeral arrangements, so if you could find it in your heart to help out we would greatly appreciate it. Anything helps."

As of this writing, no other updates on Gray's exact cause of death have been revealed by the Pitt County Sheriff's office, as all investigations surrounding the event are still ongoing. ::

—Jonathan Golian

Disney refuses to opt out of HRC's Corp Equality Index

In an annual meeting for Disney shareholders last Thurs., March 20, investors overwhelmingly voted to turn down a proposal that would pull the company out of the Human Rights Campaign Foundation's (HRC) Corporate Equality Index.

The HRC's Corporate Equality Index (CEI) is the national benchmark for corporate policies, practices and benefits pertinent to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer employees. The proposal was put forth by the right-wing think tank National Center for Public Policy Research through its Free Enterprise Project initiative. The Free Enterprise Project (FEP) calls itself "the original and premier opponent of the woke takeover of American corporate life."

The proposal put forth by the FEP was determined to classify the series of "perfect scores" Disney received on the index since 2007, given by HRC, as an outright negative thing.

"When corporations take extreme positions, they destroy shareholder value by alienating large portions of their customers and investors. This proposal provides Disney with an opportunity to move back to neutral," the FEP's document read. The scores, the FEP expressed, could "only be attained by abiding by its partisan, divisive and increasingly radical criteria."

Within the proposal, the FEP also took aim at trans-rights efforts, bringing up HRC and other organizations like it including

The Trevor Project and GLAAD, claiming that they "seek to sow gender confusion in children, encourage irreversible surgical procedures on confused teens, effectively eliminate girls' and women's sports and bathrooms, and roll back longstanding religious liberties." Using those examples, the FEP looped Disney into those claims, stating that "Disney disastrously engaged in such activism when it inserted itself in the middle of a divisive public debate over the Parental Rights in Education Act," referring to Disney's opposition to Florida's dubbed "Don't Say Gay" law in 2022.

Thankfully, the investors did not share the FEP's opinion on the matter. In a statement opposing the proposal, the board said: "Given the Company's existing practices to assess participation in transparency efforts and the Board's oversight of ESG [environmental, social and governance] reporting, workforce equity matters and human rights policies, we do not believe this proposal would provide additional value to shareholders."

In a statement, Eric Bloem, VP of



Walt Disney World during a Summer Parade in August 2024. CREDIT: Facebook / Walt Disney World

corporate citizenship at the Human Rights Campaign Foundation, shared HRC's approval of the resulting outcome. "This vote gives us a clear statement of values from Disney's shareholders," Bloem wrote. "They know what we know; that despite all the noise, commitments to inclusion pay figurative dividends and help their literal bottom line." ::

—Jonathan Golian

Mural of NC drag legend Brandy Alexander 'accidentally' painted over

A significant part of Charlotte's queer history has vanished. According to the new property owners, the mural at the rear side of a structure located at 1510 Central Avenue, which was an homage to the late drag legend Brandy Alexander was painted over accidentally.

In an interview with the Charlotte Observer, Jack Dunn the managing partner at Chartwell Property Group, confirmed that the mural was painted over by accident.

As reported, Chartwell did hire a contractor to repaint the building on Pecan Avenue, but a miscommunication resulted in the mural being painted over. Dunn also confirmed the

miscommunication was not a political statement. "We are not infallible, Dunn said in the pages of the Observer. "In our efforts to improve and maintain the structures, [our contractors] misinterpreted our request and painted over the mural, but it was with the intent of giving a better home to our merchants. Our intent is to preserve the neighborhood, not sanitize it with new development."

The project was originally conceived by musician and documentarian John Kennedy, artist Nick Napolitano and Boom Charlotte founder Manoj Kesavan. Other artists who participated in the actual creation of the work of art

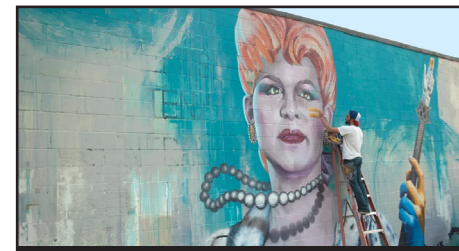
included Matt Moore and Matt Hooker.

In addition to paying tribute to Alexander, the mural carried a political message in protest of House Bill 2, which prevented trans individuals from using the appropriate restroom in government facilities. The bill was likely the matchstick that created the firestorm of anti-drag and anti-trans legislation that exists today.

In a slap at former North Carolina governor and Charlotte mayor Pat McCrory, who was responsible for HB2 and had become notorious for his anti-LGBTQ+ viewpoints, the artists created cameo pendant earrings with McCrory's image as part of Alexander's accessories depicted in the mural.

Chartwell is reportedly considering a new installation that will pay homage to Alexander.

As reported in *Qnotes* when the mural was first installed, the initial plan was to have several legendary drag queens in the mural, including Boom Boom Latour, Tony Lenoir and Kasey King, along with Alexander. At the time Lenoir was the only member of the additional



The Brandy Alexander mural as it appeared near completion in 2016. CREDIT: Qnotes archives

three considered who had passed away. Latour died shortly after the mural's completion and King passed away late last year.

Community conversation and internet chatter has suggested that a new mural should include all four performers, all of whom left an indelible mark on the city's community and contributed much in the struggle for LGBTQ+ rights, the fight against HIV/AIDS and the Queen City's queer culture. ::

—David Aaron Moore

NC Republicans introduce new anti-Trans bathroom bill

Republicans in the North Carolina legislature are attempting to recreate a scene from the past in the form of a new anti-transgender bathroom bill.

Senate Bill 516 would require that bathrooms in public schools and other facilities mentioned by the bill "shall only be used by one designated biological sex at one time," restricting transgender people from using the restroom corresponding to their gender identity.

Many locals to the state will recall a similar bill that was introduced and passed into law in March 2016 by then Governor Pat McCrory. House Bill 2, more commonly known as the "Bathroom Bill" or just HB2, was immensely criticized during its time and is still remembered as being particularly devastating to the state.

Government entities from across the

United States banned employees from non-essential travel to North Carolina, many corporations stopped plans conventions, events and jobs in the state and performers the world over skipped NC entirely while touring. The result was hundreds of millions of dollars lost that would have normally been invested in the state.

However, where HB2 stopped short of just monitoring the bathrooms, SB 516 extends in targeting trans citizens directly and the people that support them.

Sponsored by State Senator Vickie Sawyer of Mooresville and Brad Overcash of Belmont, like HB2, the new "improved" version would restrict bathrooms to correspond with a person's biological sex. The facilities named by the bill include prisons, domestic violence centers, rape crisis centers and public schools,

including public colleges and universities.

There are additional measures within the bill that make it particularly insidious. SB 516 would grant someone who "encounters a person of the opposite biological sex" in the facilities the ability to sue that establishment. Another measure introduced in the bill would strip the right of transgender people to change the gender on their birth certificate after receiving sex reassignment surgery. All driver's licenses within the state would also require a person's sex at birth, not their gender identity, to be displayed.

In response, North Carolina Democratic Party Chair Anderson Clayton said in a statement that Tuesday's bill was an attempt to reintroduce HB2. "This is a ploy by the Republican party to distract and divide, and doesn't do a thing to address the pressing needs that North Carolinians are feeling in their pocketbooks and in their schools," she said.

Another Democrat, Senator Julie Mayfield, pushed for the state to not return to the days of HB2 during a news



Senate Bill 516 is nothing short of an attempt by Republicans in the North Carolina Legislature to recreate a revenge version of HB2. CREDIT: Facebook

conference centered around a stack of pro-LGBTQ+ and reproductive rights bills filed by the party.

"We're done with that," she said. "We need to be done with that. We need to recognize who people are. We need to allow them to live their lives, and we need to be done with treating people as anything less than whole human beings deserving of respect and dignity." ::

—Jonathan Golian

Nancy Mace calls town hall event in Mt Pleasant, S.C. 'unsafe'

Like many Republicans before her, Representative Nancy Mace (R-SC) has started avoiding town halls in her district. According to a poster for a town hall event scheduled in Mount Pleasant, S.C., Mace is listed as an invited guest to the event. However, the congresswoman has refused to attend, claiming the gathering is "not safe."

"This is FAKE NEWS," Mace posted on the social media site Twitter (X), in reference to the event. "This event is being driven by left-wing extremists and paid agitators with a clear agenda. I WILL NOT be attending."

The confusion here, much like with many red districts that Republican legislators have refused to visit for community conversations, is that Mount

Pleasant is a red town in terms of party. Despite Mace's claim that "This event is being driven by left-wing extremists and paid agitators with a clear agenda," there is a higher probability that those wanting to attend and speak with her more than likely also voted for the congresswoman.

However, like the many other Republicans that refuse to speak to their districts, Mace also seems to be falling in line with Donald Trump's modus operandi. In a recent Truth Social post from earlier in March, Trump claimed that "paid 'troublemakers' are attending Republican Town Hall Meetings."

"It is all part of the game for the Democrats," Trump wrote. "But just like our big LANDSLIDE ELECTION, it's not going to work for them!"

Trump and Mace's claims, no doubt, are a source of confusion for the event's organizers, Mount Pleasant Town Councilwoman Guang Ming Whitley and the Lowcountry Accountability Alliance (LAA). The LAA, a grassroots organization dedicated to improving transparent communication between elected officials and their constituents, along with Whitley, have been trying to encourage Mace to host an in-person town hall meeting since the first week of March.

"Our community deserves the opportunity to engage directly with our Representative to discuss how federal policies are impacting our daily lives. An in-person town hall with Congresswoman Mace will provide a platform for open dialogue and accountability," said Whitley.

While Mace refuses to visit constituents in the 1st Congressional District, which she represents, she has made visits all around South Carolina and even to Harvard University. According to *Charleston.com*, the last in-person town



Mace visiting Israel during its attack on the Palestinian territories. CREDIT: Facebook / Michel Rolf

hall she attended was June 7, 2024.

Given her recurring current trend of invitation declines, she appears to be intentionally avoiding her own district for fear of confrontation. It's unlikely she'll be making appearances anywhere that doesn't come with a rigged softball audience. ::

—Jonathan Golian

Senator Cory Booker makes history in record-breaking speech

Booker spoke for 25 hours about concerns incited by the Trump administration



by Jonathan Golian
Qnotes Staff Writer

For anyone watching the Democratic party since Donald Trump's inauguration in January 2025, the perception is that the majority of the party has not done much in terms of fighting back in a substantial way. However, as March 31 started to wind down into the next month, Senator Cory Booker of New Jersey began a marathon speech on the Senate floor that lasted 25 hours.

During his time spent addressing the Senate, Booker addressed both concerns about the current administration's actions and spoke to constituents writing to him from all over the nation. As he spoke through much of his time at the podium, while given slight breathing breaks in between when asked questions by his colleagues, he brought a massive amount of letters to read from and respond to, including several that came from Charlotte.

Booker used some of his time to talk about the ways that the Department of Education has stripped away protections offered to the transgender community in

guarding against sex-based crimes.

"Sex-based cases also include harassment involving gender identity, an issue that fueled Mr. Trump's campaign last year and motivated executive orders early in his administration aimed at preventing schools from recognizing transgender identities, barring transgender girls and women from competing on girls' and women's sports teams and terminating programs that promote "gender ideology," Booker stated.

There were also a number of letters that addressed constituent concerns in his own state, including one coming from a religious leader. The identity was hidden from the Senator for the citizen's protection.

"Thank you, Senator Booker," the letter reads. "Please continue to fight the good fight against the injustices being done by the current administration. I am the pastor of Emanuel Lutheran Church in New Brunswick. As a faith leader and your constituent, I am deeply concerned about the treatment of LGBTQ people and immigrants by this administration. The demonization and marginalization of these groups is unchristian and deeply offensive to the values of my faith. I ask that you continue to oppose all Executive orders and legislation that targets these groups. You have been a consistent ally. Please continue to be a champion for

most vulnerable."

The speech is historic, having surpassed former Senator Strom Thurmond's time on the stand for just over 24 hours while filibustering the Civil Rights Act of 1957, and making Booker's speech the most recent and most time consuming to be recorded. In addition to conquering Thurmond's record, the speech was important because it evidenced something new in terms of the fight coming out of left-leaning politics in America. Booker's move toward fighting back will hopefully inspire other more creative means of combating the current administration's actions against the nation as citizens do all they can to sound the alarms.

Booker's words chronicled many of the issues that the current administration has incited within the first hundred days of the new presidency, including Social Security, health care and joblessness brought about by the major cuts to State Departments.

The letters Booker read and thoughts he shared regarding healthcare and Social Security were intense and reflective of America's feelings about the current administration.

"Medicaid has saved my life many, many times," Booker read from one of the many letters sent in. "Without it many people in America will die. Please help us."



Sen. Cory Brooker during his marathon 25-hour speech on the senate floor. CREDIT: Facebook

the following thoughts: "Our country has made a promise to people that if you pay into the Social Security program your whole life that money will be there for you when you retire," said Booker. "Social Security is not the government's money to spend. It's the hard-earned savings of working americans. The president and Elon Musk need to keep their hands off of it."

Additional material added by Qnotes staff. ::

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Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce announces grand opening of Impact Center

Ribbon-cutting ceremony takes place May 1
by Qnotes Staff

The Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce is proud to announce the grand opening and rainbow ribbon cutting ceremony for the Impact Center for the Carolinas on Thurs., May 1, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. The facility is located at 2838 Queen City Drive, Suite A, in Charlotte.

The Impact Center for the Carolinas is a groundbreaking initiative designed to motivate economic empowerment, workforce development and small business and professional growth throughout the region. Boasting 2,800+ square feet, the center will serve as:

The administrative home of the Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce & The 628 Foundation

- A non-profit incubation space, supporting emerging organizations dedicated to social impact
- A co-working and training hub, providing resources and guidance for entrepreneurs and small business owners
- A multipurpose room for educational programs, events, workforce development initiatives and professional training
- A Wi-Fi lounge & collaboration space, fostering an environment where professionals and business leaders can connect and thrive
- Pod & media space for content creation and education

The multipurpose room, Wi-Fi lounge, co-working space and training hub will be available to members and partners, and can be reserved.

In its 34th year, the Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce continues to expand its reach, now serving more than 500 members and 45 corporate partners across 90 counties in North Carolina and South Carolina. The launch of the Impact Center strengthens the Chamber's mission to provide education, economic opportunity, and advocacy for small and minority-owned businesses, nonprofits and professionals.

The Freedom Center for Social Justice will add their headquarters to the Impact Center as well. For more than a decade, we have relied heavily



New local facility offers LGBTQ+ community a variety of exciting opportunities.
CREDIT: Courtesy CLGBTCC

on their partnership and value their continued collaboration.

Grand Opening Celebration

The Chamber will host the open house from noon – 7:30 p.m., with the official rainbow ribbon cutting at 6:30 p.m., alongside staff, board members, elected officials, corporate partners and community leaders. The event will feature food, music, networking and celebrations honoring those who contributed to making the Impact Center a reality.

A Community Effort

The creation of the Impact Center was made possible through the dedication of key partners and sponsors who played a vital role in the design and buildout of the space, including CLTGeek, Jen Carbutto Designs, Hatted Handyman Services, Truliant Federal Credit Union, Make A Move and Wells Fargo.

"We are excited to be a community partner of the Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce in all their business

and professional efforts," says Toya Patterson, Business Partner Officer for Truliant. "We congratulate the Chamber on their continued intentional impact in the community and look forward to future partnerships that support local businesses and economic growth."


"The Impact Center is more than just a building—it's a catalyst for growth and change," explains Chad Turner, President & CEO of the Carolinas LGBT+ Chamber of Commerce. "This space will empower small businesses, provide resources for non-profits and create an inclusive hub for professionals to engage, learn and grow. We are incredibly grateful to our partners and supporters who have helped bring this vision to life."

"As a member of the Chamber for the past 10 years, I've witnessed both the obstacles we've faced and the powerful progress we've made fighting for equity, growing our membership, and expanding partnerships that uplift

LGBTQ+ businesses across the region," CLGBTCC Chair Mel Morris offers. "Until now, that work has happened in a patchwork of borrowed spaces, fueled by passion and grit."

"The new Impact Center changes everything. We're finally creating a home. An intentionally designed, safe and vibrant hub where LGBTQ+ entrepreneurs and business owners can access vital services, ongoing training, collaborative co-working and community resources. This isn't just a building. It's a bold statement of presence and possibility. It's a beautiful Queer Quilt stitched together by us, for us and it's ready to wrap our community in connection, support and strength."

The grand opening and rainbow ribbon cutting of the Impact Center for the Carolinas is open to all. For more information, visit www.clgbtcc.org or call 704-837-4050, ext. 7102. ::




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Developing a giving plan is important in these trying times

LGBTQ+ organizations are losing government and corporate support and we can help

by Frank Summers/ Contributor

With the intense political attacks on our community, many of us are looking for ways to help. For some, this is deeply personal as we've watched family and loved ones actively support actions that could take away our rights or harm our relationships or our people.

The attacks on our community are real. Some are easy to see, such as legislative efforts and others are a little harder to find. Many of the anti-DEI campaigns have been coordinated by activist Robby Starbuck. While he describes himself as an opponent of DEI, half of his attacks are aimed at corporate support of gay, lesbian and transgender people, while a much smaller fraction – nine percent – target racial diversity. (USA Today 09/2024). These efforts have caused major corporations to stop supporting our community financially. This is not just stopping contributions to Pride, or no longer submitting questionnaires to the Human Rights Campaign, this has an impact on the funding of grants (such as for medical research), and corporate charitable giving as well as all kinds of LGBTQ+ organizations.

Some information about the organizations that support our community:

- Only 0.16 percent of all charitable giving is to LGBTQ+ focused organizations. That's correct, that equates to less than 2/10 of 1%, a very small amount of funds compared to non-LGBTQ+ organizations.
- In the past, government grants made up about 40% of total contributions to LGBTQ+ organizations. Corporate contributions accounted for more than 15% according to Equitable Giving Lab.

In the Carolinas, there are nearly 150 registered charitable organizations. Nationwide, there are thousands of charitable organizations focused on the LGBTQ+ community, providing support, education and/or advocacy. Some provide legal advocacy or promote civil rights, while others



Consulting with an attorney is an important step when preparing a giving plan.

fund medical research, or help those seeking to start families, and some provide camaraderie and social engagement, or keep us informed with news about our community. Lists are available from various sources, such as equitablegivinglab.org and charitynavigator.org, which also has reports and rankings for the financials of organizations.

Your Money and Making an Impact

With much needed investments in support of our community not coming from government or the corporate sector, we can help fill the gap. There are strategies to help you make the most impact with your money. A charitable giving plan is a great tool for this.

All of us have different financial situations. Some would like to give and some would not. Some may want to do something now, others are on fixed incomes. Some would like to give to several nonprofits, and others might want to give to nonprofits that are not focused on the community. The key is to be aware of the options. When thinking

through a charitable giving plan, being strategic can help any gifts go further. Some of the strategic objectives might be to maximize a gift, or to make any contributions in a way that helps with taxes, or to hold onto their money as long as they're alive but to give any remaining estate to charity. When planning future giving, it may be years or even decades between now and the time of giving. Situations will change within nonprofits and charitable organizations. Flexibility is needed.

Next are brief explanations of different strategies that can be used. Before engaging in any of them, I recommend understanding them fully, as well as the impact on your overall financial plan. Good financial planning will coordinate charitable giving in certain tax years to maximize the benefit. Currently, 60% of cash contributions are deductible and appreciated assets (such as stocks) get a deduction of 30% with no capital gains tax.

One tool that helps answer many of those needs is a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF). Highly flexible, DAFs can be customized to the wishes and timing

of the donor. They can accept cash and non-cash (think of property or valuables, or even investments). Donations can be made during the lifetime of the donor, or with assets from the estate. During lifetime, the timing of gifts into the DAF can be coordinated to help with taxes.

It's true that any property can be given (or left in a will) directly to a charitable organization, however, many organizations are focused on their charitable mission and find it difficult to manage gifts of property or investments. When planning gifts, it's best to ask the intended organization what kind of gifts they can accept.

Life insurance is an often-overlooked strategy. For example, there may be an old life insurance policy that's no longer needed but has cash value gains that would be taxable if surrendered. A charity (or DAF) could be named as beneficiary. Some people even purchase a life insurance policy specifically for the purpose of charitable giving. The intent is to pay the annual premium knowing that it will leave a much more substantial gift at death. For some, leaving that legacy is important.

Many corporations offer life insurance as an employee benefit, generally 1x or 2x salary. Employees pay tax on the premium for any face amount over \$50,000 based on rates published by the IRS. For older people with higher salaries, the tax on that amount can be substantial. If a charity is named as beneficiary for the entire year, then there would be no tax on that premium amount.

Another idea is a Qualified Charitable Deduction (QCD). Everyone age 73 and older must take a Required Minimum Distribution from their qualified retirement accounts, such as 401ks or Traditional IRAs. With a QCD, if the contribution is made directly from the qualified account to a 501(c) 3 organization, there is no tax on the RMD to the donor. There are limitations to this strategy.

For couples, it is possible to structure estates and retirement plans to ensure



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both spouses will be cared for during their lifetimes with remainders going to charity. Those with significant estates might want to explore charitable trusts or even private foundations.

Whatever one's estate looks like, no matter how much you wish to give, there are ways to help you and the

organizations you wish to support. Developing a strategy is involved and requires knowledge and expertise. A financial planner can help people with these concepts. It should also be discussed with an attorney when developing estate plans, and with a tax preparer or CPA.

Frank Summers is a Certified Financial Planner™. He can be reached at frank.summers@ceterainvestors.com or 704-459-4646.

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Equality North Carolina
Everyday Transformative Queeries
Faith in America
Fayetteville Pride
Freedom Center for Social Justice
Gaston Pride Committee
Gay Men's Chorus of Charlotte
Genderlines Inc
GLSEN Greensboro
GLSEN Greensboro
GLSEN Triangle
GLSEN Winston Salem
Grace Fellowship MCC
Guilford Green Foundation
Halifax Northampton Pride

Holding The Light 4u HIV Testing Prevention & Care
Hoss Foundation
International Association of Gay & Lesbian Country Western Dance Clubs
Lesbian Health Resource Center
LGBTQ Center of Durham
LGBTQ Center of Greensboro
LGBTQ Center of Raleigh
LGBTQ Center of The Cape Fear Coast
Lila Latinx LGBTQI Initiative
NC Pride At Night
North Carolina Coalition for Gay and Lesbian Equality
North Carolina Lambda Youth Network
OBX Pride
One Voice Chorus
Onslow County LGBTQ+ Community Center
Out at the Movies
Out Impact
Out Wilmington
Outright Youth of Catawba Valley
PFLAG Alamance
PFLAG Asheville
PFLAG Carteret and Craven Counties
PFLAG Charlotte
PFLAG Concord Kannapolis
PFLAG Cornelius

PFLAG Fayetteville
PFLAG Flat Rock/Hendersonville
PFLAG Gaston County
PFLAG Greensboro
PFLAG Greenville
PFLAG Hickory
PFLAG Hickory Catawba Valley
PFLAG High Point
PFLAG Lenoir
PFLAG Lexington
PFLAG Raleigh-Durham Triangle
PFLAG Rocky Mount
PFLAG Salisbury Rowan
PFLAG Sandhills
PFLAG Smoky Mountain Chapter
PFLAG Statesville
PFLAG Transgender Network
PFLAG Wilmington/Cape Fear
PFLAG Winston Salem
Port City Pride
Pride Winston-Salem
Queen City Sisters
Raleigh Pride
Sacred Journey MCC
Salisbury Pride
Sandhills Pride
Smokin Cardinal Sisters of Sacred Insanity
Southeastern Transgender and Ally Initiative

St Johns MCC
St Judes MCC
St Marys MCC
Stonewall Sports Charlotte
Stonewall Sports Raleigh
Stonewall Sports Wilmington
Sylva Pride
The Adam Foundation
The Grape Myrtle Festival
Time Out Youth
Trans Empowerment Project
Transgender American Veterans Association
Tranzmission
Triad Pride Performing Arts
Triangle Community Works
Triangle Gay Men's Chorus
Triangle LGBTQ Group
Triangle Pride Band
Twirl To The World Foundation
Womansong of Asheville
Youth Outright WNC

South Carolina Nonprofits

Alliance for Full Acceptance
Charleston Pride
Gender Benders
Grand Strand Pride
Greenville Gay Men's Chorus
Harriet Hancock Center Foundation
Imperial Sovereign Court

of South Carolina
Lowcountry Pride
MCC Greenville New Day Community Church
MCC of Charleston
Midlands Men's Chorus
PFLAG Aiken
PFLAG Columbia
PFLAG Greenville
PFLAG Myrtle Beach
PFLAG Pawleys Island
PFLAG Spartanburg
Pride Link
Pride Myrtle Beach
Project Pronouns
South Carolina Black Pride
South Carolina Equality
South Carolina Pride Movement
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Thinking about leaving the United States?

Considerations to make for relocation abroad



by Wendy Lyons
Qnotes Staff Writer

The decision to relocate abroad has become increasingly popular and complex in the current political climate of the United States. Legislative actions, fluctuating global tariffs and rising costs of living have prompted many individuals to seek opportunities beyond our borders. Individuals are considering relocation, now more than ever, to escape precarious political environments, economic downturns and social volatility. Seeking safety and security is a significant factor for many expatriates.

For those contemplating a move, whether temporarily or permanently, it is essential to consider various factors to ensure a smooth transition. Relocating to another country is a significant decision that requires careful consideration and planning. By taking into account financial aspects, visa requirements, healthcare, cultural awareness and through research, individuals can better prepare for the challenges and rewards of living abroad. Drawing from the insights of Robin Bradford, who holds dual citizenship in the U.S. and Costa Rica, this article will explore key considerations for relocating to another country, supported by examples from various nations.

Researching Your Destination

Extended visits before committing to a permanent move are invaluable for gathering insights about daily life. Writer and consultant Ande Wanderer refers to this process as “deliberate immersion.” For example, spending time in Colombia’s Medellín can reveal essential aspects of living there, from transportation options to social dynamics. Engaging with local communities, attending cultural events, and participating in day-to-day activities will provide a clearer picture of your potential new home.

Financial Planning

One of the first and most important steps in preparing for relocation is financial readiness. Moving abroad often incurs expenses that extend beyond initial expectations. As Bradford wisely advises, “If your dependency is retirement funds, know the money exchange.” Understanding the cost of living in your destination country is crucial. For instance, in countries like Portugal, where many retirees or expatriates from the U.S. are moving, the cost of living can be significantly lower than in major U.S. cities. However, it is vital to account for factors such as housing, transportation, healthcare and daily expenses. “Rent first unless there’s an amazing deal,” Robin stated. Researching local banking options and currency exchange rates will also help mitigate financial surprises.

Visa Requirements

Securing the correct visa is essential for anyone looking to live abroad. Without the right documentation, you may face barriers to employment or even entry into the country. For example, countries like Spain offer various residency visas, including non-lucrative visas for retirees, while others, like Germany, have options for skilled workers or digital nomads. It’s crucial to familiarize yourself with the visa application process, including expected timelines and costs. Ensure that your visa allows not just for travel but also for work, if that aligns with your plans.

Healthcare Systems

Healthcare is another critical aspect to consider when relocating. Countries have vastly different healthcare systems, and you must understand what is available to you as an expatriate. For example, Costa Rica has a well-regarded public healthcare system that is accessible to foreigners, while private insurance options are also available. Before moving, research healthcare facilities, available services and insurance options to prepare for your needs and ensure access to medical care.

Cultural Awareness

Adapting to a new culture is pivotal for a successful relocation. Robin Bradford emphasizes the importance of immersing yourself in local life, “See how the locals live beyond the tourist attractions. Visit as many communities as possible.” Learning the language, understanding social customs, and respecting local traditions are essential for easing the transition. Countries like Mexico, with its rich cultural tapestry, may present both challenges and rewards as you navigate local customs, cuisine and daily interactions.

Legal and Logistical Planning

Legal and logistical preparations are crucial to ensure a seamless relocation process. Ensure your passport is valid, and have copies of essential documents ready. Notify your bank and credit card companies of your move, and consider obtaining an international credit card to avoid foreign transaction fees. Additionally, research local laws and regulations regarding residency, employment and taxation to avoid any pitfalls.

The political climate in the U.S. significantly affects the decision-making process for potential expatriates. Increasing political and social unrest can drive individuals to seek stability in other countries. For instance, many U.S. citizens have turned to Canada, drawn by its more stable political environment and welcoming immigration policies. The rise in global tariffs and economic instability may also influence financial planning and budgeting for



With the right preparation, relocating to another country can lead to enriching experiences, political stability and peace of mind.

potential relocation. Individuals must remain informed about the political landscape both domestically and internationally, as these dynamics can impact their relocation choices and long-term plans.

Examples of Countries for Relocation

Costa Rica

Known for its stunning landscapes and welcoming culture, Costa Rica has become a popular destination for retirees and expatriates. The country’s healthcare system is robust, with both public and private options available. The cost of living is relatively low, especially outside major cities like San José. The relaxed lifestyle and emphasis on sustainability make it an attractive option for those seeking a new way of life.

Portugal

Portugal has emerged as a top choice for many expatriates, particularly retirees. With its affordable cost of living, beautiful scenery and rich history, Portugal offers a high quality of life. The country has various residency options, including the Golden Visa program, which facilitates residency for investors. Expats often find a welcoming community and access to excellent healthcare services.

Mexico

Mexico has long been a favored destination for Americans seeking warmer climates and lower living costs. From bustling cities like Mexico City to tranquil beach towns like Tulum, there is something for everyone. Expats can enjoy a vibrant culture, delicious cuisine and a diverse landscape. The healthcare system is accessible, with many private hospitals offering quality care.

People choose to move abroad for a variety of reasons, often driven by personal circumstances, professional opportunities, or lifestyle preferences. In addition to the aforementioned, some common motivators are:

Career Opportunities

Many individuals relocate to pursue better job prospects or career advancement. Certain countries may offer higher salaries, unique job markets or opportunities in specific industries that are not available in their home country. The rise of remote work has enabled many to move abroad while maintaining their jobs. This flexibility allows individuals to explore new locations without having to change their employment status.

Education

Students and professionals may move abroad to access high-quality educational institutions or specialized training programs. Studying in a different country can also provide valuable international experience and broaden one’s worldview.

Adventure and Exploration

A desire for adventure and the chance to experience new cultures, languages and environments motivates many individuals to relocate. This can include a longing for travel or a need to break away from the routine of everyday life.

Family Reasons

Family considerations, such as joining a spouse or partner, caring for relatives or seeking a more family-friendly environment, can drive relocation decisions. Some individuals may also want to raise their children in a different cultural context.

Each person’s decision to move abroad is influenced by a unique combination of these factors, reflecting their individual goals and circumstances. Many people in our community are currently considering relocating abroad for political stability. Seniors in our community are discovering that retiring can provide a more affordable lifestyle. Whatever your case, with the right preparation and mindset, relocating can lead to enriching experiences, peace of mind and a fulfilling life in a new country. ::

'The Cost of Fear: Why Most Safety Advice is Sexist and How We Can Stop Gender-Based Violence'

Out In Print



by Terri Schlichenmeyer
Qnotes Staff Writer

'The Cost of Fear: Why Most Safety Advice is Sexist and How We Can Stop Gender-Based Violence' by Meg Stone
c.2025, Beacon Press
\$26.95
232 pages

The footsteps fell behind you, keeping pace.

They were loud as an airplane, a few decibels below the beat of your heart. Yes, someone was following you, and you shouldn't have let it happen. You're no dummy. You're no wimp. Read the new book, **'The Cost of Fear' by Meg Stone**, and you're no statistic.

Ask around.

Query young women, older women, grandmothers and teenagers. Ask gay men, lesbians, and trans individuals, and chances are that every one of them has a story of

being scared of another person in a public place. Scared – or worse.

Says Meg Stone, nearly half of the women in a recent survey reported having "experienced... unwanted sexual contact" of some sort. Almost a quarter of the men surveyed said the same. Nearly thirty percent of men in another survey admitted to having "perpetrated some form of sexual assault."

We focus on these statistics, says Stone, but we advise ineffectual safety measures.

"Victim blame is rampant," she says, and women and LGBTQ individuals are taught avoidance methods that may not work. If someone's in the "early stages of their careers," perpetrators may still hold all the cards through threats and career blackmail. Stone cites cases in which someone who was assaulted reported the crime, but police dropped the ball. Old tropes still exist and repeating or relying on them may be downright dangerous.

As a result of such ineffectiveness, fear keeps frightened individuals from normal activities, leaving the house, shopping, going out with friends for an evening.

So how can you stay safe?

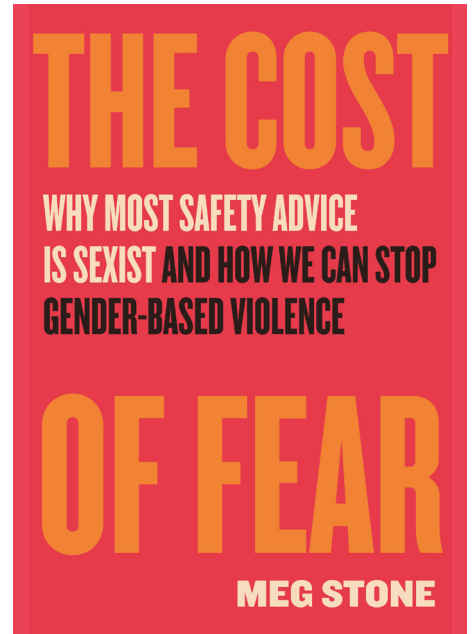
Says Stone, learn how to fight back by using your whole body, not just your hands.

Be willing to record what's happening. Don't abandon your activism, she says; in fact, join a group that helps give people tools to protect themselves. Learn the right way to stand up for someone who's uncomfortable or endangered. Remember that you can't be blamed for another person's bad behavior, and it shouldn't mean you can't react.

If you pick up "The Cost of Fear," hoping to learn ways to protect yourself, there are two things to keep in mind.

First, though most of this book is written for women, it doesn't take much of a leap to see how its advice could translate to any other world. Author Meg Stone, in fact, includes people of all ages, genders, and all races in her case studies and lessons, and she clearly explains a bit of what she teaches in her classes. That width is helpful, and welcome.

Secondly, she asks readers to do something potentially controversial: she requests changes in sentencing laws for certain former and rehabilitated abusers, particularly for offenders who were teens when sentenced. Stone lays out her reasoning and begs for understanding; still, some readers may be resistant and some may be triggered.



Keep that in mind, and "The Cost of Fear" is a great book for a young adult or anyone who needs to increase alertness, adopt careful practices, and stay safe. Take steps to have it soon. ::

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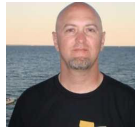
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'Modern' family: an interview with 'Mid-Century Modern' producer/director Max Mutchnick

New gay series comes from producers of 'Will and Grace'



by Gregg Shapiro
Qnotes Contributing Writer

It's been a long time – maybe 25 years when "Will & Grace" debuted – since there's been so much excitement about a new, queer sitcom premiering. "Mid-Century Modern," bowed on Hulu on March 28. It's the creation of Max Mutchnick and David Kohan, the gay men who were also behind "Will & Grace."

Set in Palm Springs, Calif., following death of the one of their closest friends, three gay men gather to mourn. Swept up in the emotions of the moment, Bunny (Nathan Lane) suggests that Atlanta-based flight attendant Jerry (Matt Bomer) and New York-based fashion editor Arthur (Nathan Lee Graham) move into the mid-century modern home he shares with his mother Sybil (the late Linda Lavin).

Gregg Shapiro: Before "Will & Grace," you co-created the NBC sitcom "Boston Common," which starred your fellow Emerson College alum Anthony Clark. Is it important for you to maintain those kinds of relationships?

Max Mutchnick: Because Emersonians are such scrappy little monkeys and they end up being everywhere in the world, you can't help but work with someone from Emerson at some point in your career. I'm certainly more inclined to engage with someone from Emerson once I learn that they went to my alma mater. For me, it has much more to do with history and loyalty. I don't think of myself as one of those guys that says, "loyalty means a lot to me." I'm someone that really leans into history. It's just what my life and career turned out

to be. The longer I worked with people and the more often I worked with them, the safer that I felt, which means that I was more creative and that's the name of the game. I've got to be as comfortable as possible so I can be as creative as possible. If that means that a person from Emerson is in the room, so be it. (Costume designer) Lori Eskowitz would be the Emerson version. And then (writer and actor) Dan Bucatinsky would be another version. When I'm around them for a long time, that's when the best stuff comes.

GS: Relationships are important. On that subject, your new Hulu sitcom "Mid-Century Modern" is about the longstanding friendship between three friends, Bunny (Nathan Lane), Jerry (Matt Bomer) and Arthur (Nathan Lee Graham). Do you have a friendship like the one shared by these three men?

MM: I'm absolutely engaged in a real version of what we're projecting on the show. I have that in my life. I cannot say that I'm Jerry in any way, but the one thing that we do have in common is that in my group, I'm the young one. But I think that's very common in these families that we create. There's usually a young one. Our culture is built on learning from our elders. I didn't have a father growing up, so maybe that made me that much more inclined to seek out older, wiser, funnier, meaner friends. I mean the reason why you're looking at a mouthful of straight, white teeth is because one of those old bitches sat across from me about 25 years ago at a diner and said, "Girl, your teeth are a disaster, and you need to get that fixed immediately." What did I know? I was just a kid from Chicago with two nickels in my pocket. But I found three nickels and I went and had new teeth put in my head.

GS: "Mid-Century Modern" includes

some great opportunities for the singers in the cast. Linda Lavin sang the Jerome Kern/Ira Gershwin tune "Long Ago (And Far Away)" and Nathan Lane and the guys sang "He Had It Coming" from "Chicago." Was it important to give them the chance to exercise those muscles?

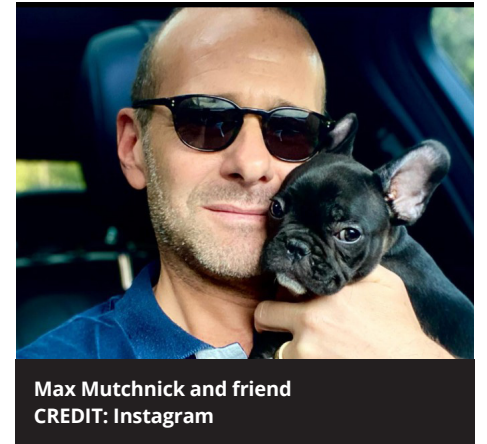
MM: I don't think it was. I think it really is just the managers' choice. David Kohan and I like that kind of stuff, so we write that kind of stuff. But by no means was there an edict to write that. We know what our cast is capable of, and we will absolutely exploit that if we're lucky enough to have a second season. I have a funky relationship with the song "Long Ago (And Far Away)." It doesn't float my boat, but everybody else loved it. We run a meritocracy, and the best idea will out. That's how that song ended up being in the show. I far prefer the recording of Linda singing "I'll Be Seeing You" over her montage in episode eight, "Here's To You, Mrs. Schneiderman." We were just lucky that Linda had recorded that. That recording was something that she had done and sent to somebody during COVID because she was held up in her apartment. That's what motivated her to make that video and send it. That's how we were able to use that audio.

GS: Being on a streaming service such as Hulu allows for characters to say things they might not get away with on network TV, including a foreskin joke, as well as Sybil's propensity for cursing.

MM: And the third line in the show is about him looking like a "reluctant bottom." I don't think that's something you're going to see on ABC anytime soon. David and I liked the opportunity to open up the language of this show because it might possibly open the door to bringing people...I'm going to mix metaphors... into the tent that have never been there before. A generation that writes off a sitcom because that language and that type of comedy isn't the way that they sound. One of the gifts of doing this show on Hulu is that we get to write dialogue that sounds a little bit more like you and I sound. As always, we don't want to do anything just to do it.

GS: "Mid-Century Modern" has a fantastic roster of guest stars including Jesse Tyler Ferguson, Vanessa Bayer, Billie Lourd, Cheri Oteri, Richard Kind, Rhea Perlman and Judd Hirsch. Are there plans to continue that in future seasons?

MM: Yes. As I keep saying, if we're so lucky that we get to continue, I don't want to do "The Love Boat." Those are fine comic actors, so I don't think it feels like that. But if we get to keep going, what I want to do is broaden the world. Because that gives us more to write about. I want to start to introduce characters that are



Max Mutchnick and friend
CREDIT: Instagram

auxiliary to the individuals. I want to start to meet Arthur's family, so we can return to people. I want to introduce other neighbors, and different types of gay men because we come in so many different flavors. I think that we should do that only because I'm sure it's what your life is and it's what my life is. I've got a lot of different types. So, yes, we will be doing more.

GS: Finally, Linda Lavin passed away in December 2024, and in a later episode, the subject of her character Sybil's passing is handled sensitively, including the humorous parts.

MM: We knew we had a tall order. We suffered an incredible loss in the middle of making this comedy. One of the reasons why I think this show works is because we are surrounded by a lot of really talented people. Jim Burrows and Ryan Murphy, to name two. Ryan played a very big role in telling us that it was important that we address this, that we address it immediately. That we show the world and the show goes on. That wasn't my instinct because I was so inside the grief of losing a friend, because she really was. It wasn't like one of those showbizzy-type relationships. And this is who she was, by the way, to everybody at the show. It was the way that we decided to go. Let's write this now. Let's not put this at the end of the season. Let's not satellite her in. Let's not "Darren Stevens" the character, which is something we would never do. The other thing that Jim Burrows made very clear to us was the import of the comedy. You have to write something that starts exactly in the place that these shows start. A set comedy piece that takes place in the kitchen. Because for David and me, as writers, we said we just want to tell the truth. That's what we want to do with this episode and that's the way that this will probably go best for us. The way that we've dealt with grief in our lives is with humor. That is the way that we framed writing this episode. We wanted it to be a chapter from our lives, and how we experience this loss and how we recover and move on. ::



'Modern Family' cast members Nathan Lane (right) and the late Linda Lavin.
CREDIT: Courtesy the Karpel Group

Dixie throws her final Tupperware parties

Playwright Kris Andersson leaves the road as Dixie Longate with future thoughts for his alter-ego



by Jonathan Golian
Qnotes Staff Writer

Dixie Longate, the other side of playwright and actor Kris Andersson, has had a busy career on the road. Spanning most of the United States and several continents, Andersson's Longate has taken her Tupperware parties across the globe and as a result has also sold millions of small plastic containers throughout the years. However, the wonder bowls brought to incredible success through home parties by Tupperware found Brownie Wise aren't the only thing being hawked by Dixie at her stage shows.

Over the countless tickets sold for each affair, each represents someone who feels at home in Dixie's one-night show and tell sessions. The inspiration that helped Andersson develop the character also brought about someone that could mingle with a largely female audience and hear their stories while telling Dixie's. It's comfortably presented in such a unique and relatable way, and paired with a few dozen quips and a cocktail or two, Dixie and the girls turn up the parties with wild laughter and many unforgettable evenings. So where does the road lead from here? **QNotes** asked Dixie herself, and the answers only give a prelude to what audiences can expect at the Blumenthal this April.

Jonny Golian: Good Morning, Dixie! So, I've read up a bit about you and the family, and wanted to start by asking how the kids are doing. How are Wynona, Dwayne and Absorbine, Jr.?

Dixie Longate: The kids are gross. You know, they take up time, and they just always want things from you. You know, when I'm on the road, it's always trying to do a facetime and saying, "Hey, Mama, what are you gonna bring



After 16 years on the road, Tupperware expert and comic drag performer Dixie Longate's ready to settle down.
CREDIT: Publicity

us?" I'm like, "An STD, if you're lucky. You should have to get your own job." Yeah, kids, kids are sticky.

JG: Sounds like you have had a wild life.

DL: I have. It has been something, and I've been grateful for everything that's happened. I've been lucky that things have gone on. I never thought I'd be out of Alabama doing anything of value. And the fact that the show has been running for this many years is kind of insane. To me, it's just been one of the best rides, and people have been so stinking neighborly. And I love even more getting to come back to the city over and over again. I'm in Fort Worth right now doing my show, and this is my eighth time here. And then I'm going from here to Houston, where I've been many times, and then I'm coming back for my sixth time in Charlotte. So it's really lovely because people will come back again and again to the show, and they'll bring other friends. That just warms my heart to be able to meet new people and then have other people say, "I follow you. I've come to the show multiple times. I'm always so tickled by everything you do," and so I'm grateful. I would say I wish people could spend a day in my shoes, because people are so kind and neighborly, and I just think we need that more in the world, and I'm just such a lucky beneficiary of all that.

JG: It does seem like you are friends with a lot of people in America, as well as other countries. How many stops for 2025 are in this run? Is this really the final run?

DL: Oh, it's done and dusted. Sept. 7 in Denver is the final performance. So now I'm working on, hopefully being able to take the show to New York after that. That's where everything is kind of focused right now. If I'm able to get all the money together and get the people behind me, I can take the show to New York in the fall and open it there, and then I'll do it as long as I can there, and hopefully, we'll get a good healthy run out of it. But, as far as the tour goes, yeah, I'm wrapping it up. My kids get so moody when I'm gone so long, and I've tried to just be gone for their whole raising time, because I don't want to have to deal with that, but then the police get involved. So, it's time that I settle down for a minute, and if I can be at one spot for a long period of time, that will make life a little bit better. But, being on the road, once I get the ankle bracelet removed, I don't have to run away from the law.

JG: So you actually do sell Tupperware, beyond the shows. How much do you think you've sold from the start of your career to where we are right now?

DL: I could not even imagine counting all that. I have no real record of that. I know back years ago as part of the conditions of my parole, I was just doing it in people's living rooms. From 2001 at the start to 2007, I had already sold



'The fact that the show has been running for this many years is kind of insane. To me, it's just been one of the best rides, and people have been so stinking neighborly.' - Kris Andersson/Dixie Longate
CREDIT: Publicity

well over a million dollars in check work. From 2008 to 2025, I have lost count of how many millions. I mean, I knew I was counting back then because it was a whole different thing. And I was just that work full time and not doing a show, so it was easier to track everything that I was doing and but now I've just lost track completely. But yeah, millions, it's crazy.

JG: What inspired you to take the Tupperware parties and turn it into a show?

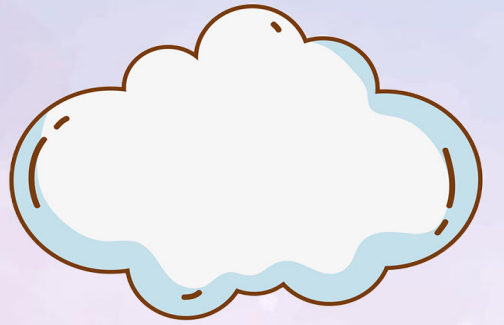
DL: I had a friend that was a director, and he said to me, "You should do this as a show. There's something here to say." And so, at first, I'd done the tougher parties in people's living rooms, and it was just me hawking the plastic bowls. But when I was at the parties, I would meet all these wonderful women. I just noticed a pattern when I would go and set everything up, and the ladies would ask me about me. As I'm setting them up, I tell them about me, and Alabama, and about my kids and everything, my story and why I was doing it, what I loved about getting to meet so many people, being in people's homes every night, and so on. I decided to ask them, "Well, tell me about you." And they'd tell me, "Well, I got two kids, one's in Galilee, and one's, you know, in the film football." And I just noticed that all these women were always talking around themselves, never about themselves. So I thought I wanted to write a kind of a love letter to all the women that I've met and all the unsung heroes of the world. And so, the show has a definite message of inspiration and personal empowerment, and about lifting yourself up and showing that you're better than you give yourself credit for. And so that's kind of a slight

little message hidden in that. And that all comes from me doing parties in people's living rooms and wanting to celebrate all these people that don't get the chance to celebrate themselves.

JG: So this is your last run of touring shows. For all of the audiences that have come to love you and the shows, what is the enduring message you would want them to take away from everything?

DL: My biggest takeaway in each show that I always leave people with is to go out there and do something to prove to yourself that you're amazing, because by you being able to pat yourself on the back, by being able to recognize what your value is, the world is better when you play at that level, when you honor yourself, and when you find things about you that are great, because then everybody gets to see that, and everybody gets a benefit from that, and it makes the world better. Where people are mad and yelling at other people, it's because they don't stop ever to take stock of what they have. When you recognize that you have good traits that you can develop and that you can put out into the world and share with people, it makes the world better, because everybody's operating from a place of joy and happiness and kindness, and they're not operating from a place of trying to tear each other down. And so that is my hope that I leave that and all three of my touring shows have some sort of element of that in it, because I think that's a lesson that bares repeating again and again, because it's so easy to forget sometimes how great we are and how lucky we are to be here. ::

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