We wish everyone a Happy New Year! A robust agenda faces our committee in 2022.

President Kathleen Wilkinson sent our committee’s proposed Name Change Rule, which was approved by the House of Delegates, to the Pennsylvania Supreme Court’s Civil Procedural Rules Committee.

The Equal Protection for Trans Female Athletes Study Group, chaired by Sharon López, continued its work through the end of 2021, and anticipates concluding its work soon with the delivery of a consolidated White Paper which will be useful for lawyers. The Paper will examine the social experiences of transwomen athletes; medical and scientific knowledge related to medical transition; and the rapidly evolving law and policy toward trans women and girls.

Several committee members, through other interested organizations, are continuing to encourage the Pennsylvania Department of Health to address (and hopefully correct) the action it had taken with respect to unannounced and unexplained new rules and forms for birth certificate corrections,

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The City of Philadelphia and Catholic Social Services Consent Judgment and Settlement


The City agreed to pay $2 million in legal fees for CSS and to renew the agency’s contract for foster placement services, without requiring it to adhere to the City’s nondiscrimination policy regarding same-sex couples. Ultimately, the City paid Becket Law, which represented CSS, $1.95 million, and $56,000 to CSS for related fees. In addition, CSS will post a notice on its website that it does not make foster placements with same-sex couples, and will provide referrals to agencies that do work with same-sex couples. (As the Supreme Court noted in Fulton, CSS does not certify unmarried opposite-sex couples as foster parents, but was already willing to provide referrals, certifies gay and lesbian individuals and places gay and lesbian youth.)

The agreement is further to the Consented Entry of Judgment and Permanent Injunction, following the parties’ Motion for Consent Judgment granted by United States District Judge Petrese B. Tucker on Oct. 1, 2021. Microsoft Word - Fulton, et al. (18-2073) - Order Granting Consent Motion.docx (reason.com).
particularly those pertaining to name changes for minors and to changing the sex and/or gender for adults and minors. Nationwide, the federal Equality Act remains an active legislative proposal, passed by the House and supported by the White House – but to date not voted upon in the Senate. This legislation would address fundamental discrimination against LGBTQ+ individuals, explicitly protecting rights with respect to housing, food, health care, transport, education and other aspects of daily life. As transphobic and anti-gay laws and other government actions proliferate around the country, and as many seek to reverse hard-won constitutional rights, in tandem with the efforts to overturn the rights recognized in Roe v. Wade, the significance of The Equality Act cannot be overstated. Our committee is following this important legislative effort and seeking to act on several fronts.

In coordination with PBA Civil and Equal Rights Committee (CERC), our committee is looking to obtain a PBA resolution endorsing the Equality Act, through the recommendation and report process for the May Board of Governors and House of Delegates Meetings. A subcommittee has been formed to work on this with CERC.

Pennsylvania's statutory Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) is still on the books, more than seven years after being declared unconstitutional. As in previous sessions, legislation is before the Assembly for the removal of those DOMA provisions. Mark Momjian and Sharon López are looking into the PBA's previous resolution addressing this issue to ascertain what, if any, additional action the bar association may take.

Lastly, we want to mention a brainchild of ours in hopes of attracting interest. Remembering the power of the “How Marriage Counts: 572 Ways Marriage Counts in Pennsylvania” project, which publication coincided with the White-wood decision, we believe that progress on the proposed federal Equality Act, and on Pennsylvania’s proposed Fairness Act, which would add sexual orientation and gender identity to Pennsylvania’s anti-discrimination laws, would benefit from an examination of Pennsylvania laws that hinder equality in substantive, bread-and-butter fashion. As with the How Marriage Counts project, we envision this as a potential collaboration with other LGBTQ+ organizations, to catalogue the fundamental necessity of the Equality Act and the Fairness Act for the dignity and empowerment of the LGBTQ+ community.

Congratulations to committee member Jen Coatsworth, recently elected Vice Chancellor of the Philadelphia Bar Association!

We value all our members and your unique voices. We hope you will consider joining our upcoming meetings, and, as always, please feel free to contact us between meetings if you are interested in participating in any the foregoing projects, or have new ideas for advancing LGBTQ+ rights in other ways.
In 1998, the Pennsylvania legislature amended the Name-Change Statute, 54 Pa.C.S. § 701 et seq., to create the “felony bar,” which prohibits anyone with a felony conviction from obtaining a name change until at least two years have passed since the end of their sentence, and prohibits individuals convicted of certain felonies from ever obtaining a name change. The felony bar is based on a presumption that Pennsylvanians convicted of felonies seek name changes only for fraudulent or otherwise improper purposes. In practice, the bar can prevent legitimate name changes for many Pennsylvanians, including those who simply want their names to match their gender identities and expressions.

In 2021, a pro bono team at Reed Smith LLP and the Transgender Legal Defense & Education Fund (TLDEF) set out to end the injustice created by the felony bar. The team filed name-change petitions in Philadelphia and Allegheny Counties on behalf of Monae Alvarado, Chauntey Porter, and Priscylla Von Noaker, transgender women who desired name changes but were subject to the felony bar. In the petitions, the team explained that the felony bar infringes due process and free speech rights under the Pennsylvania Constitution. The team also noted that the bar fails to advance any legitimate state interest, because the Name-Change Statute already includes safeguards against improper name changes. The Office of Attorney General for the Commonwealth declined to intervene.

On Dec. 7, 2021, after an evidentiary hearing that included testimony from Dr. Ayden Scheim of Drexel University, an expert on epidemiology and transgender health, the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas granted Monae Alvarado’s petition, overriding the felony bar. In the Matter of Petition for Change of Name of Rothmoony Alvarado a/k/a Monae Alvarado, No. 210901990 (Phila. Co., Dec. 7, 2021).

The team then headed to Pittsburgh where, on Dec. 15, 2021, after another evidentiary hearing that included Dr. Scheim’s testimony, the Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas granted Chauntey Porter’s and Priscylla Von Noaker’s petitions. The court ruled:

Based upon the testimony of the fact witnesses given today and the expert testimony and the opinion rendered by Dr. Scheim and the legal arguments of counsel, this Court concludes the Pennsylvania Felony Bar to a name change is unconstitutional as a violation of due process as well as the other two grounds argued by counsel today.

In re the Petition of Scott Porter, Jr. a/k/a Chauntey Mo’nique Porter, G.D. No. 21-11804 (Allegheny Co., Dec. 15, 2021); In re the Petition of Robert Lee Noaker, Jr. a/k/a Priscylla Renee Von Noaker, G.D. No. 21-11805 (Allegheny County, Dec. 15, 2021). Further information on the cases is available from Law360 and The Legal Intelligencer; they also received media coverage on WTAE-TV in Pittsburgh and in the Pittsburgh Tribune Review. Allegheny County judge rules felony name bar unconstitutional, grants name changes sought by 2 transgender women with prior felonies | TribLIVE.com. Efforts are underway to make sure that all Pennsylvanians can benefit from these rulings.

Patrick Yingling is a partner at Reed Smith LLP. He represented the transgender petitioners who successfully challenged the felony bar in Pennsylvania’s Name Change statute. Patrick was also counsel of record in In re: Estate of Kimberly M. Underwood, No. 2014-E0681-29 (Bucks County, July 29, 2015), recognizing Pennsylvania’s first same-sex common-law marriage, and Roberts v. Berryhill, 310 F.Supp. 3d 529 (E.D. Pa. 2018), holding that Social Security must recognize Pennsylvania same-sex common-law marriages. In 2021, he received Reed Smith’s Sean Halpin Award for pro bono service for his advancement of LGBTQ+ rights.
Getting to Know One of Our Members: Nicholas Ripley

What is your full name?
Nicholas Ripley, but I go by Nick (they/them).

Tell our readers about your background, education and employment as an attorney.
After graduating from Pitt with a BA in anthropology, I went to American University in DC, mainly to study international human rights law. While I found this work fascinating, I began to expand my conception of human rights law to include domestic legal aid, which I found to be more accessible and ultimately fulfilling. Because of who I am and what I find compelling from my lived experience, I was also drawn toward a focus in gender and sexuality law. LGBTQ+ jurisprudence is so dynamic and interesting to me; when the laws aren’t written for you, you have to get creative. I had the amazing opportunity to work with the National Abortion Federation and Whitman Walker Health (a DC-based LGBTQ+ medical-legal partnership) as a student attorney, which pretty much cemented my trajectory.

When the bar exam was delayed indefinitely over the first summer of the pandemic, I was indefinitely unemployable. While studying for the bar exam during a global health disaster wasn’t ideal, it did give me the time and space to deeply consider the kind of work I wanted to do (in addition to the diploma privilege advocacy work I took up). Unfortunately, that kind of work didn’t really exist in Pittsburgh, which is where I knew I wanted to return. So, I took up grant writing, consulted with some amazing pro bono attorneys in the area and designed an LGBTQ+ civil legal aid program. I noticed Hugh Lane Wellness Foundation was expanding and, because of my incredibly positive experience with the medical-legal partnership model, I thought their holistic LGBTQ+ health and wellness services would make a great home for legal aid services.

In the short time we’ve been in operation, we’ve seen the immense impact this kind of work can have. Due to systemic discrimination, our community consistently experiences some of the worst economic, health and legal outcomes in society – outcomes that are worsened by factors like racialization and disability. Therefore, providing legal aid services to low-income LGBTQ+ folks (in combination with other direct assistance programs) has proven to be an incredibly effective way of improving the quality of life of the community more broadly. But LGBTQ+ people have specialized legal needs that require both technical and cultural competency. Building this kind of expertise with my incredible coworkers and colleagues is an honor and I’m so excited to see this kind of work grow and flourish.

Where do you live and work?
I live in Friendship but work in the Northside. I’m not thrilled about having to cross a bridge on my commute but other than that, I don’t have any complaints. Friendship is so quiet at night I forget I’m in a city, and the Northside has plenty of perks. On my breaks, I like to take walks by Lake Elizabeth and the National Aviary. For lunch, you can’t beat Peppi’s or the Modern Café.

Why did you join the PBA LGBTQ+ Rights Committee and how does it dovetail with other professional or volunteer efforts or ventures?
Fighting for LGBTQ+ rights is my passion, my profession and a significant portion of my personal life. I joined the committee to advance my work and learn from experts in the field. As

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Getting to Know One of Our Members: Nicholas Ripley
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Can you give me an example?
Entering the legal field under any circumstance can be challenging, but my program was developed and launched under COVID, so nothing has been normal thus far. When the COVID emergency protections and support systems were largely pulled out from under us in the Fall, I needed referrals, advice and community to commiserate with. In the LGBTQ+ Rights Committee, I’ve found all that and more, which has helped me adapt my work to each deeply abnormal phase of this new normality.

What’s your favorite vacation spot? Why?
Maybe this is indicative of some deeper personal issues, but I get bored on beach vacations – I like places with interesting histories, like Harpers Ferry or Point Pleasant (home of John Brown and the Mothman Museum, respectively). Lately, my favorite spot to visit has been my parents’ place in Lycoming County. The forests out there are a great place to forage, explore and escape from the city.

Do you have a favorite book and why do you love it?
“The Mysteries of Pittsburgh” by Michael Chabon is an incredible queer bildungsroman that perfectly incapsulates the romance of the city for me.

Do you have a favorite TV show? Which one?
“Reservation Dogs,” the FX series about four indigenous teenagers in rural Oklahoma, is a perfect show, and I can’t wait for season 2.

What’s your favorite movie?
Based on rewrites, probably “Rocky Horror Picture Show.” When I first saw it in high school, it felt like a revolution.

What’s one thing that we don’t know about you?
I like to bead and cross stitch in my free time.

Do you have a favorite band or type of music?
In high school I was obsessed with The Strokes. But lately most of the music I listen to is instrumental or not in English so I can put it on while I work without getting distracted. Vivaldi, Mahmood and Bad Bunny are some recent favorites. I’m also a sucker for musical soundtracks and haven’t stopped listening to “Tick, Tick... Boom!” since the new movie came out.

Do you have any “pet peeves?”
Inefficient talkers. I love to gab as much as next girl but I have a petition to file before the courthouse closes, so let’s get to the point.

Is there anything special you do after a particularly challenging day?
This isn’t necessarily fun, but I have to do meditation breaths or my body stays in stress mode even after my brain has clocked out. If it’s an especially frustrating day, I also sing in the car to the loudest music I can find.

Do you have any interesting object you keep on your desk?
It’s technically on my bookshelf but I have my travel chess set in my office just in case anyone notices and wants to challenge me.

Is there any special photo or artwork on your office wall or office?
I bought a mildly spicy AIDS Action Now poster from a queer bookshop in Toronto that I keep above my desk. It reminds me of my organization’s history and the radical leaders that paved the way for us.

Do you have any pets?
Unfortunately not, but I would like a cat soon.

If you were not a lawyer, you would be _____.
Either an architect or an apothecary.
Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

This feature provides up-to-date, brief bulletins addressing LGBTQ+ issues that might be relevant to readers’ lives or practices. Contributions from committee members and allies are welcome. Send the editors an item or an alert to the item.

On Nov. 18, 2021, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Office of Civil Rights revoked the blanket faith-based exemptions for child welfare agencies which were implemented by the former Administration. As HHS explained, the agency reestablished its commitment to furthering nondiscrimination and upholding the law by rescinding inappropriate broad waivers issued by the Trump Administration. It now will evaluate religious exemptions and modifications of program requirements on a case-by-case basis, instead of providing blanket exemptions. As HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra stated in a press release, “we owe it to all who come forward to act, whether to review, investigate or take appropriate measures to protect their rights. At HHS, we treat any violation of civil rights or religious freedoms seriously.” https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2021/11/18/hhs-takes-action-to-prevent-discrimination-and-strengthen-civil-rights.html.

Shorter v. United States, No. 20-2554 (3rd Cir., filed September 1, 2021). In 2015, Shorter, a transgender woman, began a 96-month sentence for fraud. At that time, she had already undergone hormone replacement therapy. Despite knowing that Shorter was transgender, prison officials first housed her in a room, without a lock, with eleven men. Prison officials specifically found that Shorter was at “significantly” higher risk for sexual assault, given that she presented as transgender, was small in stature and had been sexually assaulted in another prison. Nonetheless, prison officials placed her in a cell with a sex offender. Moreover, despite repeated requests, formal grievance filings and support from the prison’s psychology department to be transferred, Shorter was stabbed and raped by another inmate. She filed a federal lawsuit, claiming that her Eighth Amendment rights were violated by prison officials’ deliberate indifference to the substantial risk of assault. The U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey dismissed Shorter’s complaint; however, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit reversed, finding that she adequately pleaded a violation of the Eighth Amendment. https://law.justia.com/cases/federal/apellate-courts/ca3/20-2554/20-2554-2021-09-01.html.

In October 2021, a Texas man, Daniel Jenkins, 22 years old, was sentenced for hate crimes as part of a conspiracy to target users of the dating app Grindr. Jenkins was sentenced to a prison term of 280 months for targeting, kidnapping, carjacking and committing other violent crimes against gay men. According to the Department of Justice, Jenkins “targeted innocent victims for violent crimes simply because he believed they were gay.” Jenkins was the last of four members of the conspiracy who pleaded guilty; all received over 10-year sentences. https://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/texas-man-sentenced-hate-crime-and-other-charges-after-using-dating-app-target-gay-men.

The Idaho Supreme Court, in Gatsby v. Gatsby, recently held that a non-biologically related spouse, who conceived by sperm donation, was not a legal parent. Linsay and Kylee Gatsby married in 2015 and decided to conceive and raise a child. They found a sperm donor, and all agreed that the donor would have no rights or responsibilities for the child. Kylee carried the child, and both Linsay and Kylee signed the birth certificate. However, within a year of the child’s

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Hear Ye! Hear Ye!

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birth, Linsay and Kylee got into a physical altercation and soon filed for divorce. Through custody proceedings, Kylee asserted that Linsay did not have legal standing as a parent.

The trial court agreed with Kylee, and found that Linsay was not a parent because Linsay failed to utilize the legal process to declare herself as a parent, by signing a voluntary acknowledgement of paternity or adopting the child.

On appeal, the Idaho Supreme Court, in a split decision, held that Linsay was not a legal parent. The Court was extremely critical of the sperm donation agreement, which was not drafted by an attorney. The dissent, authored by Justice John Stenger, explained that the effect of the majority’s opinion is contrary to public policy and jeopardizes the legal protections of a parent whose child was conceived by artificial insemination. Opinion: Gatsby v. Gatsby - BIAhelp.com; https://abovethelaw.com/2021/10/parents-by-sperm-donation-should-be-very-concerned-about-this-idaho-supreme-court-ru.../.

In Bear Creek Bible Church v. EEOC, a declaratory judgment class action, a federal district judge in Texas held that religious employers, including for-profit companies, are eligible for exemptions to permit LGBTQ+ discrimination in employment. Judge Reed O’Connor ruled that the church, which refuses to employ LGBTQ+ people, was automatically exempted from complying with the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in Bostock v. Clayton County. The other named plaintiff was Braidwood Management, Inc., described in Judge O’Connor’s opinion as a “Christian-owned business”; it operates Christian health care businesses. According to Judge O’Connor, “Title VII places a substantial burden on its religious exercise” and therefore policies against “homosexual conduct” do not violate Title VII.

This decision is extreme. The last update on the docket was on Nov. 2, 2021, Judge O’Connor’s decision related to summary judgment. It remains to be seen whether this case will be appealed to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. https://casetext.com/case/bear-creek-bible-church-braidwood-mgmt-v-equal-empt-opportunity-commn.

Rolfingsmeyer v. Office of Personnel Management was noted in the Spring 2021 issue of Open Court. The case has been dismissed by stipulation, as the parties agreed that Patricia Rolfingsmeyer was to be paid her full federal benefits following the death of her wife, Tina Sammons, an Air Force veteran and postal service employee. A special thank you to Jonathan S. Franklin, Esq., of Norton Rose Fulbright US LLP, Ms. Rolfingsmeyer’s counsel, for providing us with the update.

California will become the first state to track violent deaths of LGBTQ+ people. Gov. Gavin Newsom signed A.B. 1094, which will establish a three-year pilot program in as many six counties to collect information about gender identity and sexual orientation in cases of violent deaths, which include suicides and homicides. Given that 2021 looked to be the deadliest year for transgender and gender non-confirming people, advocates have said that this kind of data is key to understanding and addressing the greater risk of violence faced by LGBTQ+ people. https://leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/billTextClient.xhtml?bill_id=202120220AB1094.

In a September referendum, Swiss voters overwhelmingly decided to allow same-sex couples to marry. The official results showed that the referendum, known as the “Marriage for All” measure, passed with 64.1% of voters in favor. Switzerland gay marriage: Voters overwhelmingly approve reform in referendum | Euronews; Marriage for all (admin.ch). Beyond marriage, the measure will put same-sex partners on equal footing with heterosexual couples by permitting them to adopt children, facilitating citizenship for same-sex spouses and permitting lesbian couples to use regulated sperm donation. https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/sep/26/swiss-vote-overwhelmingly-for-same-sex-marriage-according-to-poll?CMP=Share_AndroidApp_Other; Marriage for all (admin.ch).

Transgender lawyer Sheryl Ring filed a lawsuit in October 2021, seeking a declaration that attorney ethics rules in Illinois do not allow discrimination based on gender identity. Specifically related to Illinois’ ethics rules, Ring argues that the ban

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on sex discrimination should also encompass a ban on discrimination due to gender identity, gender expression, nonbinary statutes, and transgender status. Ring identified specific instances where lawyers in this community faced discrimination, including being misgendered and verbally harassed by other lawyers and judges. (Pennsylvania’s Rule of Professional Conduct 8.4(g) prohibits “harassment or discrimination based upon…gender identity or expression [and] sexual orientation…”)

In late October, Texas Governor Greg Abbott signed a bill banning transgender girls from participating in female sports at public schools. Effective Jan. 18, 2022, the bill’s stated purpose is to protect fairness in school sports by eliminating what people see as an unfair physical competitive advantage. Texas has joined 31 other states which have introduced bills to exclude transgender youth from athletics in the gender with which they identify.

The Washington State florist who refused to make an arrangement for a same-sex couple, based on her religious objections, discontinued her Supreme Court challenge after settling the case. Arlene’s Flowers, represented by Alliance Defending Freedom, issued a statement that Barronelle Stutzman chose to retire, her employees will now run the business, and she will pay $5,000 to the two men who sued her. The matter began in 2013, when Stutzman refused to provide wedding flowers for Robert Ingersoll, a long-time customer, and Curt Freed. The Washington Supreme Court held that Stutzman violated a state law barring discrimination based on sexual orientation. It found the law “neutral” and served the state’s interest in eradicating discrimination in public accommodations.

Given this withdrawal, the U.S. Supreme Court will have one less opportunity to review the intersection of religious liberties and discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

Nur Sajat Kamaruzzaman, a transgender woman and Malaysian cosmetics entrepreneur, was arrested, beaten and handcuffed in Bangkok for wearing women’s clothing. Malaysian authorities sought Sajat’s extradition on charges of insulting Islam. Her offense was wearing a baju jurung, the traditional long-sleeved outfit worn by Malay women, at a private religious ceremony in 2018. Sajat was given refugee status in Thailand and permitted to seek asylum in Australia.

A school board member in Florida, Jill Woolbright, called the police and filed a criminal complaint after learning that the book All Boys Aren’t Blue, by George M. Johnson, a memoir that discusses same-sex romances, race and sexual assault, was on public school library shelves. She complained that the school was distributing “obscene” material. Members of the community that support Woolbright argued that the book contained mature adult content inappropriate for children. Johnson defended his book, stating that it helps youth be seen. A student-led group held a no-censorship rally in support of Johnson’s book. The Flagler County Sheriff’s Office found no criminal wrongdoing by school employees who put the book on the shelves; the propriety of the book for a school library was a matter for the school district and school board.

Following Dave Chappelle’s “The Closer,” which first aired on Oct. 1, 2021, members of the LGBTQ+ community criticized Netflix for not addressing Chappelle’s anti-transgender comments. Two Netflix employees raised concerns publicly.
and ultimately filed complaints with the National Labor Relations Board. Given the publicity, about 30 Netflix workers staged a walkout. Transgender workers dropped their NLRB complaint, and one employee resigned. Ultimately, not much changed. Netflix continues to stand by its procedures, continues to make the comedy special available for streaming, and both complaining employees no longer work for Netflix.


A jury awarded $4 million to a Jackson County, Missouri, transgender student, after determining that the Blue Springs school district discriminated against him by refusing to let him use the boys’ restrooms or locker rooms. The student legally changed his name in 2010 and amended his birth certificate in 2014 to reflect that. Therefore, the state recognized him as a boy, but his school district denied him access to the boys’ restrooms and locker rooms. The student participated in boys’ physical education and athletics in middle school, but was required to use a single-person bathroom outside of the boys’ locker room. Following the verdict, the school district said that it disagreed and would seek post-trial relief, and appeal if necessary.


Rainbeaux Arts

This section adds the arts, humanities and social sciences, which civilize, inspire and educate. It includes the creative arts, documentaries and non-fiction works in various media. Members are welcome to send the editors an item or alert about the arts and culture for the LGBTQ+ community. Items are provided for information and are not officially endorsed or promoted by the committee or the PBA.

Paul Rudnick, Playing the Palace (Berkley Jove, a Penguin Random House imprint; 336 p.; $16). Rudnick’s rom-com (romantic comedy) novel centers on the relationship between Carter Ogden, an American, and England’s Crown Prince Edgar, whom Carter long admired but never thought he would meet. They fall in love quite openly, to the dismay of Edgar’s grandmother, Queen Catherine, who calls Carter “a down-market distraction.” The boyfriends survive various public and private mishaps, some quite comic. However, Carter fears the relationship is ultimately not to be, and goes home to New York. That is not the end, however—this is a romantic comedy, after all— and the pair work toward a happy ending.

PLAYING THE PALACE | Kirkus Reviews.

Several LGBTQ+ themed films, including documentaries, biographies and fictional stories, are in production or scheduled for release in 2022: 11 Queer Movies Coming Out in 2022 We Can’t Wait to See; The Most Anticipated LGBTQ+ Films of 2022 | NewNowNext.

Several books are to be on the shelves as well, and likewise diverse: fiction, memoir and history: These are the Most Anticipated LGBTQ+ Books of 2022 – News, Breaking News, Latest News, News Headlines, Live News, Today News (live48newz.com); 2022 LGBTQ Book Releases (95 books) (goodreads.com); 10 of the most anticipated LGBTQ+ books of 2022 (gaytimes.co.uk); The Most Anticipated LGBTQ+ Books of 2022 - Electric Literature; Queer Books Winter 2022 Preview (autostraddle.com).
News Notes provides information and links to non-legal items of interest to the LGBTQ+/Allies community.

- Dr. Rachel Levine became the first openly transgender official to be named a four-star admiral when she was sworn in to the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps (USPHS). The USPHS helps deliver health care after emergencies and natural disasters and has been actively involved in combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Levine has said that she sees herself as an advocate for health equity and, following this recognition, explained that she was honored to have taken a role to defend the nation's public health as it faces the greatest health threat in modern times. https://www.pennlive.com/news/2021/10/rachel-levine-becomes-first-openly-transgender-official-to-be-named-four-star-admiral.html.

- Vermont Supreme Court Justice Beth Robinson is the first out lesbian to serve on any federal circuit court as she became a member of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. Judge Robinson has been an associate justice on the Vermont Supreme Court since 2011. Prior to her service, she practiced in employment law, workers’ compensation, contract disputes and family law, and worked on several landmark LGBTQ+ rights cases. https://www.npr.org/2021/11/02/1051466337/beth-robinson-first-out-lesbian-judge-federal-circuit-court.

- A Catholic diocese in Michigan recently instructed its pastors to deny baptism, confirmation and other sacraments to transgender and nonbinary people. Interestingly, because the Catholic church primarily baptizes infants, the policy is likely primarily to affect non-Catholic adults seeking baptism and transgender teenagers preparing for confirmation. Notably, there has not been any particular guidance from the Vatican or United States Conference of Catholic Bishops. Some theologians have said that the new rule may contradict Canon Law, which provides that any person who has not yet been baptized is eligible for that sacrament. https://www.washingtonpost.com/religion/2021/12/08/catholic-diocese-transgender-people/. Catholics in the Diocese, including attorney Robert Anderson, are petitioning the Diocese to change its position, and Reverend Father James Martin, a Jesuit, posted the issue on Twitter, where he advocates for the transgender community: “It is not a sin to be transgender. Transgender people are beloved children of God struggling to understand their identity.” “They need to be accepted with respect, compassion and sensitivity.” As Cardinal Gregory told a trans person(: ‘)You belong to the heart of this church. (‘)” Area Catholics circulate petition asking diocese to soften policy | News, Sports, Jobs - Daily Press.

- Chick-fil-A will not be a part of the Vantage Airport Group’s proposed concessions program at the new Kansas City International Airport terminal. Vantage, a Canadian concessions company, was proposing for the concessions contract, and, following a letter from the LGBTQ Commission of Kansas City and discussions with the Department of Aviation, informed City Council that Chick-fil-A does not promote an inclusive environment and, as such, Vantage would no longer include the vendor in its development plan. https://info.umkc.edu/unews/chick-fil-a-removed-from-new-airport-concessions-deal/. (Competitive solicitation documents to conduct businesses at airports typically include language prohibiting discrimination as required by federal, state and local law. Chick-Fil-A Cut From Proposal For Kansas City Airport Restaurants After Criticism From LGBTQ Groups | KCUR 89.3 - NPR in Kansas City. Local news, entertainment and podcasts.)
LGBTQ+ Rights Committee

The LGBTQ+ Rights Committee shall study matters pertaining to the recognition and protection of the legal rights of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender (LGBTQ+) community. The committee will monitor and make recommendations on issues and developments in the law impacting LGBTQ+ people in the public and the legal profession.

The committee is open to LGBTQ+ lawyers and allies. The committee welcomes all members who are interested in promoting equal rights for the LGBTQ+ lawyers and the LGBTQ+ community at large.

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