

# B.I.L.L. BOARD

Newsletter of the Berkshire Institute For Lifetime Learning  
Winter 2000/2001 • Volume 9 • Number 2

## Winter 2001 Semester

The Curriculum Committee has put together an exciting and stimulating array of courses for the winter semester. Courses begin on January 8 and run through February 16 at the Quality Inn on Route 7 in Lenox. See the catalog for complete details, and don't forget to register!



Diane Hitter, Lecturer

### MONDAY

10:30 am to 12 noon  
1:30 pm to 3 pm

*Mock Trials* – Judge Rudolph Sacco  
*Humanity: The Next Generation: A Genetic Point of View* – Marsha Altschuler

### TUESDAY

10:30 am to 12 noon  
1:30 pm to 3 pm

*Music and the Unconscious* – Barbara Bliss  
*Jazz: Its Sounds, Evolution and Artists* – Karl Easton

### WEDNESDAY

10:30 am to 12 noon  
1:30 pm to 3 pm

*Today's Headlines* – James Cotter, Moderator  
*Renewable Energy* – Reports by Specialists

### THURSDAY

10:30 am to 12 noon  
1:30 pm to 3 pm

*Robert Frost: Yankee Grit, Grace and Gift*  
– Diane Hitter  
*Brush Up Your Shakespeare* – Dot Rowe, Facilitator

### FRIDAY

10:30 am to 12 noon

*Central Europe Since World War I* – Jan Wiener

## Winter 2001 Special Events

### January 7

Annual New Year's Brunch  
Country Club of Pittsfield

### January 24

American Museum of Natural  
History and Rose Planetarium  
New York City

Watch your mail for flyers.

## Annual Winter Film Club

Each of the four classics selected for this series includes an introduction followed by the viewing and a discussion led by moderators Lenore Rubin, Jack Rubin, and Elliott Vines. The films will be shown at BCC in the Little Theatre (Room K111) on Thursdays from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. The fee is \$15 for the series or a \$5 fee for a single film.

DECEMBER 14, 2000

*Adam's Rib* (1950) Spencer Tracy,  
Katherine Hepburn

JANUARY 18, 2001

*The Man Who Would Be King*  
(1975) Sean Connery,  
Michael Caine

FEBRUARY 15, 2001

*King of Hearts* (1966) Alan Bates,  
Genevieve Bujold

MARCH 15, 2001

*Cinema Paradiso* (1989)  
Academy Award, Best Foreign Film

## New Year's Brunch



Sunday, January 7, 2001  
11:30 am  
Country Club of Pittsfield

Gourmet Buffet, Music, and More

For Your Entertainment  
Jazz with Karl Easton, Joel Bishop  
O'Brien, and Eddie Diehl

*Happy Holidays!*  
*Happy New Year!*



## President's Message

Mark Twain said, "Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education."

The B.I.L.L. course about Mark Twain introduced the class to a remarkable American writer. In fact, all our courses introduce us to remarkable and varied fields of learning. What a feast for the mind! We are so lucky.

I have taken many B.I.L.L. courses and feel a great debt to our wonderful organization. When I meet someone new, I realize my questions begin to center on whether or not this person can teach a course. I feel a responsibility to B.I.L.L. to continue this search for quality courses.

How about it, B.I.L.L. members? Have you a secret ambition to learn about and teach aspects of the Civil War? Discuss the Adams-Jefferson Letters? Investigate the nuances of geography? Not all of our peer teachers are retired teachers so don't be daunted if you don't have a teaching background. Interest and a willingness to share that interest is all you need. Think about it! Let the Curriculum Committee (through our office at BCC) know of your interest, or call me. I am always ready to help construct a course.

Our success at B.I.L.L. relies on teaching "cabbages to be cauliflowers." So let us all try to promote this horticultural phenomenon.



### B.I.L.L. BOARD

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## A Peek Into Providence

Our two buses headed for Providence; perfect weather, congenial company, comfortable bus with confident driver—all made for high expectations. Accustomed as B.I.L.L. members are to outstanding trips, we are a critical group—not too easily impressed. Let me say, we were impressed!

Wending our way through tree-lined streets, viewing the many landmark 18th and 19th century homes—each tastefully maintained, we were reminded of the long history of this town. Rather than being out of place, the many modern structures made for a balanced landscape. They were an enhancing backdrop.

Our visit to the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD Museum), which serves as a teaching institution for almost 2,000 students, was rewarding. Its collection stretches from artifacts of the ancients through oils, watercolors, and sculptures of the present. We had sufficient time to wander on our own, augmenting our guided tour.

After a pleasant picnic lunch in the park, a visit to the First Baptist Church in America emphasized the independent spirit of those led by Roger Williams, who fled Massachusetts for religious freedom. The church is beautiful in its simplicity.

The John Brown House is located at the summit of long, climbing streets overlooking the Providence River. The splendor of its architecture and furnishings made it almost an East Coast Acropolis. Excellent guides filled us in on its history, pointed out distinctive wallpaper, crystal, Georgian ceilings, mementos from the lucrative China trade, and so much more. The four Brown brothers, successful entrepreneurs and philanthropists, endowed and gave their name to Brown University. We left the Brown House, visually satiated—more knowledgeable and appreciative of this part of early American history.

Next, at Johnson and Wales University, we were guided through the world's largest culinary collection containing over half a million items reflecting food history, culinary artifacts, cookbooks, menus, and Presidential place settings.

Finally, to cap this splendid day, a delicious supper awaited us at Audrey's Restaurant, part of the Johnson and Wales culinary program. With appetites, mental, spiritual, and physical very satisfied, we wended our way back to the Berkshires.

—Arne Lostrangio

## A Message to Members of B.I.L.L.

When Judy and Tom Easton persuaded Hank Payne, former president of Williams College, that Williams College should be a sponsor of a new non-credit program for Berkshire County, Hank knew its value because of his mother's involvement with a similar program in Worcester.

Working with Jim Kolesar in Public Affairs, I became the Williams College liaison because of my involvement in community outreach, particularly on projects to enhance the learning environment in the local schools. It's been a pleasure to make connections with students of all generations. As we know, learning is a life-long activity; learning really *does* take a lifetime.

A retired Dartmouth faculty member and the grandfather of a Williams College student told me how quickly a similar program in Hanover had exceeded their expectations. Williams College is delighted by B.I.L.L.'s success. And, like Alexandra Warshaw, I look forward to joining!

—Nancy McIntire, Liaison, Williams College





## Letters to the Editor

Dear B.I.L.L.BOARD Editor,

Returning to Pittsfield four years ago, I wondered what would be in store for me in my new life. What a pleasant surprise when I met B.I.L.L.

Every year I seem to take more courses. Whatever he teaches, Paul Flaum is a must! The winter session always has something interesting to get us through the doldrums. And it is always a treat to drive to Williamstown in the spring to hear a variety of Williams College professors.

The bus trips I have taken have been more than worthwhile, and I have met many wonderful people through B.I.L.L. — Sara Pollard

Dear Editor of B.I.L.L.BOARD:

I am celebrating an anniversary! One year ago in November I made a life changing decision. I left good friends and a socially active life in Oklahoma to move to the Berkshires to be near my daughter and family. Once the new living quarters were completed, I wondered how I could meet people and make new friends. I heard about B.I.L.L., and on a day that the temperature dropped to 20° below zero, I drove to the Quality Inn for my first course.

Not only did I learn about the Indian tribe that once inhabited Stockbridge, I also met several people who have become good friends. Through them I learned about the many programs B.I.L.L. offers.

I look forward to the coming year. Thanks to B.I.L.L. and the people I have met, I am happy and content living in these beautiful Berkshires hills.

— Norma White

Are you leaving the Berkshires for the winter? To be sure your mail is forwarded, let the office know your temporary forwarding address (with inclusive dates) so that we can send you a catalog, issues of B.I.L.L.BOARD, and any announcements. Call Sharon at 499-4660 Ext. 456, with your information.

## Getting to Know You

**SUE and HOWARD GORHAM**

Sue and Howard have been members of B.I.L.L. since its inception. For the past three years, Howard has served on the Board as Treasurer. Prior to that he was the chair of the Finance Committee and has recently taught for B.I.L.L. Sue has served as chair of the Social Science Subcommittee and contributed to this "Getting To Know You" column.

Howard has been extremely successful in several former vocations. Believe it or not, he was a serious professional trombone player in a swing band. He graduated from N.Y.U. Law School attending at night while earning his tuition working as an accountant. Then he joined a prestigious New York law firm and was the real estate attorney for the Pan Am building. He also is an ex-banker having been associated with Chase Manhattan. Howard is interested in Mayan history and archeology.

A community activist, Sue is proud of her position as the community representative advisor on the Principal's Council at the Morris Elementary School in Lenox where she feels she can make a difference. Having taught



school, she is a believer in public school education and is involved in PTA activities. Sue believes in good government and voter participation. She sold real estate for 17 years.

Sue and Howard have been full-time residents in Lenox for the past six years. Sue enjoys playing the piano and both play golf and tennis. Indeed, it was Howard's golf friendship with Tom Easton that brought them into the B.I.L.L. orbit originally. Coincidentally, Howard and Norman Avnet, president of B.I.L.L., attended the same junior high school. "We found each other again in the Berkshires."

B.I.L.L. is fortunate that Sue and Howard are so actively involved.

— Karl Easton

Dear B.I.L.L. Members:

Just a note to say that we were absolutely delighted to have your group attend the opera this summer! It was particularly exciting for me to attend Joel Revzen's lecture on Don Giovanni as part of the B.I.L.L. lecture series and then to have you join us for the actual production. I remember feeling inspired by the enthusiastic welcome Joel received, and I was struck by the provocative questions and comments offered by the group.

Your enthusiasm for this exciting art form is contagious! Thanks for your ongoing support—looking forward to seeing you at the opera again in the future!

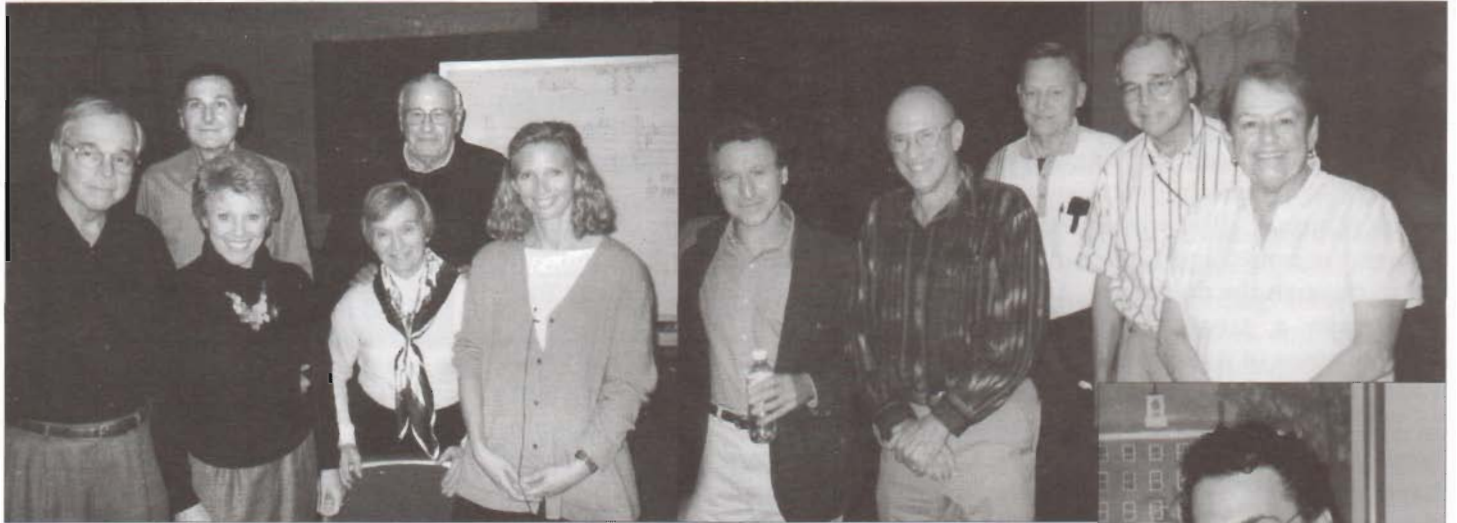
— Lisa Donovan, General Manager  
Berkshire Opera Company

## The Play's the Thing

Play reading led by Rosanne Berkowitz will continue on Tuesday's beginning January 9 at 3:15 p.m. at the Quality Inn. For more information call Carol Sabot at 447-8216.

B.I.L.L.'s Financial Statements for the Fiscal Year ended June 30, 2000 are available. Call the B.I.L.L. office to request a copy.





*Conversations With . . .*



*History of Presidential Elections*

*The Joys of Thinking*



*The Four Bs and Their Place in Musical History*



*Our System of Justice*



*The U.S. Constitution*



## B.I.L.L. Bids Good-bye to the Founders

It is very difficult to say "good-bye" to dear friends who have meant so very much to the community and to the founding and early growth of B.I.L.L. Judy and Tom Easton, who have spent many winters in La Jolla, are leaving the Berkshires to reside full time in the warm California sun.

On Sunday, September 24, over 90 B.I.L.L. members, the Easton family, and their friends gathered for a lovely luncheon at the Country Club of Pittsfield to express their thanks and offer good wishes for long, healthy and happy lives to Judy and Tom. Roz Avnet, Ileen Cohen, and Mona Sherman organized the luncheon. It was a great pleasure to share this occasion with the Easton's son Jim, his wife Marty, and their three wonderful children, Billy, Susie, and Molly. Very dear friends of the Eastons, Barbie and Alan Shoolman, came from Boston.

Art Sherman thanked the Eastons for their vision, their willingness to share it with the community, and their ability to bring it to fruition. He also recognized the contributions made to B.I.L.L.'s growth by attendees, Barbara Viniar, President of BCC; Alexandra Warshaw, BCC's Director of LifeLong Learning; and Nancy McIntyre, Assistant to the President of Williams College.

The three presidents who followed Tom Easton in office spoke. Len Stolzberg described the early startup steps and Tom's highly "democratic" form of leadership. The instant positive response from the community was a welcome surprise



for the founding group. Ann Dulye spoke of the warmth, the friendships, and the close relationships that developed early and continued to grow with the passage of time. For Ann, the key to B.I.L.L.'s success has been this ability to

bring together, in close community, people in retirement seeking to grow intellectually. Norman Avnet, B.I.L.L.'s current president, thanked those who had organized the luncheon, extended the good wishes of the community, and spoke of the contributions made by many people. He emphasized the good fortune we have had in the continued support of BCC and Williams College. He then presented to Judy and Tom a "timely gift" of a beautiful engraved clock.

Tom Easton, clearly moved, thanked B.I.L.L. for the luncheon and gratefully acknowledged the efforts of so many people who helped B.I.L.L. get its start. He especially thanked the many who were present at both the startup meetings and this luncheon: Fran Dichter, David Hoadley, Sue Phillips, Ilse Browner, and Rabbi Jack Stern. Tom also recognized the enormous contribution of Barbara Viniar, Alexandra Warshaw, and Nancy McIntyre.

Judy Easton followed Tom with her own very warm expressions of appreciation for the luncheon and the good wishes of everyone.

The Easton's friend, Alan Shoolman, sang a parody. It was funny and got many laughs, and only Gertrude Knepper had the courage to follow that act with some very warm remarks. At 92, she is the oldest B.I.L.L. member and a very good friend of the Eastons. They have promised to return for her 100th birthday party, and we all look forward to being there, too.

Good luck, Judy and Tom! — Art Sherman

## A Special Message for B.I.L.L.



Dear Friends:

We have been honored and overwhelmed these past few months by all the good wishes we have received from our friends at B.I.L.L.

The luncheon on Sunday was beautiful, and the words spoken touched our hearts deeply. We felt surrounded by love. It also meant so much to us to be able to share the occasion with our family and to have them, in turn, meet so many of our B.I.L.L. family.

We shall never forget B.I.L.L.—the challenges, the joys, the laughs, and the enrichment that it has given us. Most important, we are grateful for the opportunity to have met so many wonderful people. We shall always treasure the friends we have in the Berkshires.

Until we meet again, best wishes and love to you all.

Tom and Judy  
September 25, 2000





## Psychiatric Notes on Becoming a Jazz Musician

Little did I know fifty years ago when I arrived in New York City for my internship at Montefiore Hospital that at age 73 (in the year 2000) I would be diligently studying jazz and practicing on my trumpet many hours daily to achieve some degree of competence in the jazz medium.

During my high school days and early undergraduate college years, I played the trumpet mostly in large swing bands. I functioned primarily as a lead trumpet player in these bands, read the music, took occasional solos but never really worked at improvising.

Improvisation is the hallmark of the jazz musician. It is the *sine qua non* in jazz where the musician *creates*; that is, instantly composes an altogether new piece of music based upon the chord structure of the song or tune being played. It is an exquisite and exciting art form, highly individualistic, and a moving experience to the attuned listener.

From 1950 until my retirement a few years ago from the practice of psychiatry (except for a few months of playing in the New York Doctors' Symphony), I gave up the trumpet altogether. I have to admit that I found it boring to have to wait sometimes fifty to one hundred measures in some of the major works before the brass instruments were needed for a few notes. Interestingly, I did not sell or dispose of my trumpet which is now over sixty years old. I now wonder whether I unconsciously wished or planned to take it up again at a later date?

Becoming a jazz musician is an awesome endeavor. Under ordinary circumstances it takes years or a lifetime to become accomplished. There are those fantastic performers who become great in their twenties (I could name a few), but they are rare indeed. It requires a remarkable technical mastery of the instrument and a massive knowledge of



music theory and harmony. The great jazz masters acquire a "feel" for the sound. In addition to knowing the chord changes in a particular piece of music, termed the "vehicle" by John "Dizzy" Gillespie, ear training is a must. I can tell you that there is never enough time during the course of the day to keep working at the craft. Unlike most classical musicians, jazz musicians absolutely need to play with and listen to each other at "gigs" or at jam sessions that are, unfortunately, not as common as they used to be. The really great jazz musicians are totally involved with jazz.

As you can see, jazz has come to me at a rather late date, but I keep working at it with pleasure as well as understandable frustration. I now work with Joel Bishop O'Brien, a very talented jazz pianist who also sings. I love the "gigs" we do together—and we get paid, to boot. On those occasions when I play a "clinker," which may be accompanied by a playful jaundiced look from my pianist partner, I have the perfect rejoinder: "What do you expect, Joel, when I haven't played for the past fifty years." To "toot my own horn," we have gotten some really good feedback. As you can well understand, this tends to keep me going.

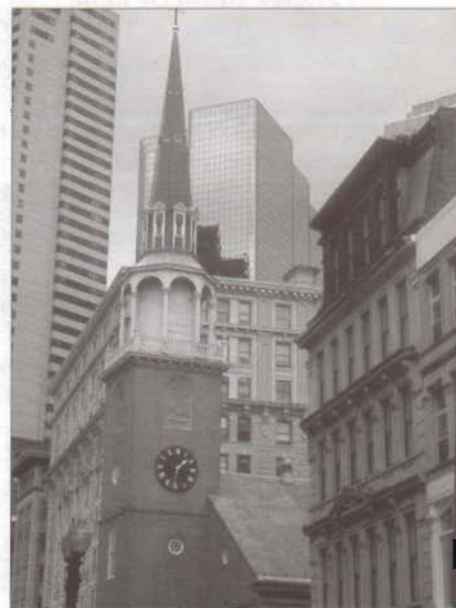
— Karl Easton

## Boston Bonanza

Although B.I.L.L. members have enjoyed many Special Events trips to Boston in the past, September 13 was the first time they explored the city on both land and water. The day began with a "duck" tour on a renovated World War II amphibious landing vehicle. Starting at the Prudential Center in Boston's historic Back Bay, we followed a land route that included buildings from the pre-Revolutionary and Revolutionary periods, the extensive Boston Common park landscapes, Newbury Street and its fashionable shops and restaurants, Beacon Hill, and a dramatic "splashdown" in the Charles River for a waterside view of the city.

After several hours exploring Boston on our own, we met at the Museum of Fine Arts to view the Van Gogh exhibit, "Face to Face," which included over 70 portraits, many of them rarely seen before in the U.S. Along with the famous, intensely colored portraits he painted in Arles, there were several striking studies of people in his native Netherlands. The paintings and drawings revealed Van Gogh's fascination with the human image which he depicted with great poignancy.

Special thanks to Audrey Schlanger and Barbara Greenbaum for a memorable day.  
— Lenore Rubin





## XC Skiing: Ticket to the Olympics—Ticket to B.I.L.L.

Watching the opening ceremonies of the Summer Olympics in Sydney provided a strong reminder of one of the most thrilling experiences of my life—attending the opening ceremonies of the Winter Olympics in Nagano in 1998 when my oldest son participated as a team athlete in cross country skiing. A very moving added local connection was Seiji Ozawa conducting choruses in Beethoven's Ninth choral movement on five continents via satellite.

Attending the Olympics with all its hoopla, and being exposed to an unfamiliar culture was very stirring. We were fortunate to be a part of a program that arranged for athletes' families to stay in Japanese homes. The two families we stayed with (one in Nagano and one in Hakuba) were as intrigued by our foibles and peculiarities as we were interested in their customs and culture. They treated us wonderfully, and we were especially pleased when the daughter of the family in Hakuba paid us a visit in Lenox last fall.

Sponsors treated athletes' families very well with lavish buffet lunches and dinners in Nagano's posh hotels and numerous gifts of winter coats, sweatshirts, travel bags, and binoculars. This generosity was dwarfed by the shopping carts full of gear that the

athletes themselves received.

Although Patrick skied in five races and did reasonably well for an American against the stiff competition from the Scandinavians, we think that his major achievement was being an Olympian.

Watching the races in a foreign country is interesting, as XC Skiing is much more popular in many other countries. The degree of talent and enthusiasm in Japan surprised us, because we hadn't thought of Japan as much of a Nordic country. Their enthusiasm for the ski jumping events and their excellent jumpers was great to witness. As far as enthusiasm for XC skiing goes, however, nothing beats the Norwegians. We experienced this when we went to the Nordic world championships in Trondheim, Norway, the winter before. It was like a Super Bowl event in the U.S.

We were able to get to some of the other events such as speed skating, woman's hockey, and downhill skiing (witnessing Herman Meier's memorable crash), but venues were very spread out, and it was hectic to get from one to another.

Patrick evolved into a champion skier at first through recreational family outings when the economics of downhill ski weekends with five children became daunting. This achievement was the source of much pleasure to us all. When he entered high school, the world of racing



*President Clinton and Patrick Weaver*

opened, and his enthusiasm rubbed off on his siblings who became excellent racers as well.

To those of you who have not tried the sport and do not migrate south at the first snowfall, I recommend it highly. I do not guarantee that it will be a ticket to the Olympics for you, and you already have a ticket to B.I.L.L.

My ticket to B.I.L.L. came indirectly when I sustained a career-ending cerebral hemorrhage while preparing to attend Patrick's fourth race. I had a grand mal seizure in front of our Japanese host in his home, was hospitalized, and watched the fireworks of the closing ceremonies from a hospital room. I was subsequently flown via Lear Jet Med-Evac to Mass. General Hospital for brain surgery.

While I do not feel it appropriate to attempt to practice medicine any longer, I feel very fortunate to be able to attend and enjoy immensely the varied courses that B.I.L.L. offers. Having concentrated on the sciences in college and medical school, I am reveling in the chance to "smell some roses" in the humanities without the pressure of exams or papers. Thank you, B.I.L.L.!!

— Terry Weaver



*Patrick and friend at Olympics*

The following poem was inspired by Professor Edward Burger's B.I.L.L. course, "The Joys of Thinking: An Invitation to the Beauty and Power of Mathematical Ideas," presented this fall 2000 semester at Williams College.

### The Joy of Thought

For all my life, mathematics  
 Has been stored away in mental attics.  
 My brain has not been much encumbered  
 By anything that's plus or minus numbered.  
 I strove to conceptualize the fourth dimension  
 And brought to mind a Rube Goldberg invention.  
 I sat down to read Melville's "Mobius Dick,"  
 But the curves of the Mobius made me seasick.  
 I probed into the magic ratio conceived by Fibonacci  
 And burned my fingers measuring our hibachi.  
 How many infinities you can count on the head of a pin  
 Just puts my poor brain in a timeless spin.  
 And when I entertain the laws of probability  
 I come face to face with my own senility.

— Walter Bemak

Handwritten note:  
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B.I.L.L. adheres to a policy of nondiscrimination towards its members and students and will admit all those who apply regardless of race, religion, color or national origin.

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