

Volume 1 • Issue 1
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INSTEP

**Milwaukee's
LesBiGay
Community
Honors
In Step
Magazine
Editor/
Publisher,
Ron Geiman**

**SPECIAL
COLLECTOR'S
EDITION!**



PROGRAM

(Two minutes, please)

Introductions & Acknowledgements

Tony Rhodes
President
Cream City Foundation

Remarks

Doug Nelson
Executive Director
AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin

Remarks

Terry Boughner, PhD
Publisher
The Wisconsin Light Newspaper

Remarks

Bill Meunier
Executive Director
PrideFest, Inc.

Remarks

Kim Zweibohmer
Friend

Remarks

Annabelle Havlicek
Havlicek & Associates

Presentation from the Friends in the Community

Stephanie Hume
Friend

Response

Ron Geiman
Publisher & Editor
In Step Magazine

Closing Remarks

Tony Rhodes

THE HISTORY OF IN STEP & RON GEIMAN

The idea for In Step Magazine was first conceived in November, 1983. Ron Geiman and David Iraci started brainstorming about a locally owned and operated Gay publication which would fill the niche Escape and Gay Milwaukee (two short-lived publications started by Erin Criss in 1982-1983) had left open.

Dave Iraci & Erin Criss



Born in Harrisburg, PA, August 26, 1951, Ron Geiman published the first issue of In Step Magazine on February 9, 1984.

In 1971, he was drafted into the Army, signed up for an extra year, and was able to pick his training. He chose "Military Journalist" and functioned as one until 1974. It was the Army that taught him a philosophy he's lived by ever since: If you're a true news journalist, you could type the facts of a story into the computer and the computer would write the story.

From 1975-1977 he was a Person Friday in the advertising department of a German weekly here in Milwaukee. During that timeframe he took a broad spectrum of journalism and communications courses at UW-Milwaukee. He took a job at the Factory in 1978, and managed it from 1980 to mid 1983, when he teamed up with Erin Criss as a Wisconsin ad rep for Escape and Gay Milwaukee.

Ron and the first issue of In Step Magazine



He had built up trust with local Gay advertisers during the time he worked for Criss, but it was a battle from the start because the papers were Chicago based. He discovered a real market for a local Gay paper, and so he started one. Sounds simple, right?

For start-up capital he convinced local advertisers to buy three-time packages, secured enough funds, and went to work publishing the first five issues of In Step Magazine.

There were no July, August or September issues due to lack of funds, but things came together for a 1984 Halloween issue, and he hasn't missed an issue since. That's over ten years of publishing an issue every two weeks (that's over 250 issues).

Just weeks before In Step's first anniversary, Dave Iraci gave up, packed his bags and headed for California, telling Ron he didn't see much promise in the magazine. Ron, believing it would work, became a sole proprietor in February, 1985 publishing a pocket-sized, 32-96 page bi-weekly magazine, with a print run of 5,000 copies.

In that first year he learned he couldn't go to the bars six nights a week to cover what was happening, and then deal with the magazine during the day. In his own words, "I realized it was time to stop partying and get down to business."

After numerous relationships and dozens of one-night stands, he also decided he couldn't have a sex life and publish a magazine. So, again in his own words, "I married my magazine." He made a life-long commitment, put his love, life and heart into In Step, and decided that reporting a fair picture of Milwaukee's Gay & Lesbian community to the world was well worth it.

From the Chalet at the River, to office space next to Danceteria on North 27th Street, to its present location (where the magazine has found a home since 1987), Ron Geiman and In Step Magazine has been there to inform, entertain and report on Milwaukee's Gay and Lesbian community.

Beginning with a Selectric typewriter and using early optical character recognition and telecommunications, In Step in 1984 was just beginning to utilize the ways and means average human beings were starting up "cottage" publications. Ads were done using cut and paste, press type and stripping in line-for-line copy, fitting in art and graphics.

For a short time the publishing of the magazine took a short step backward, with Ron typing and marking up articles, only for them to be rekeyed for type composition.

But soon Ron was dragged, kicking and shrieking into the computer age thanks to the computer wizardry of David Johnson. Ron's first computer (an XT) allowed him to upload the majority of the magazine to a bulletin board service, where the print was processed through

photocopy equipment. By that time, ads were being done on a Mac system, using a scanner to import artwork and graphics, and were being outputted from a laser printer.

Adding a fax machine allowed columns and breaking news stories to arrive closer to deadline for inclusion in the current issue.

Ron at his desk, many deadlines ago



Upgrading to a 286 and then a 486 computer, and the purchase of a 600 dpi laser printer, In Step made a huge step in becoming a self-contained publication in late 1992.

This past fall, with the addition of Havlicek & Associates and the unique blend of equipment (Macs and IBMs living and working in blissful harmony), we're proud to say that over 90% of In Step is done completely "in-house."

Today In Step's print run is 11,000 copies. It changed to the larger size format with the 1993 Christmas issue, and averages 48-72 pages each issue (that's 96-144 pages of the old size).

Through the past ten years Ron has worked to shed the "bar rag" image by adding feature columns, local and national news, local arts information, expanding the calendar to include organizations and other events, cartoons, and more. Space restrictions eliminated many event



Ron and the first issue of the new larger format In Step

THE HISTORY OF IN STEP & RON GEIMAN

photos and made room for more columns and more news.

He pushed hard to attract more non-bar advertisers, seeking professional, business and organizational advertisers. The special feature issues, instituted in the fall of 1994 has helped further break down certain barriers.

Ron Geiman & Erin Criss



Unfortunately, Ron estimates that less than 15% of the Gay/Lesbian professionals and businesses in Milwaukee ever advertise in the Gay press. As his readers demand more out of his magazine, and more access to his magazine, he asks "where's the other 85%?"

But by no means is Ron Geiman disappointed in his readers, advertisers or his magazine. In his office are framed originals of every issue from the very beginning, displayed with pride. He conducts his business and that of his magazine with professionalism, fairness, diplomacy and high standards. He enjoys being a witness to the growth of the Milwaukee Gay and Lesbian community and hopes In Step has served as a vehicle in the evolution of that community. He is generous and kind and gives his moral and financial support in hundreds of different ways.

Ron sees the move to the new office as the start of a new era; more professionalism, more efficiency, more technology.

For the first time he's contemplating hiring a full time "paid" employee. He's planning for the future: his future, the possible future of Milwaukee and its LesBiGay community, and the role he'd like In Step Magazine to play in that future.

Tony Rhodes asked me to gather this history of In Step Magazine . . . but it's Ron's history because Ron is the heart and soul of In Step. And through the years he's worn many hats: Editor, Publisher, Columnist, Photographer, Ad Rep, Delivery Person, Paste-up/Layout Person, Courier . . . Plus, since I've taken up quarters in the office, I've also seen him function as a travel consultant, crisis hotline worker, & directory

assistance (you would not believe the phone calls we get).

At this very moment in time I can assure you that In Step is in very capable hands. The office runs extremely smooth with Ron at the helm (where he will continue to remain) and with Joe Koch and his incredibly thick skin. The computer's every whim is catered to by David Johnson. And even though I'm still adjusting to "deadline," my associate (DC) and I manage to get through it intact, issue-after-issue.

But if you think it's just "us" who play a part in In Step, you're wrong. Directly and indirectly, Ron also financially contributes to: 3 cartoonists (2 from

Wisconsin); Jarnakaya as News Editor; Carmen as Arts Editor; 3 local columnists; a Madison correspondent; 5 syndicated columnists; 3 syndicated contributors; 3 photographers.

He also wore his first data entry person's (Mary Maliborski) fingers to the bone over the first 10 years of the magazine. Now he's working on wearing mine down (and that will ruin my manicure).

Still, none of us can get through an issue without shrieking "Aaaiieeeee" at least once. And that's as it should be.

The layout area at the old In Step Office (with previous issues hanging on the walls)



The almost completed new office across the hall at 225 South Second



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