



## Fyrst Launches Second Bid at State Treasurer's Office

By William Attewell, Special to Q Life

Madison — Openly gay Dane County Supervisor Rob Fyrst has launched a second bid at becoming Wisconsin state treasurer, announcing his candidacy for the statewide post in the shadow of the State Capitol on June 7.

In 2002, Fyrst first ran for state treasurer and lost in the primary to fellow Democrat Dawn Marie Sass. Sass lost by a wide margin in the general election to State Treasurer Jack C. Voight. Voight, a Republican first elected to the post in 1994, is seeking re-election to the post.

Fyrst was first elected in 2000 to the Dane County Board of Supervisors and was re-elected 2002 and 2004.

Fyrst, 36, is an African American and a gay father raising his adopted son, Tyler. Tyler is 12 years old.

"Four years ago, my son Tyler and I began an incredible journey of enlightenment. We traveled from Superior to Kenosha, from Marinette to La Crosse, from Madison to Wausau and many, many places in between. This trek across the dairy land of Wisconsin served as a reminder of why I love public service and why I love Wisconsin. It is the

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# Flagging Tenants

## Milwaukee Resident Says She's Outed from Her Home Because She's a Lesbian

Exclusive to Q Life  
By Tim Grair and Don Hoffman

Your landlord has just found out that you're gay. They want you out. Now.

It can't happen here, right? Wisconsin has a law preventing discrimination in housing and employment. We were the first in the nation — back in the early '80s Lee Dreyfus, a Republican governor, signed that bill into law. However, that law appears to have very little bite.

Just ask Janet Ast.

Along with thousands of others, Ast went to PrideFest this year. She spotted a rainbow flag and decided to replace her butterfly and flower flag with something a little closer to her heart. Later that evening she raised her colors. Early the next morning she was apparently confronted by one of her landlords.

According to Ast, her landlord, Colleen Babinec, was quick to make her displeasure known. "I need you to take that flag down immediately," said Colleen Babinec, according to Ast. Ast assured Babinec that her newly acquired Pride flag merely represented support for equal rights for all humans.

Babinec was not mollified.

According to Ast, Babinec grew louder, more confrontational and asserted, "My brother died of AIDS. I know all about your kind of people."

Hoping to put an end to the situation, a fearful Ast said she did her best to diffuse the situation.

"Colleen, settle down, I'll take the flag down," Ast claimed she told her



Janet Ast of Bay View sits on her front porch beneath her Rainbow flag Thursday June 23. Photo by Melody Carranza

landlord. With that, the flag was folded and put back inside.

However, it appears that the flag was not the issue but merely the flashpoint.

Before long, Ast received a 28-day notice to vacate from Colleen and Stephen Babinec's lawyer, Patrick J. Rubich terminating her lease.

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# PrideFest 2005: Pride Old and New

By William Duane

"A great time was had by all." That phrase could easily describe the experience at this year's PrideFest, Wisconsin's largest annual lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender celebration. Great weather and a star-studded lineup of mainstage acts combined to give 21,368 festival-goers a weekend of fun and pride unequalled in the memories of most.

According to the PrideFest Web site, the first official Pride event in Milwaukee was a picnic at Mitchell Park in 1988.



PrideFest began as a small rally focusing on political issues and LGBT civil rights, and has expanded over the years to include exhibitions on local community history, a marketplace for businesses, and national and international headline entertainment. This year's festival saw further growth in attendance — up more than 25 percent over last year, with gross revenues up \$25,000 over last year — and the addition of several new features.

Scott Gunkel, president of PrideFest, attributed the bigger crowds to a number of factors. "I think we had a great entertainment lineup, we did a great job promoting, we had a number of new things, and our new interactive Web site," he said.

In addition to a new sheephead tournament tent at the north end of the grounds, this year saw the addition of a silent auction. Gunkel said the sheephead attraction was well received but numbers were lower than expected. "We got about four or five hundred hits, and we were aiming for a

thousand."

The number of festival tickets purchased over the Web is not available yet, but Gunkel expects it to be high. "We had a lot at will-call," he added. People had to pick up their tickets at the will-call window at the front gate. In past years, there were delays to making the Web site interactive for ticket purchases.

### Saturday Night Strut

Saturday saw sunny skies in the afternoon and a near miss by an expected storm in the evening, giving the large crowd a chance to enjoy some prime-time entertainment. Kristin Miller and Brandon Wright, winner and runner-up of Rock Star Project 2005, were scheduled to judge the final competition of the Pride Idol competition on the dance stage. The performance by Jaizon Plaga, who sang Al Green's "Let's Stay Together," earned him the winning title.

Tret Fure and Kimi Hayes got the audience at the main stage up on their feet in the early afternoon. Maria Cadenas, Chair of Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee (LAMM), complimented PrideFest on an "incredible" lineup. "They did a wonderful job of having diverse music genres and included top women performers," she said.

LAMM also sponsored the Lesbian Lounge and the Stonewall Stage, and helped organize the community rally Saturday afternoon featuring U.S. Rep.



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Photos by Melody Carranza

## Homophobe Watch

Homophobic taggers used Q Life and the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center as their canvas last month, defacing the cream-city bricks at our office with the choice, yet very unimaginative word, "Fags." While the immediate neighborhood appears to have gotten sprayed as well, nowhere else were any derogatory slogans used. Many would argue that this was nothing more than a random tagging or that the taggers were British, but unfortunately we know better. Our landlord is working carefully with us and is installing security cameras. If we catch the image of those responsible, you can bet Queer Life will fight back.

