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Vol. 2, Issue 5 - April 2006

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Flag Flap

City of Milwaukee Says No to Year Round Display

By Holly Grey

The City of Milwaukee refused on March 2 to grant a permit to James Kuchta of Milwaukee Pride Parade Inc. and Walker's Point area business owners to hang rainbow flag banners.

The permit would have allowed Kuchta to hang over 100 rainbow flag banners on lampposts along 2nd Street from Lapham to Pittsburg year round to enhance the sense of Milwaukee LGBT community. At least that's what Kuchta and numerous Walker's Point business owners were hoping.

"I was hoping, by hanging these banners year round, it would help define this area as the LGBT business area that it is," said James Kuchta, founder and director of the 2005 Pride Parade. "Most of the economics in this area comes from LGBT-run businesses."

Kuchta had approached the City of Milwaukee with the idea of hanging the banners during PrideFest and the Pride Parade several months ago. According to Kuchta, city officials in the special events department encouraged him to apply for a permit that would allow the banners to

be hung year round. Per city requirements, all Kuchta had to do was notify area businesses of the idea and, barring outright opposition from any of them, Kuchta would have had the permit from the Department of Public Works to hang the banners starting last month.

Kuchta sent letters of notification to all of the area businesses and discussed the idea either face-to-face or by phone with many area business owners as well. Bolstered by the city officials' encouragement and confident he would be granted the permit, Kuchta also approached these same businesses to sponsor a banner. "I really wanted this to be a community effort," said Kuchta.

On March 2 Kuchta received a letter from the City indicating the permit allowing the banners to be hung year round was denied. A permit was, however, granted to allow the banners to be hung two weeks prior to the Pride Parade and for one week after the parade in June. Nothing in the letter, obtained by Q Life, indicates why the year round permit was denied.

Kuchta is not sure what happened. "They seemed like

they were all for it and then, all of a sudden, it died on the vine," sighed Kuchta. He theorizes "that there was some local business opposition or that possibly the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce approached the City wanting to mark the same area as the Latino corridor or that a local condo unit contractor or two lobbied the City against the banners."

Kuchta also wonders if Don Hoffman's name on a letter of support that was circulated to area businesses and sent to the City might have had something to do with the year round permit rejection. Hoffman is the editor of Q Life and a member of the board of directors for the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center. The Milwaukee Gay Arts Center is located in the heart of the "gay district" and is also in the midst of filing a law suit against the City of Milwaukee for its closure of the production of "Naked Boys Singing!" late last year.

"Who knows? I hate to be a conspiracy theorist, but at this point, I can only speculate on what happened. I've tried to learn more, but once I received the denial letter, all of a sudden they wouldn't return my calls," said Kuchta. "All I

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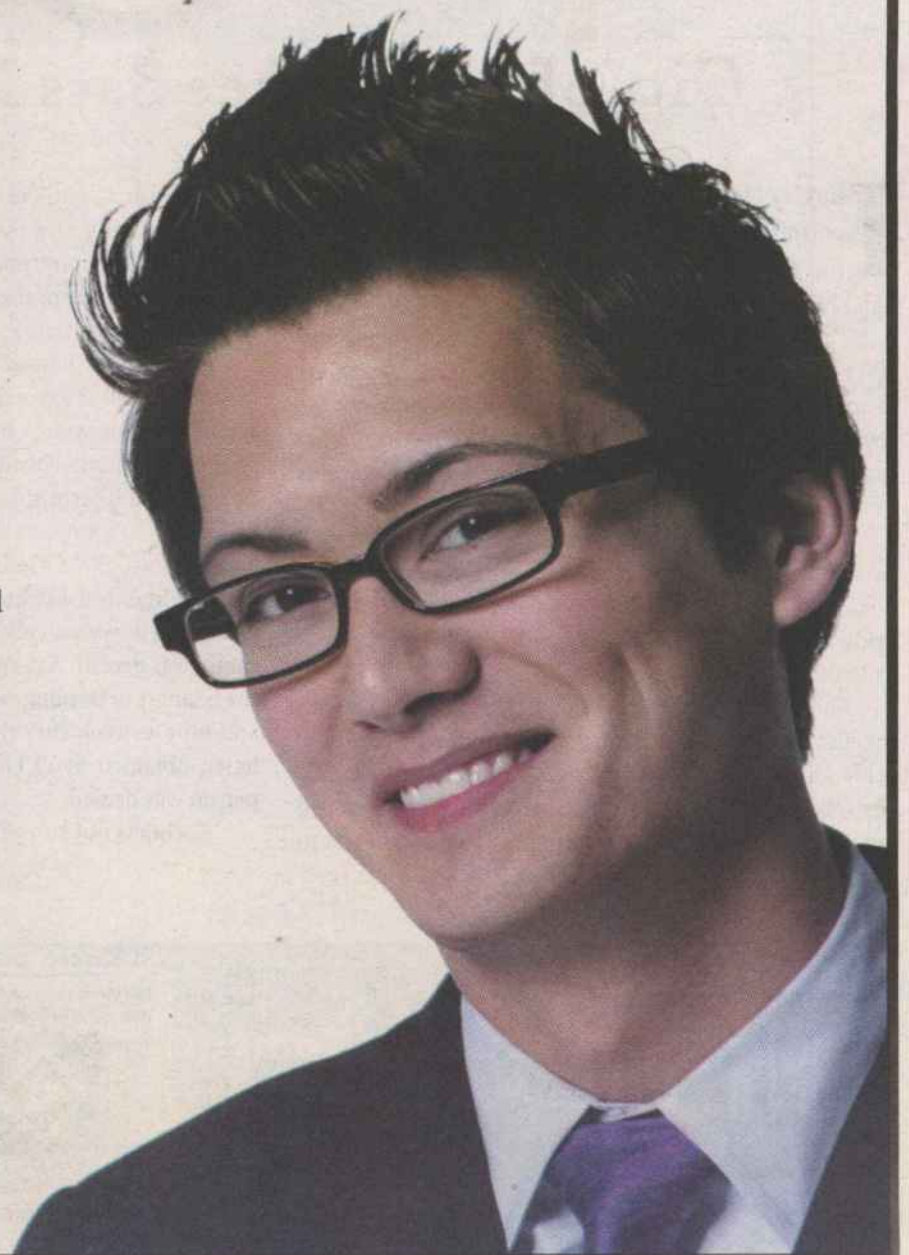
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Play Ball

By Paul Masterson

The Queer Life News softball team is looking forward to its upcoming 2006 season. After its successful inaugural season last year, when they finished first in Milwaukee's SSBL "D" division, the team is anxiously awaiting the first call to "play ball."

Shelly Hermann was named manager/coach for the 2006 season. A long-time softball enthusiast, her career began on grade school and high school teams. She loved the sport and the camaraderie. One season, Hermann played every day of the week, often running from one game to the next on the same day. Here in Milwaukee, she came to the Q Life team late in the 2005 season but immediately caught the team spirit. Her experience and sportsmanship were recognized as a complement and asset to the team.

Hermann wants to introduce some innovations to improve the team. She plans on holding weekly practices to develop on-field performance, commitment and team spirit. She would also like to create a system of fines as an incentive for better field performance and as a fund for a post-season party. Her expectations are to have dedicated players who will show up at meetings, practices and games, and "to have fun, cheer on the other team, and if we win a couple of games, even better," she said.

The team is still looking for players. "A core of 20 players would be ideal," Hermann said.

"Above all, we are a diverse, fun team of guys and gals, ranging from young to old, representing the ideals of gay softball and the positive attitude and sportsmanship associated with our team in particular. Non-gay players are welcome too; we don't discriminate."

So far, the 2006 lineup will include last season's regulars as well as several new players. The 2006 team promises to be an even greater challenge to opponents than last year.

As a result of invitations extended during the 2005 Dairyland Classic in Milwaukee, the Q Life team will participate in the Minneapolis North Star Classic Tournament May 26 to 28. It also hopes to go to the Toronto Tournament held July 4th weekend — right after Toronto Pride. SSBL will underwrite part of the team's tournament expenses.

Q Life softballers will again participate in SSBL's volunteer concession staffing at Miller Park. SSBL Commissioner Brian Reinkober commented on "how great it is to have the Q Life team in SSBL. From the time you started last year to the Dairyland Classic 2005 to your first out-of-town tournament, you guys and gals have embodied what SSBL is all about and I am really glad that you are in the league."

Oh, and this year the team has an official name: the Queer Life Gnus, of course.

If you are interested in joining the Queer Life Gnus, call Shelly Hermann at 414-418-6831 or e-mail the team at qlife_softball@yahoo.com.



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- Hosted an LGBT African American Leadership Forum
- Hosted and supported the Rainbow Alliance for Youth, a statewide network of LGBT youth-serving organizations
- Provided 16 days of training for LGBT youth development specialists in Wisconsin
- Conducted 14 focus groups, collected over 700 surveys, and reviewed 200 academic abstracts to prioritize health disparities among LGBT people in Wisconsin
- Influenced positions of decision makers in Wisconsin foundations and government agencies communities.



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- Jay Botsford, Young Leader 19-24
- GLESEN South Central Wisconsin, Youth Program
- Warren Scherer, Youth Advisor
- Bob Pedersen, Adult Ally
- James Vergeront, MD, Community Partner

Congratulations to the 2005 Adult Leadership Award Recipients:

- Johnny King, Program Staff
- Shawn Neal, LGBT Program
- Scott Gunkel, Community Leadership
- Gina Graham, Community Leadership
- Mari Carmen Saavedra, Community Ally
- Brico Fund, Adult Community Partner

Flag Flap *continued from page 1*

want to know is officially from someone at the City why they denied the permit."

Si Smits, an area business owner, is also curious about what happened. Smits tried contacting 12th District Alderman James Witkowiak shortly after Kuchta received the denial letter. "I tried to talk to the alderman, but he was not available. I ended up talking to the alderman's assistant who told me that a couple of businesses along the route were opposed.

City officials in the special events department encouraged him to apply for a permit that would allow the banners to be hung year round.

They didn't want the flags up at all, but there has not been any confirmation of this from the City."

It's puzzling to Kuchta and Smits why the City just doesn't tell them what happened. "I knew before applying for the permit that if there was major opposition from a majority of the businesses, we would then need to seek help from Alderman Witkowiak in order to move this project forward," said a perplexed Kuchta.

According to Witkowiak, "There were

three area businesses who opposed the year round permit. These businesses felt that this area should be viewed as an area for everybody regardless of color, nationality, sexual orientation etc. and not just for one group. I believe that allowing the banners to be hung for three weeks during and around the Pride Parade and PrideFest is a good compromise."

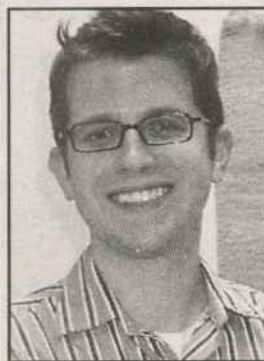
He also said that typically an association made up of real-estate owning area businesses has approached the City for this type of permit. "This permit application was one of a kind. There was no precedent set for this type of application," explained Witkowiak "I first heard of the idea when someone at DPW called me. I thought the idea was fine. I didn't and still don't have a problem with it, but I thought the three weeks was a good compromise. However, I do think had DPW been approached with an application by an association connected with the real estate in the area that there might have been a different outcome."

The alderman suggested that if Kuchta would like to re-apply, he should approach all the area businesses and sit down with the owners. "If I were them, I would ask each individual property owner for their permission and, if a consensus is built, approach the City with the results of this canvassing. In the absence of an association, this would be the next approach."

Resurgence of HIV Among Gay Men Challenges Complacency

Join ARCW in Fighting to Keep Infections at Bay

By Tad Gospodarek



HIV is once again on the rise among gay men. The State of Wisconsin AIDS/HIV Program has reported that while HIV cases among gay men decreased during the

1990s, cases increased between 2001 and 2005. In 2005, 60 percent of new HIV cases reported in Wisconsin were among gay men. Younger generations of gay men often do not see AIDS as the serious health threat it once was and take prevention less seriously than their counterparts did in the early years of the epidemic.

The challenge is clear: We need to fight harder to reverse the trend of rising HIV among gay men.

As the new prevention coordinator for Gay Community Programs at the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, I have committed my career to stopping new HIV infections among gay men, and I need your help. I wanted to be with an organization where I knew my daily work positively affected people, so I joined ARCW. As a gay man myself, I decided it was time to start giving back to my community. ARCW has provided me with the perfect opportunity, allowing me to not only expand my skills, but the chance to work closely with and mobilize people throughout the gay community to defeat AIDS.

ARCW's HIV prevention programs for gay men are on the cutting edge of reducing new HIV infections. Our popular and well-

established Bag Boyz team is currently recruiting new volunteers. The Boyz are a dedicated team of energetic volunteers who donate their time to provide peer-education on issues of sexual health and HIV prevention to members of Wisconsin's gay community.

The Bag Boyz program sends teams of trained peer educators to bars around the state. The volunteers provide messages of prevention and protection, safer sex kits, and referral to testing and counseling in an informal and comfortable atmosphere. Their work keeps the threat of HIV visible in the gay community. The Bag Boyz have received national recognition as an innovative program that has reduced HIV risk behaviors among gay men.

ARCW's IMSexEd internet chat room project is Wisconsin's newest HIV prevention program for gay men. SexEd is an animated condom that appears as a character in the Wisconsin chat rooms of Gay.com. SexEd is a straight-talking, open and nonjudgmental guy who is ready to answer all your questions relating to HIV testing, prevention and sexual health. So far we've had a phenomenal response to the program. My staff and I rely on help from volunteers throughout the state to keep Ed up and running. Contact me if you're interested in having Ed as an alter ego, and always make sure to check in with Ed when you are online.

A fun, new way to fight AIDS will be unveiled in the coming months. Raising the Bar 2006 will be the perfect opportunity to reassert the solidarity with the gay community in the fight against AIDS. Stay tuned to Q Life for more details.

To find out more about joining the Bag Boyz, providing educational counseling through SexEd or participating in Raising the Bar 2006, contact me at 414-225-1535 or Tad. Gospodarek@arcw.org.

Former MPS Teacher Comes Out of the Cloakroom

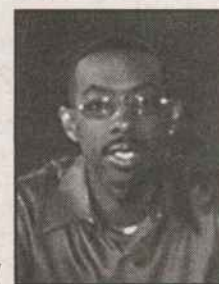
Before becoming a teacher, Benn Setfrey knew he had homosexual tendencies. He also knew they would have to remain his closely guarded secret in the workplace. On Sunday, April 9, at 2 p.m., Setfrey will share a reading and discuss his controversial new book, "Don't Shoot! I'm Coming Out: How to 'Man-Up' and Set Heterosexuals 'Straight,'" at The Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. 2nd St., Milwaukee.

Setfrey is a graduate of Marquette University, where he was elected Black Student Council president and president of his fraternity chapter. After graduating, he taught on the south side of Chicago at various schools and eventually began consulting for the Chicago Public Schools. Setfrey's prowess in the classroom landed him on local NBC and CBS news affiliates.

He was featured on "Positively Milwaukee" and "PrimeSpot" shortly after he began teaching.

What will former colleagues, classmates, fraternity brothers, students and community members think of the man they admired and respected as an educator? Will their opinion of Mr. Setfrey now change? Will this teacher pass the test?

By using his life experiences as a backdrop throughout the book, Setfrey will undoubtedly empower homosexuals and educate heterosexuals. For more information, visit www.bennsetfrey.com.



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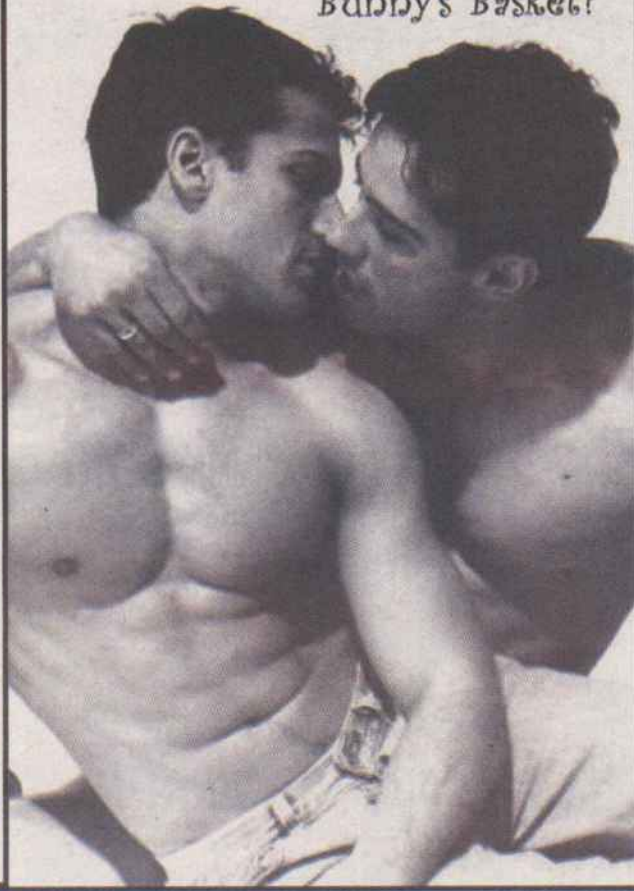
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Wisconsin



Happenings

PrideFest Returns to Friday Night with Community Rally and Major Entertainment

After two years as a two-day festival, PrideFest will again add Friday night to its schedule. PrideFest will be held June 9, 10 and 11 at Maier Festival Park on Milwaukee's lakefront.

The Friday night schedule will feature a community rally followed by a lineup of some of the most distinctive and entertaining performers in the LGBT universe. The acts will be announced in coming weeks.

PrideFest planners had initially planned for Friday to be a "soft" opening to the festival weekend, but it has evolved into a major night of

entertainment. "We had an opportunity to provide an evening of unique and exceptional entertainment, so we come back strong!" said PrideFest co-producer Michael Hall.

The community rally at the Miller Lite Pavilion will feature elected officials, community leaders and special guests.

"In this year when Wisconsin is considering a constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage, it's especially important that our community and our allies have an opportunity to come together and stand united," said Paul Williams, a PrideFest task force member.

PrideFest also announced that it has once again partnered with Queer Life News to produce the 2006 Pride Guide.

In addition, qualifying rounds for the popular Pride Idol singing competition will start in April in many of the area's finest LGBT establishments. Visit www.pridefest.com for more information and to apply for the competition.

PrideFest is Wisconsin's largest celebration of LGBT culture and community. For more information, visit www.pridefest.com or call 414-272-7823.

HRL-PAC Endorses Watts and Others

The Human Rights League Political Action Committee (HRL-PAC) announced its endorsement of JD Watts for Milwaukee County Circuit Court Judge, Branch 39, in the April 4 general election. HRL-PAC is Wisconsin's only group dedicated to electing candidates who will work for and defend equality for LGBT people.

"JD Watts is well-qualified and has expressed strong support for equal protection under the law for LGBT citizens," said Paul Williams, HRL-PAC board president.

Watts has a varied job history that gives him a breadth of experience to apply to the job, including recent work as an attorney specializing in juvenile and family law, serving as vice president of his family's china shop, and three years as a Milwaukee County assistant district attorney.

HRL-PAC also made early endorsements of candidates who will compete in fall elections. The early endorsements are for Gov. Jim Doyle, State Sen. Tim Carpenter and Jim Sullivan, a candidate for State Senate District #5.

The fall primary election will be held Sept. 12 and the general election will be Nov. 7.

Wauwatosa Alderman Jim Sullivan is running a strong campaign for the 5th District State Senate seat currently held by Tom Reynolds. "When Reynolds was first elected, we predicted that his vitriolic hatred of gay people would lead him to become one of the loudest anti-gay voices ever in state government," said Williams.

"Unfortunately, Reynolds has made that prediction come true."

Doyle has vetoed anti-gay legislation and has been one of the strongest voices against the proposed constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage.

Carpenter is a long-time supporter and champion of LGBT issues and is one of only two out gay elected officials in the legislature.

Be a Mentor! Yes, You!

As a positive LGBT/LGBT-friendly adult role model, have you ever thought about ways in which you could provide direct support for LGBT youth? Come and support an innovative collaboration between Milwaukee Mentors and the Alliance for LGBT Youth, a program of Children's Service Society of Wisconsin. An information session will be held at Broad Vocabulary on Tuesday, April 11, from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.

You will learn more about opportunities to mentor LGBT youth in the community, including LGBT youth in foster care. LGBT youth in out-of-home care may not have access to a solid connection from our community; therefore, LGBT/LGBT-friendly adults are needed to help this group of kids feel safe and accepted.

Come as a single or as a couple — and bring a friend. We are responsible for the future of our LGBT youth! For more information, contact Jane Ottow at 414-453-1400 ext. 5008 or jane.ottow@cssw.org.

Milwaukee LGBT Community Center Welcomes New Board Members

The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center is proud to welcome three new board members. Bernell Hooker, Sue Haertl and Charu Malik were elected to the board because of their extensive experience and strong dedication to their work.

Hooker is the women's basketball coach at Mount Mary College. She also created her own nonprofit organization, IOU Sports, to foster positive attitudes, self esteem and leadership skills for girls and women.

Haertl is a teacher in Sussex and ad-hoc professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She is a long-time supporter of the Challenge Party fundraiser and is active with UWM's Gay/Straight Alliance.

Malik is the executive director of the Cancer Vaccine Consortium, a lead program of the Sabin Vaccine Institute in Washington, D.C. She is experienced with strategic planning, diversity training and fundraising.

In addition, the center and the board are extremely grateful to outgoing board co-presidents Jeff Goldberg and Debbie Lang, who have spent countless hours in their roles. Goldberg will remain on the board but Lang's term has ended so she will no longer be on the board. The board elected Melissa Beasom and Sheldon Walker, who have considerable experience on the board, as the new co-presidents at its March meeting.

International



Happenings

State Department Report on Human Rights Violations Points to UAE and Iran

Washington — A State Department report released in March highlights the United Arab Emirates for its human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender identity, alongside other countries.

"The State Department report is enlightening but it won't be effective if the U.S. government keeps siding with abusers like Iran in supporting silencing human rights watchers," said Human Rights Campaign President Joe Solmonese. "Countries like the UAE are abusing men and women and the best the U.S. government can do is give them a multi-million dollar contract to manage our ports. We should be demanding accountability for human rights violations, not simply turning a blind eye toward the problem."

Solmonese explained that the State Department's "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices," "continues to show severe human rights violations based on gender identity and sexual orientation occur around the world. But in January, the United States sided with Iran in denying United Nations consultative status to organizations working to right these wrongs. We will continue to work with our allies to encourage the United States to follow its own advice."

The report points to violations in several countries, including the UAE, Iran, Jamaica, Cameroon and Poland.

The report finds that in the UAE, on November 23, Abu Dhabi Police arrested 26 allegedly homosexual men — UAE nationals, Arabs, and Asians — who had gathered at an Abu Dhabi hotel for a party. Government officials reportedly said that the men were transferred to the ministry's Social Support Center and would "be given the necessary treatment, from male hormone injections to psychological therapies" after their trial.

Statement on World Pride 2006 from IGLHRC

The board of directors and staff of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) have issued the following statement on World Pride 2006, which will take place in Jerusalem in August:

The mission of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission (IGLHRC) is to secure the full enjoyment of human rights of all people and communities subject to discrimination or abuse on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and/or HIV status.

Affirming a guiding principle that human rights are indivisible, IGLHRC's vision fits within a broader, global social justice movement that addresses the economic, social, cultural and political conditions that impact the lives of people whose sexual orientation, gender expression, or HIV status are stigmatized or do not conform to social norms.

IGLHRC recognizes that many LGBTI people in the region who

wish to attend World Pride 2006, named "Love Without Borders," will be unable to do so due to travel restrictions and conditions that limit mobility and participation.

IGLHRC condemns the homophobic statements made by Christian, Muslim and Jewish religious leaders in connection with World Pride 2006. A basic tenet of human rights is to embrace human rights for all regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity or expression and/or religion.

While IGLHRC will not be participating in World Pride 2006, we support the work of LGBTI and human rights organizations which embrace the indivisibility of human rights and we will continue to work with national and international partners to advance the global cause for the full enjoyment of human rights by all.

IGLHRC encourages all human rights organizations and individuals who choose to participate in World Pride 2006 to engage in active discussion about the denial of human rights of all people in the region as well as LGBTI communities in Israel and the Occupied

National



Happenings

Baldwin Rallies Colleagues in DHHS Protest

Washington — Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) is leading a Congressional inquiry into the Department of Health and Human Services' removal of LGBT-oriented health information from the department's Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) Web site. SAMHSA removed the information in January, without explanation, after the right-wing Family Research Council attacked it.

"It is outrageous that an organization with a long track record of attacks on the LGBT community can successfully pressure a government agency to stop

providing preventative health care information to LGBT Americans," said Baldwin.

After sending a personal letter in late February to DHHS Secretary Michael Leavitt protesting the removal of the information, Baldwin enlisted other members of Congress to join her in calling for an explanation and reversal of the department's decision.

For years, the SAMHSA Web site provided basic, yet critical, educational information for lesbian and gay Americans on topics such as substance abuse, youth suicide, ethnic and cultural

diversity, social support, violence prevention and homophobia.

In their joint letter to Secretary Leavitt, Baldwin and her colleagues said, "[I]n asking you to restore the Web site as soon as possible, we must warn against any revisions to the Web content that would distort the LGBT community and its preventive health needs, such as equating "homosexual conduct" with "significant health risk." We hope your department will take a consistent and fair-minded approach in recognizing and assisting with the unique health risks to LGBT individuals."



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Tranny Roadshow Comes to Milwaukee

Special to Q Life

By Michael Munson

All you need do is head for the restrooms in the nearest restaurant or department store, and there is the evidence: People come in two flavors: men and women. Unless, of course, the Tranny Roadshow is in town — dissecting and detailing the multitudes of ways gender can unfold! Don't miss their brilliantly dynamic, one-night-only performance at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. 2nd Street, Milwaukee, on Thursday, April 6, at 10 p.m.

The Milwaukee stop of the Tranny Roadshow's 2006 sweep through the eastern half of the United States and



Canada will feature seven self-defined transgender artists piecing together a multimedia performance art extravaganza. Like their genders, the artists' work defies neat categorization.

AJ Bryce is a photographer, guitarist and rocker. Kelly Shortandqueer is a zinester. Tona Brown sings opera, spirituals and art songs. Seeley Quest declines to describe his performance art at all, instead simply calling himself "a queer

crip gender traitor." Dylan Scholinski, author of "The Last Time I Wore a Dress," a memoir of being institutionalized as a teen for being "an inappropriate female," talks of his experiences. Jamez Terry, an Alaskan sled dog trainer and zinester, also plays the fiddle. And last but not least, Imani Henry is the acclaimed performance artist best known for B4T (before testosterone).

Each show, the Roadshow promises, is different. "We're a fluid entity," said co-organizer Jamez Terry. "We change to suit the artists and the crowd, but our performances are always full of intelligence, fun and humor." Jamez also promises, "Although the Tranny Roadshow is done entirely by transpeople, it is a raucous evening of entertainment that is open and accessible to people of all backgrounds."

Co-sponsored by the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center and FORGE, the Tranny Roadshow's Milwaukee performance will be the first fundraiser for the FORGE Forward 2007 Conference, the first trans-masculine and SOFFA (Significant Others, Friends, Family, and Allies) conference to be held in the Heartland. Attendees of the Tranny Roadshow performance will get a small taste of the work of Imani Henry, who will perform a full-length performance art piece at the Milwaukee-based national conference, to be held March 29 to April 1, 2007.

The conference will also include two full days of pre-conference institutes; over 75 concurrent, multi-threaded workshops and caucuses; keynote addresses by leading transgender and SOFFA leaders and innovative thinkers; sizzling entertainment; socializing and networking; free

consultation with respected transgender surgeons; an exhibit hall packed full of your favorite vendors and organizations, and much, much more.

Proceeds from the \$10 tickets for the Tranny Roadshow will help defray FORGE conference costs for low-income registrants. Tickets can be ordered online (for a small additional fee) at www.uncommontheatre.net, or at the door.



Learn more about the Tranny Roadshow at www.trannyroadshow.org.

For directions to the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, call 414-383-3727. To get more information on the FORGE Forward Conference 2007 or sign up for its e-mail announcements list, surf to www.forge-forward.org/conference.

Season of Passing

When controversial radical feminist writer Andrea Dworkin died last year, a friend said she "didn't recognize her name." I guess that's every writer's dream: for your ideas to outlive your name. The passing of Connie Panzarino and Mary Francis Platt did not make major waves in or outside of our queer communities, although these fearless disabled lesbian activists transformed much of disability politics in this country — their legacy lives on in every ramped sidewalk in America.

When I was young, I would often watch television with my mother, who would gasp and cry at the death of some politician or entertainer that I'd never heard of before.

That scene is now repeated with my children. "Oh, my god, Betty Friedan died," I gasp, and my kids give me that look. "Who's that?" they say disdainfully. How could anyone they haven't heard of possibly be important? A half century later my children have no sense of the pre-feminist world that detonated Betty Friedan's dissatisfaction with married life with children, or Andrea Dworkin's fury at patriarchy and pornography.

The icons of my youth are men and women pushing 70 and 80 now; that generation is passing away. I want to make note of some passings whose stories may not have made it to the evening news, but who have made the lives we live possible.

Betty Berzon recently lost her long-time battle with breast cancer, leaving her partner of over 30 years, Terry DeCrescenzo, and a long legacy of gay activism. Betty was a lesbian psychotherapist at a time when that phrase was an oxymoron. She was the author of nine books addressing lesbian and gay life, including "Positively Gay" and "Permanent Partners." She was also a founding mother of the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center, the largest gay community center in the world, providing services for over a quarter million people a year (!).

Betty struggled with her lesbianism, suffering psychiatric breakdowns until she came to accept her sexual orientation. She then went on to found the first organization of gay therapists within the American Psychiatric Association. Betty worked with others (like Judd Marmor who died in 2004) to remove the diagnosis of homosexuality from the list of psychiatric disorders. In 1973, homosexuality was officially removed from the diagnostic manuals and in one fell swoop (to quote Richard Green), "several million mentally ill persons were cured."

Stanley Biber was a medical doctor who performed thousands of sex reassignment surgeries long before transgender was a household word. From the small town of Trinidad, Colo., which became known as the "sex-change capital of the world," he perfected the surgical art of genital surgery, assisting transsexuals in their dream to fully actualize themselves. Dr. Marci Bowers, a gynecological surgeon, parent of three, and male-to-female transsexual herself, who has continued Biber's practice, said, "He put the operation on the world map. He made it safe, reproducible and functional and he brought happiness to an awful lot of people."

If you don't recognize the name Charles Socarides, you can thank people like Betty Berzon and Stanley Biber for doing their work so effectively. Charles Socarides continued to believe that homosexuality was a mental illness long after most psychiatrists



FAMILY

Arlene Istar Lev is a family therapist and is the author of "The Complete Lesbian and Gay Parenting Book and Transgender Emergence." She and her partner are the parents of two children. You can reach her through www.choicesconsulting.com.

had come to accept human sexual diversity. Socarides was a founder of the National Association of Research and Treatment of Homosexuality, a large right-wing organization of clinical therapists committed to turning gay people into straight people. Their theory is that same-sex attraction is due to poor gender identification; their treatment includes sending women to beauty parlors, and having boys spend time playing football with their fathers. "Socarides' death represents the passing of a homophobic era. By the way, his son Richard was a senior adviser to Bill Clinton on gay and lesbian issues. Perhaps if Socarides had only played more football with him...

I received an e-mail last week saying a young man had died — the 19-year-old son of some colleagues. Although I had never met their son, I burst into tears when I read the e-mail and have cried many tears since for young Jacob. This is a mother's pain I feel, a pain so deep and searing that I never knew it existed before I held my tiny babies. When parents say they will give a kidney or an arm for a child, it is not rhetoric. I can never hear of a death, a car accident, an army casualty and not think: That was someone's baby, someone's child. My heart aches for my colleagues, their loss and the world's loss.

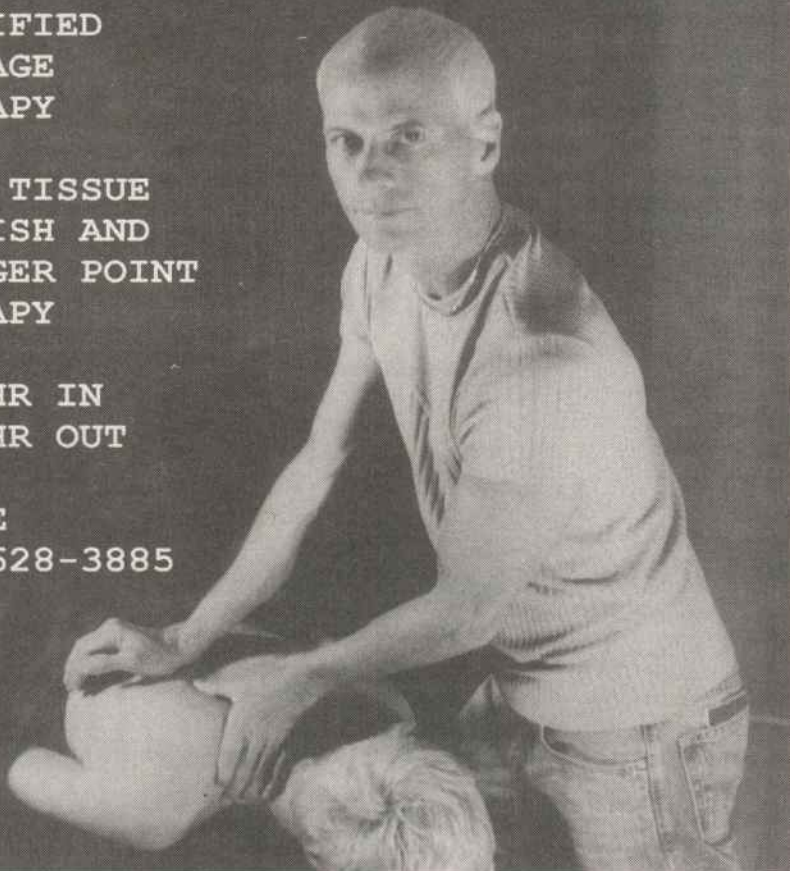
We only have a short time here on this fragile planet. Let us all do our work in the world with passion, to honor those who have come before us, and for the children who are watching our every move.

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Awards and Anniversary Celebration for Diverse and Resilient

Special to Q Life

By Gary Hollander

On April 28, 12 awards will be distributed at Diverse and Resilient's 10th anniversary party to be held in Milwaukee's Third Ward. Award recipients were selected from individual and organizational nominees in five categories each for youth service and adult service. The awards for youth services are



Gary Hollander

presented on behalf of the Rainbow Alliance for Youth (RAY), a statewide network of eight community-based LGBT youth programs in Wisconsin. Diverse and Resilient developed as a project within Aurora Health Care and the University of Wisconsin's Milwaukee Clinical Campus in 1995 with funding from the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services. For six years, the project gradually developed in size and recognition, becoming a separate nonprofit organization four years ago. During that time, the program expanded its mission. The original mission was to address the HIV prevention needs of LGBT youth; the broader, current mission is to improve the health of LGBT people in Wisconsin by

Since its inception, Diverse and Resilient has distributed more than \$350,000 in mini-grants and subcontracts to LGBT organizations around the state.

building the capacity of organizations and communities to take action.

Since its inception, Diverse and Resilient has distributed more than \$350,000 in mini-grants and subcontracts to LGBT organizations around the state. Project Q of the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, having received approximately \$130,000 through Diverse and Resilient, is the largest single financial beneficiary of its efforts. In addition to this funding, Diverse and Resilient has provided training to more than two dozen youth development specialists who work with LGBT youth in community-based settings.

Diverse and Resilient has also been recognized for its HIV prevention and health promotion work with transgender groups and individual leaders. Along with House of Infinity in Milwaukee and OutReach in Madison, Diverse and Resilient has developed a Transgender 101 curriculum intended to meet the basic information and awareness needs of community-based organizations that are not specifically LGBT affiliated. Diverse and Resilient also hosted Wisconsin's first

transgender health leadership forum in 2004. In recent years, Diverse and Resilient has partnered with LGBT leaders and academics to increase understanding about the health disparities in Wisconsin.

Award recipients for youth services include: Kat Miller, Young Leader 14-18; Jay Botsford, Young Leader 19-24; GLSEN South Central Wisconsin, Youth Program; Warren Scherer, Youth Advisor; Bob Pedersen, Adult Ally; and James Vergeront, MD, Community Partner.

Mark O'Neil, Diverse and Resilient director of youth services, noted, "Selection of these award recipients was complicated by the great number of possible nominees. Community-based LGBT youth work in Wisconsin is exciting and has yet to reach its full potential, but has been wonderfully supported by groups like Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin (Bob Pedersen) and the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services (James Vergeront)."

Brenda Coley, Diverse and Resilient director of adult services, stated in regard to the adult award recipients, "I am particularly pleased to have worked with many of these worthy honorees. Their passion and commitment reflect the love they have for our communities."

Recipients of awards for adult services are: Johnny King, LGBT Program Staff; Shawn Neal/Gay Men's Health Summit, LGBT Program; Scott Gunkle, Community Leadership; Gina Graham, Community Leadership; Mari Carmen Saavedra, Community Ally; and Lynde Uihlein/Brico Fund, Community Partner.

RAY, with which Diverse and Resilient presents the youth awards, was founded in 1997 by Marilyn Levin, then the director of GALAXY, a premier LGBT youth organization in La Crosse. As the leader of a program that was among the first funded through Diverse and Resilient, Levin observed that the fledgling youth groups spawned by Diverse and Resilient but sustained by community-based organizations would need a network if they were going to share successes and foster development. RAY's ongoing network management and support was transferred to Diverse and Resilient in 2001.

Nominations were reviewed by a community panel and forwarded to the Diverse and Resilient Youth Advisory Committee and the board of directors for approval. Board members include Ann Carter, Lt. Edith Childs, Gary Hollander, Ph.D., Kathleen Murphy, RN, Diane Pollard, Ph.D., and Leonard Sobczak. The Diverse and Resilient Youth Advisory Committee consists of Karl, Ryan, Jess, Chris, Ted and Mario Aguirre-Villa, the 2005/06 Public Ally who serves as program intern.

To learn more about the 2005 leadership awards or reserve a place at the 10th anniversary party, contact Diverse and Resilient at 414-390-0444 or through their website, www.diverseandresilient.org.

Gary Hollander is the executive director of Diverse and Resilient.

Sam I Am

By Holly Grey

"When Sam sings, I'm perfectly all right, except for the fact that I can't breathe! I find myself crying and laughing and applauding and knowing why I went into this business." —Liza Minnelli

Occasionally you conduct an interview where you have so much fun, you forget you are interviewing and forget to write things down because you are laughing and enjoying yourself way too much. I spent 35 minutes with Sam Harris, singer, actor, writer, director, producer and activist on the phone and fell head over heels for him all over again.

I fell in love with him the first time in 1984 when his charisma and voice took the world by storm on "Star Search." I was one of 25 million viewers who watched week after week, cheering for the bubbly, high-top-sneaker-wearing crooner. He belted out emotionally charged songs that helped him capture the grand prize at the end of the season.

He's still just as wonderful.

And he is bringing his eclectic live show, S.A.M., to the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts in Brookfield on Saturday, May 6, at 8 p.m.

Sam has been called the greatest entertainer of our time. The Los Angeles Times says, "Harris' touch is magical," and USA Today says, "The sheer force of his charisma is mesmerizing ... rousing one moment and heartbreaking the next."

Sam has appeared on numerous television shows and specials and in countless live productions, working with the legends who influenced him such as Stevie Wonder, Elizabeth Taylor, Elton John, Al Green and, most importantly, the great Liza Minnelli, with whom he has had a long-time collaboration and friendship. He has performed at the White House, made guest appearances on every talk show from "The Tonight Show" to Geraldo, and performed a stirring "You'll Never Walk Alone" on "The Oprah Winfrey Show" in the week following 9/11.

In addition to recording and performing, Sam is a tireless activist who has performed in countless benefits for human rights and AIDS organizations. He has personally collected funds in every major theater in the country for Broadway Cares and Equity Fights AIDS, and continues to campaign for like-minded politicians.

Q Life: Tell me what we can expect from your show.

SH: I'll be performing some Broadway, pop, familiar and original songs. Included is a lot of comedy — some personal, some political. Each show is always changing. I hope it's a full evening. It certainly is for me.

Q Life: After all you've done on stage, do you still get nervous before a show?

SH: Oh, my God, I'm a wreck before everything. I always get so scared, yet somehow I am able to channel all that into good energy and put on the show.

Q Life: What do you do to wind down after a show?

SH: I used to drink. Now I wind down by grabbing a burger or hanging out with friends or watching an episode of "Boston Legal." I'm blessed to have a great group of friends and a wonderful partner. He's great. We've been together 11 years, so I have this great group of people around me to help me wind down.

Q Life: Besides your current tour, what else are you up to?

SH: I am so excited. I've been cast in a new sitcom called "Class." The season has already been ordered and will start this fall.

Q Life: Besides our current president, what else do you worry about?

SH: I worry that this country lives in a bubble. Our arrogance may cause a cosmic brick to drop on our heads. You know it's bad

when Jessica Simpson won't even meet with the president. I mean it's really, really bad.

Isn't it ironic, while we are trying to bring democracy to other countries, at the same time we are squelching the human rights of gay people in this country?

We are not equal. And even though we have come a long way, we can't be complacent. We have to keep at it. This is going to make me sound like an old man, but I worry that things today are so much better for gay youth and that they haven't seen or been through the struggle. In comparison, they have it pretty good and I worry that they are complacent. We can't afford to be complacent. The other side is at work.

Q Life: Describe your activism.

SH: I do what I can, when I can. I protest, attend demonstrations, raise money and do whatever I can. My only disappointment is I haven't been arrested, but I'm working on it. I am on Rev. Phillips targeted death list and if you are going to be on a death list, this is the list you want to be on.

I was fortunate to be involved with the AIDS Project in LA during their first year big fundraising event. Elizabeth Taylor asked me to sing and, of course, I said yes. I said yes in a time when many people weren't saying yes. When a crisis comes, how we respond is sometimes larger than the crisis. I'm blessed to have known what makes me feel right about doing the right thing. I've done what I could.

Q Life: Out of all the wonderful things you have done in your career, is there one moment that stands out as being the most moving or inspirational?

SH: There were so many before I got sober, but the most recent was after 9/11 and Oprah asked me to appear on her show "Music to Heal our Hearts." I sang, "You'll Never Walk Alone." I had moved to LA from New York just two days before 9/11 and this pulled me away from the TV and into action. After the show, Oprah invited me to dinner at her house, which was pretty incredible because Oprah is not one that one just hangs out with, you know. But we gathered at her house for dinner because she wanted to create something healing. It was very moving and very emotional in the most positive way. For a moment I felt a sense of brotherhood with everyone at that table and with everyone in the nation.

Q Life: On a lighter note, if you won \$300 million in a lottery, what would you do first?

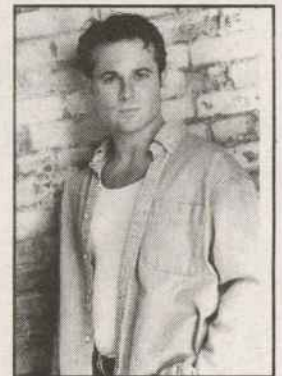
SH: I would take a chunk to improve my life because we all love stuff. After that, I would donate to projects that are good for the world. I would give money to gay youth organizations and money towards groups that help gay alcoholics.

Q Life: Would you give some to me?

SH: Sure, but you're not an alcoholic gay youth, are you?

Q Life: What's next?

SH: Well, hopefully "Class" will be a hit and we'll resume filming in July for the next season. And a film that I wrote is in pre-production. It's autobiographical. It's not a comedy but it is pretty funny. However, you never know what's going to happen in this industry. I have everything crossed — including my eyes which makes it really hard to drive.



Sam Harris

Somewhere Over the Rainbow

Midwest LGBTQ Conference Reveals Need for Allies, Inclusivity, Funding and Better Communication on College Campuses

By Nicholas Michael Ravnika

“When they called me to come host this drag show, they said it was for the MSGBLTACC,” the host of the evening said, screwing up the letters of the conference’s acronym. “I didn’t know what the ACC was for. But I’ve eaten a lot of MSG, and I love BLTs.”

Intentional though it may have been, such misreadings are a useful metaphor for the disconnection felt on college campuses by many of the LGBTQ college organizations that attended the largest conference in the Midwest (and reportedly the nation) for LGBT and allied college students.

A southeastern Wisconsin delegation, including students from the University of Wisconsin–Parkside Rainbow Alliance, traveled west to Sioux Falls, S.D., to attend the conference. They met with similar organizations from schools across the state in an effort to begin unifying the LGBTQ community and its voice throughout Wisconsin universities.

“It was really nice to see the other campuses turn out,” said Carly Surber, vice president of the UW–Parkside Rainbow Alliance. “At least at Parkside, you get such an isolated feeling — almost as if we’re the only people here in the state. So it’s always nice when you can bring everybody together.”

In total, 55 Wisconsin college students shared a cramped, 12-hour drive to Sioux Falls, where they met more than 650 other LGBTQ organization members from other Wisconsin schools and schools across the Midwest for the eighth official Midwest Bisexual Gay Lesbian Transgender and Allies College Conference (MBGLTACC). Students from Milwaukee Area Technical College and Marquette University were represented along with students from the University of Wisconsin at Eau Claire, Milwaukee, River Falls and Stevens Point.

“I thought it was a great turnout,” Surber said. “I’ve heard from more schools this year than I knew had LGBT organizations last year. It helped. Now when I look at a map, I can say, ‘Oh, Lacrosse. I know people up there, and what they’re doing at their school.’”

MBGLTACC 2006 focused on a number of issues pertinent to the LGBTQ community, but more importantly, the convention provided some basis to organize and unify campus efforts on a state level. The general sentiment following the conference was optimistic in light of more collaboration and information sharing between organizations.

Surber sees the proposed Wisconsin state Defense of Marriage Amendment referendum, likely to appear on the ballot in November, as a critical issue that every campus can rally around.

“I think that the Fair Wisconsin campaign will give us a focus point for organizing throughout Wisconsin schools,” Surber said. “That will be the thing that bridges the line of communications. You know, at different schools, we all have our individual fights, but the amendment is something that’s affecting all of us. It’ll be easier to build cooperation between the schools when you have a more universal focus point.”

Bringin’ It All Back Home

After sharing experiences with other college students, Rainbow Alliance members want to educate the Kenosha and Racine community about the repercussions of the proposed Defense

of Marriage Amendment. But foremost on their agenda seems to be drawing out a greater LGBTQ ally base at UW–Parkside and the surrounding community.

“People just feel like their campuses aren’t inclusive,” said Rainbow Alliance President Kanika Jones. She noted that students sometimes cite a homophobic atmosphere at UW–Parkside as a major anxiety — a problem the university shares with most of the smaller colleges that attended the conference.

Like similar groups on other campuses, Rainbow Alliance also faces the challenge of inadequate funding.

“This year, we got \$25,000 to work with,” Jones said. “Next year, we’ve been cut to \$15,000. But the biggest thing our organization has taken in is that we need to take things one step at a time.” (The budget for next year was recently raised to \$17,000.) Production costs for the group’s single most attended and expensive event, the “Illusions” drag show in November, were near \$5,000. The annual event brought in over 400 people and about 500 pounds of donated food for the Racine Hunger Taskforce.

But a \$10,000 cut in funding might mean limitations on both larger events that, like the drag show, benefit local charities, and smaller events that seem less tantalizing to the general public, such as speak outs, panel discussions and educational presentations. But the group’s executive board still plans on bringing Judy Shepard, mother of slain gay student Matthew Shepard, to speak in fall 2006, despite the hit that Shepard’s \$6,000 charge makes to their already low coffers. Jones said the group is considering asking for funding from community businesses and nonprofit organizations.

Surber said that bringing in Shepard is an important move for Rainbow Alliance. “Judy Shepard is a vital speaker whom we need to bring to this campus,” Surber said. “So we are going to be working with other organizations to bring her to this campus. Hate crimes are another example of a universal issue that doesn’t just affect the LGBT community.”

Say It Loud

Following the delegation’s return from the conference, Rainbow Alliance’s activism committee, headed by Surber, proposed a number of ideas to the group for consideration, most prominently the need to develop more allies on campus.

Matt Fitzgerald, a former president of the organization and MBGLTACC 2006 attendee, sees the greatest potential for organizational growth coming from allies whose support for the LGBTQ community and its concerns might still be in the closet.

“We need to reach out to our allies,”

Fitzgerald said to the group the evening prior to the conference’s closing ceremony. “Only with their support can we get what we need.”

Since statewide legislation is one of the most overt forms of discrimination facing the LGBTQ community, it was a major focus for many of the breakout sessions during the conference. But it was readily apparent that campus activism on state legislation is more powerful when connected to other campuses.

“Allies serve a crucial role in the struggle for civil rights,” Surber said. “It’s important to see that no civil rights movement has ever been won without the support of people outside of the people who are being discriminated against.”

Surber mentioned that “Gay? Fine by Me” T-shirts and “Straight but Not Narrow” pins have helped allies make themselves more visible on campus.

Eau Claire’s Struggles

Rainbow Alliance isn’t the only college group in the nation that faces funding problems and overt homophobia on campus. And it’s not the only one in Wisconsin, either.

Jacob Dougherty is the president of Spectrum, a UW–Eau Claire group that he describes as the only social outlet and forum for activism on LGBTQ issues on the 10,000-student campus.

“At our peak, we had 30 members,” Dougherty said. “But that doesn’t really represent the total LGBT community at Eau Claire.”

Despite applying and appealing to UW–Eau Claire’s budget committee, Spectrum hasn’t received any funds from the university. Most of Spectrum’s support comes from the local Chippewa Valley LGBT community center. Part of the reason, Dougherty thinks, is the organization’s lack of action.

According to Dougherty, “The biggest challenge, really, is creating an active membership. Everybody likes to talk. We love to talk. But nobody has taken real action yet.”

Dougherty said that one message he took away from the conference was that collaborating with other organizations is the best way to develop campus inclusivity.

“Just gaining general acceptance is a huge problem,” Dougherty said. “But in a place like Eau Claire, it’s hard to find common ground with other organizations. We do have very supportive faculty who encourage students to come to Spectrum.”

Dougherty characterized Eau Claire as “not very racially diverse. Most LGBTQ people of color either aren’t out or feel that our organization doesn’t address their specific concerns.” He added that while the Black Student Union, Latinos Unidos, and the Hmong Student Association meet on the campus, “they don’t address queer issues, to my knowledge.”

Organizations on other Wisconsin college campuses report facing related problems of their own. Marquette students, for instance, face the difficulties of attending a privately funded university to which some alumni refuse to donate until “that gay organization” is banned, said a Marquette student named Jess.

A Community Burden

Aside from educational breakout sessions during the day and entertainers every evening, MBGLTACC featured a speech by Jon Hoadley, a 22-year-old University of Michigan graduate who is heading up South Dakota’s efforts to stop anti-gay legislation.

“We are here together as members of a community,” Hoadley said, “and we need to remember that.” In an attempt to rally the LGBTQ community on more than a geographical level, Hoadley encouraged his audience to get involved in the fight against anti-gay legislation, however, his speech was one of the more poorly attended events at the conference, with only about half of the attendees in the hall.

Throughout his keynote address, Hoadley referred to nonviolent activists like Ghandi and civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. as prime examples for the LGBTQ rights movement, making the analogy that homophobic attitudes in South Dakota make it “the Birmingham of the gay

rights movement.”

He also interpolated Socrates’ sentence by the Athenian courts as another parallel to the equal rights struggle, suggesting that Socrates followed the court’s mandate for his suicide because he believed in what he taught, not necessarily because the law was just.

“The question we face,” Hoadley said, “is whether or not we, as a community, will pick up that burden, whether or not each of us will do our own part.”

College Conference Not Sponsored by College

The responsibility of organizing MBGLTACC changes hands between host schools every year. This year, the conference saw itself in the capable hands of co-chairs Carmen Johnson and Wendy Stubbs, who have been partners for seven years.

The conference was originally to be hosted by the University of South Dakota’s 10% Society, for which Johnson and Stubbs serve as co-advisors. But Johnson said the 10% Society receives less than \$1,000 in university funding annually, and the group quickly realized that university administration wasn’t exactly eager to help them host.

So Stubbs and Johnson formed the Vermillion Diversity Coalition (VDC), an informal group, separate from the school.

“We wrote the university a letter and basically disassociated ourselves with them,” Johnson said. “But it was difficult, because there are a lot of university resources that we could’ve used. But I didn’t even feel that I could put up posters around campus.”

Through grassroots fundraising, Johnson was able to pull together about \$2500. Registration fees paid for the rest of the conference costs. Attendance for the conference, however, dropped significantly this year.

“The one thing I hope to see develop is the formation of a parent group,” Johnson said. “To the best of our knowledge, there has been no set protocol for this conference. The conference the year before will typically share whatever database they can. All we got was a list of 15 school names. We really don’t want young people who aren’t familiar with that kind of work to have to walk into a situation like that.”

No Midwest Conference in Wisconsin ... Yet

While Johnson said that she’d like the conference location to float around the Midwest, a host school in Wisconsin isn’t on the agenda for 2007. The University of Minnesota, in the Twin Cities, won the bid to host next year’s extravaganza.

“I’m excited for next year’s conference,” said Michael Sandrone, who organized the 2006 southeastern delegation. “The Twin Cities has a really supportive community, and a lot of local businesses and organizations in that area will probably help make the event something special.”

Johnson noted that most past conferences have been held west of the Mississippi and that more even distribution across the Midwest might bring in more students.

“There aren’t as many big schools out this way,” she said, mentioning that a parent group with the power to fundraise would be beneficial to any school that takes up the task in the future.

It’s not likely that UW–Parkside will make an appearance as the host on an MBGLTACC program booklet any time soon. But a larger campus, such as Madison or Milwaukee may be able to put in a bid in the future.

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre Presents 'Take Me Out'

By Cara McMullin

What happens when a baseball superstar at the top of his game casually announces he's gay? This revelation and its reverberations fuel Milwaukee Chamber Theatre's production of "Take Me Out," by Richard Greenberg, running April 21 through May 7 at the Broadway Theatre Center.

"Take Me Out" is the story of Darren Lemming, the star center fielder of the world champion New York Empires. Darren is young, rich, famous, talented, handsome and so convinced of his popularity that when he casually announces he's gay at a press conference, he assumes the news will be readily accepted by everyone. It isn't. He unintentionally changes his life and the lives of his teammates.

Winner of the 2003 Tony Award, "Take Me Out" premiered in London in 2002 then moved to New York's Public Theatre before moving to Broadway. It also received awards from the New York Drama Critics Circle and Drama Desk and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize.

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre's production of "Take Me Out" will be directed by Patrick Holland, who described the show as "a compelling story, dealing with themes like celebrity, homosexuality, loneliness, identity, bigotry, abuse, friendship, baseball, money and happiness."

A gay playwright, Richard Greenberg has supplied a steady stream of plays including "The Violet Hour," "The Dazzle," "Everett Beeken," "Three Days of Rain" (currently being revived on Broadway with Julia Roberts) and "Life Under

Water." The inspiration for "Take Me Out" began when Greenberg himself became obsessed with baseball one summer — not unlike the show's character Mason Marzac.

Mason is Darren's business manager and the only other openly gay character in the show, and he truly falls in love with baseball. As Mason's friendship with Darren grows, so does his obsession with baseball. He eventually sees baseball as a metaphor for hope in democracy.

Another element of the show that has attracted attention is the full frontal nudity

'Baseball is better than democracy — or at least than democracy as it's practiced in this country — because unlike democracy, baseball acknowledges loss.' —Mason in 'Take Me Out'

in the play's locker room and shower scenes. When asked why he thought the playwright felt it necessary to include nudity, Holland said, "I think Greenberg wants us to look at a routine that takes place in gyms, locker rooms and sports facilities everywhere through a different set of eyes. Showering and changing in the same room

is part of being a baseball player. But the actual act of being naked reveals far more about these guys' relationships. They share each other's fears and successes. They have each other as a support group. And the fact that one of their teammates has been hiding a large part of his identity is a bit of a betrayal to some of them. There's no place to hide in a shower and Darren's teammates are forced to deal with who he is."

A play with such a variety of issues may seem like a lot to cover in a few hours onstage. Holland said, "Greenberg is great at balancing the many themes in the story. It doesn't become a message play. It unfolds as an exquisite piece of writing."

The all-male cast features actors both familiar and new to Milwaukee Chamber Theatre audiences. New York actor Hasani Issa will make his MCT debut as baseball star Darren, and Milwaukee favorite John McGovern returns as Darren's business manager, Mason. The rest of the cast includes Eric Cherney, Eddie Collins, Jim Fletcher, Chiké Johnson, Luke Leonhardt, Dan Mooney, Isai Padilla, Lucas Peterson and Jonathan Wainwright.

On Thursday, April 27, at 6:30 p.m., the public is invited to attend the pre-performance ViewPoints presentation "Homophobia in Women's Sports" given by Bernell Hooker in the second floor Skylight Lounge. Hooker is the founder and CEO of Image of Us (IOU) Sports, a nonprofit organization for girls and women that instills education through sports. The presentation is free and open to the public. For more information, call 414-276-8842.

Fair Wisconsin will host a benefit fundraiser

in conjunction with the Friday, April 28, performance of "Take Me Out." Admission includes a show ticket and pre- and post-performance receptions. For more information on the Fair Wisconsin event, call 414-271-2656 ext. 112.

"Take Me Out" is sponsored by Briggs & Stratton, John Holland and Konrad Kuchenbach, Queer Life and the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center. Performances will be April 21 through May 7 in the Cabot Theatre of the Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway in Milwaukee's Third Ward. Tickets are available at the Broadway Theatre Center or by phone at 414-291-7800. For more information, visit www.chamber-theatre.com.

Cara McMullin is marketing and PR manager for the Milwaukee Chamber Theatre

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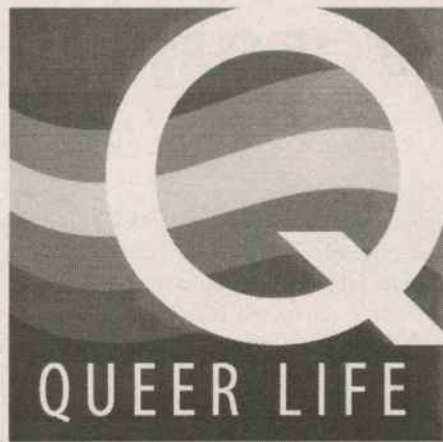
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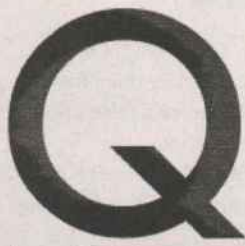
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City Keeps Year Round Pride 'in the Closet'



EDITORIAL

And so once again, the City of Milwaukee apparently says one thing and then does another.

Please forgive us if we're not surprised.

Incident du jour involves 2nd Street in Walker's Point and some 50 or so pride banners that the area businesses have been trying to get installed along what has long been known as a gay stretch.

If you believe the parties trying to get the banners hung, then you'll be scratching your head and wondering how their understanding of the city's process, as told to them by the city, could be SO wrong.

James Kuchta, publisher of The Outbound, a bar guide here in Milwaukee, laid out a series of events that recently went down with the city's special events folks. (Read our cover article for the entire story.)

If there hadn't been at least two others involved in the negotiations telling the same story, you would wonder if Kuchta and his clan were just plain making up stuff to stir an anti-city agenda. But Kuchta and his allies are all telling the same story. And the city isn't saying anything beyond a letter they wrote to Kuchta that didn't make much sense. Basically they are allowing the flags to be placed for two weeks before the Pride Parade and one week after. WHAT? How did that decision get made? Apparently it's OK to celebrate queers and our nation's diversity just three weeks a year.

So we thought we would try to get to the bottom of this flag flap and ask some questions of our own. Much to no one's surprise, the city folks are staying mum. So what are we to believe?

Well, it's clear someone here is not telling the truth. And our gut tells us ... it's not Kuchta. Kuchta has been really forward in his conversations with the City and even claims it was the City's idea, not his own, to pull a permit to allow the pride flags to fly year-round. Kuchta then got the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center involved and asked the editor of Q Life to write a letter of support that ran in Outbound and Q Life. Kuchta apparently went out of his way to make sure the letter was delivered to all the business along 2nd Street. A request the City made. He says he was led to believe it "was a done deal," claiming the City told him this would really add a little life to a bleak, colorless street.

Then, apparently, all hell broke loose. At least that's what the City claims.

We contacted the folks at special events.

They said the flags could not stay up because there was "a lot of neighborhood opposition." We asked them to provide us with a list of the businesses that were in an uproar about these flags. They told us they could not do that. They also said that our alderman would have to talk with us about why this year round permit request would be denied.

We find that hard to believe since 2nd Street is heavily peppered with gay and gay-friendly businesses. In fact, after the letters were distributed, according to Kuchta, the

phone rang with several business owners who wanted to sponsor a flag. Some even wanted to sponsor a half dozen.

Oh, and did we mention these flags would not cost the city of Milwaukee a penny and would all be paid for by those who support the project?

Clearly not a bad price for the city to pay, considering they have done very little to bring life to this stretch of street.

We contacted our alderman, James Witkowiak, several times as well. Much to our surprise it took him a very long time to get back to us. However, finally he did speak with our senior reporter, Holly Grey, after he was made aware that we would be writing this story and placing it on the front page. This is a bit curious, because overall Witkowiak has been a great supporter of the community, the annual Pride Parade and the goings on at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center. In fact, according to Kuchta, there has been talk of asking Witkowiak to be grand marshal of this year's Pride Parade.

And what did he say?

Apparently, there were just three businesses out of more than 60, who received the letter outlining the pride flag project, that allegedly seemed worried.

What is that? Ninety-five percent FOR and just 5 percent AGAINST? Not a bad betting percentage. We asked again for Witkowiak to supply the names of those businesses who he claimed had issues. He refused.

So what does this all mean?

Hmmm... not sure.

What we do know is that Kuchta, along with community members, Q Life and editor Don Hoffman, remains committed to the pride flag project. We also demand the same respect other community folks demand and receive and a clear, precise explanation from the City of why having pride flags up year

round is such a bad thing. After all, they're colorful and will add an important sense of the acceptance that Milwaukee likes to claim it offers. In addition, the City's claim that this effort is not coming from a neighborhood organization is untrue and insulting.

Also, we ask for our great ally and friend Alderman Witkowiak to get involved in this apparent misunderstanding and work to resolve this issue. If this really is a situation where neighborhood businesses are upset about these flags, then Witkowiak's duty is to take a stand. He is well respected in this neighborhood and his common sense might help those who are leery of this idea understand its importance to the entire city.

This is the same action we would expect from any alderman dealing with a similar situation in any of our other diverse neighborhoods. How different would it be if members of the African-American community wanted to have banners with a portrait of Dr. Martin Luther King flying high down MLK Drive? A wonderful idea!

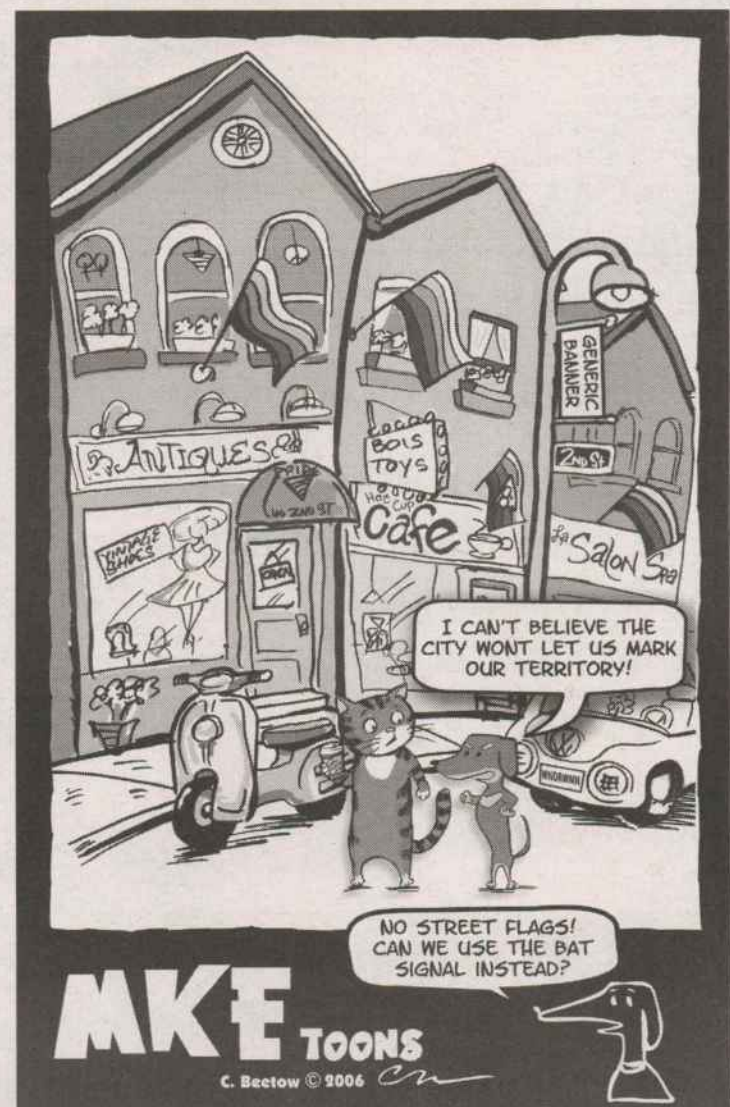
In our opinion, it would be no different.

Unfortunately some of those within City Hall see it differently. We're wondering what the U.S. Constitution has to say about that.

Maybe a judge and a jury will ultimately have to sort it all out.

In full disclosure: Q Life editor Don Hoffman is a member of the board of directors for the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center. Milwaukee Gay Arts Center is currently in the middle of filing a substantial law suit against the City of Milwaukee for its unlawful closure of a the musical production of "Naked Boys Singing!" last year.

Btw: Note to the City of Milwaukee: It's respectful when sending a letter to someone to spell their name correctly. Kuchta is spelled with an A, not Kuchte with an E.





Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I can't help but be discouraged by the docile manner in which the LGBT community is handling the current discrimination issues. If you read a gay magazine or newspaper, you see the editorials, full-length stories and in-depth studies shouting about how we are being discriminated against and that we must fight with everything we have. However, I never see anything on the news about prominent public officials publicly stating how newly proposed laws are the not-so-cleverly disguised tactics of the right wing to discriminate against gay, lesbian and bisexual people.

I don't see news stories about LGBT people gathering in public to rally support for equal rights. I don't see commercials advocating equal justice and equal rights for all Americans. I don't see personal stories of brave individuals coming out and then being punished or discriminated against because of their sexual orientation (such as the Kyle Lawson story, "The Advocate," 2/4/06). I never see human-interest stories about wealthy, courageous, powerful or inspirational gay, lesbian or bisexual people. In fact, I don't see any media coverage of this whole debate.

What I do see is the turning of a blind eye to all these issues by the majority of society, nonexistent media coverage, and inadequate pressure from the LGBT community on TV and newspapers to cover the story.

Another problem is the nonvisual stance Michael Tate seems to be taking in this fight. If not for your newspaper, I would not even know who

Michael Tate is or what he looks like. I would not know the magnitude of the battle that lies ahead, and I am willing to bet the majority of the public doesn't have a clue.

What we need is passion. We need to stand up for the rights of every person that will suffer because of these new laws that are continually being proposed. We need to get passionate about our desire to be treated equally, and we must decide that we are sick and tired of this treatment and we will take it no more. Being passive and nonviolent (which I strongly advocate) does not mean being docile and meek. It is time that we showed the strength and conviction of our passion by forging forward determinedly and firmly.

Benjamin Pedrin
Waupun, WI

Dear Editor:

Make no mistake. That \$1.5 billion to fund marriage propaganda is a ploy of the wealthy elite to promote privatization while economically empowering professional poverty pimps (ppp's) at the expense of the U.S. victims of poverty. Privatization is a deadly system that promotes and thrives on greed and prejudice. For those of us who expose government bureaucratic prejudice and inefficiency, privatization's greed, prejudice and astonishing inefficiency is a real eye-opener.

Within hours of the Feb. 1 congressional vote to cut \$50 billion from impoverished disabled people, elders, infants, orphans, students and single moms, a ppp released an e-mail claiming they would all be "floating on the ceiling" in celebration of the marriage funds at their planned conference in Atlanta! To "whet their appetite," she listed eight types of marriage propaganda that would generate funds for the ppp groups, including "institutes to certify marriage educators." They are also excited because now they can pursue state poverty funds for their marriage propaganda programs.

So the gay community can consider itself

fortunate to be ineligible for these Prince Charming funds. We will never have to face the temptation to sell out the orphans, widows and dying for some federal marriage funds like Bishop Sedgewick with his anti-poor empire in Milwaukee.

Don't underestimate the importance of that \$1.5 billion taken from poverty programs. Only 1 percent of the federal budget funds poverty programs, and our state spends 5 percent on poverty. Taking \$1.5 billion from a budget of \$16 billion (federal) makes a big difference. As it is, most of that \$16 billion goes to administration

and bogus "services," not to economic support that victims of poverty need.

Isn't it interesting that the wealthy elite who rule our lands and our governments feel a need to push propaganda for that patriarchal cornerstone, marriage? Perhaps we impoverished single moms, despite being single due to battery and abandonment, are a real threat to patriarchal control of women. Hmm.

Pat Gowens
Editor, "Mother Warriors Voice"



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LuLu

In recent months I have ventured from my ever so comfortable bubble — also known as the East Side and downtown. People were telling me to go to LuLu for months, but I never seemed to muster up the energy to drive the extra three miles to Bay View in order to take in what I eventually found to be a wonderful café and bar. With a wide variety of options for both eating and drinking, LuLu proved itself to be one of the best casual eateries in the Milwaukee area.

Lulu is located at 2265 S. Howell Ave., in a great Bay View neighborhood. The phone number is 414-294-LuLu. With a smoking section in the bar part of the restaurant and a nonsmoking section on the secluded other side of the café, LuLu will and does appeal to everyone from young professionals and the artsy crowd to families and older folks.

LuLu is quite the place. The overall aesthetic is artsy chic, with simple furniture and a long, good ol' wood bar that offers the best in brews, booze and bottles of wonderful wine.

Wednesday nights after 5, LuLu celebrates Wino Wednesdays featuring a new, unique wine at an introductory price, as well as price breaks on the existing wine menu, which is pretty impressive. And the cheese is always a nice touch while trying the new wines. The large variety of specialty martinis and drinks, combined with the large wine list, makes it easy to please anyone — even someone as picky as myself.

The menu consists of many well thought out concoctions. My favorite is the simple yet amazing Mediterranean Steak Pita, which has thin slices of flank steak marinated in



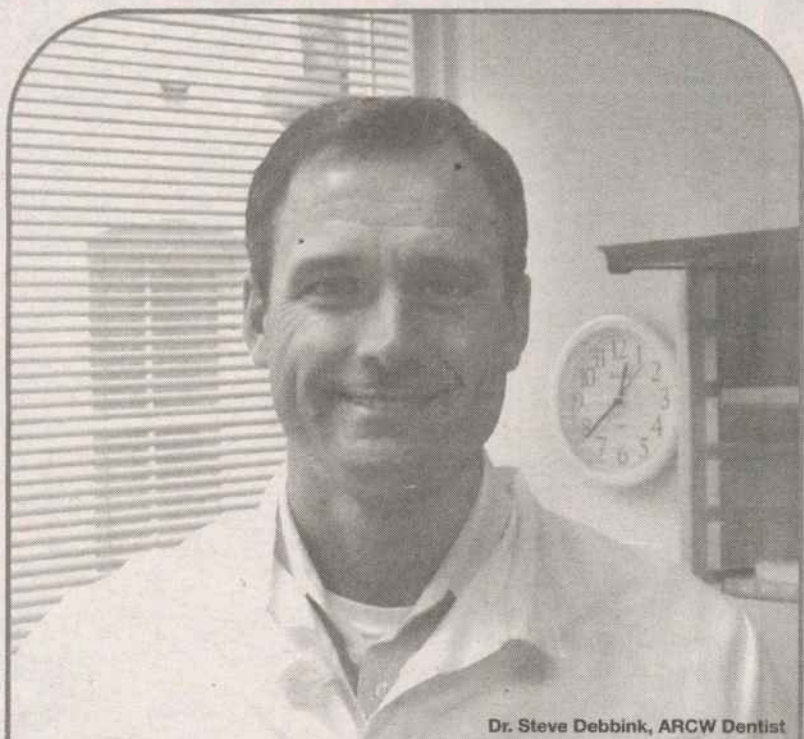
CLUBBING

Christopher Schmidt frequents many area clubs. He is always on the lookout for the newest hotspots.

Mediterranean seasonings, topped with feta cheese and a fresh tomato and Kalamata olive relish — all wrapped in a warm pita. Each of the eight wonderful sandwiches comes with either Asian slaw or potato chips with a twist: a blue cheese dip that is simple yet incredible.

There are salads for the health nut. All three, the Trinidad Chicken Salad, the Calbrese Salad and the Rustic Tuscan Salad, are great options, depending on what your taste buds require. Between the soup selection, which changes daily, and the wonderful weekly specials, there is something for everyone — from the hardcore carnivore to the wholesome vegetarian.

I am extremely glad I broadened my ever-so-small horizons and ventured to Bay View and found such a popular, fool-proof restaurant and bar. LuLu has been on my mind ever since I visited its Wino Wednesday, sampled its tremendous food and experienced its knowledgeable service and happy staff. I would recommend LuLu to any and everyone. Just go!



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by Richard Greenberg

Directed by Patrick Holland

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This production contains locker-room nudity and adult content.

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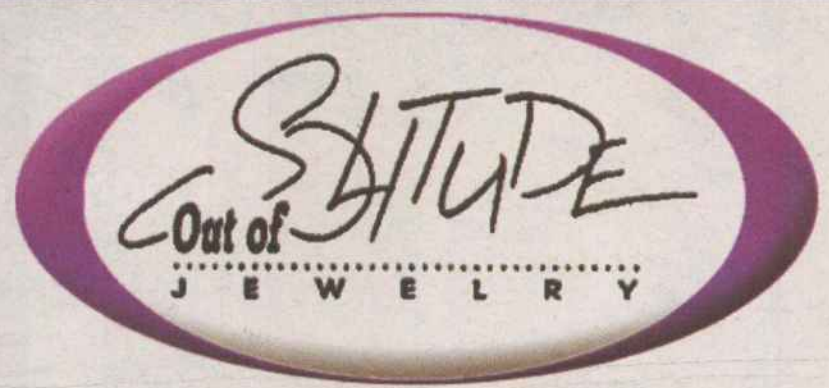
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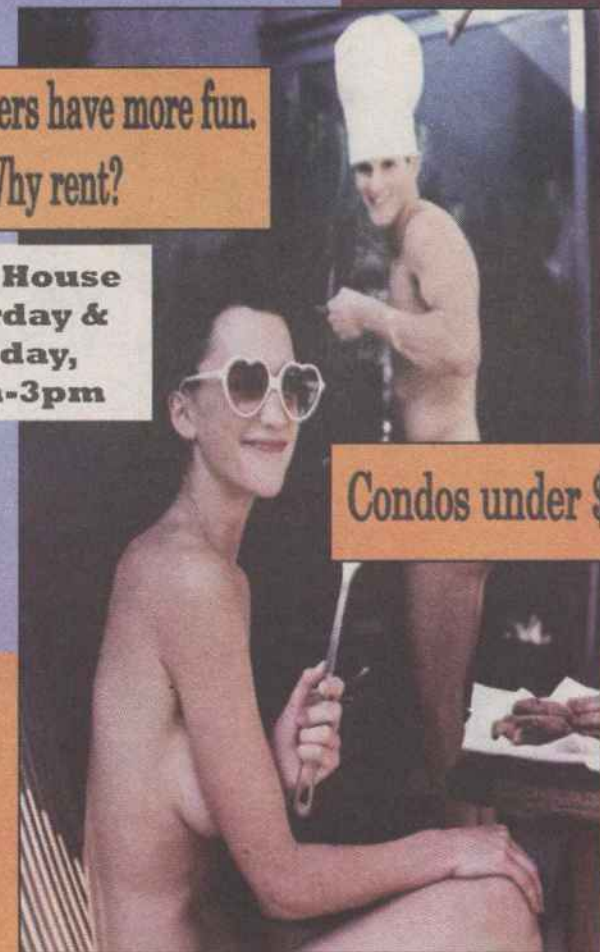
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Showing Some Flesh

It's been four months since most of us launched those New Year resolutions. If you're like the majority of Americans, yours probably included losing your waistline and defining your chest, stomach, arms or legs. Well, after all your hard work, it's time to bask in the rewards. The benefits of exercise include not only better health and mental clarity, but also clothes that fit and look better on you.

Want to show off those bulging biceps you've been painfully working on? Opt for shirts that are cut higher up the bicep to get maximum exposure of your new pipes. A great start is the Three Button Lacoste Shirt. This French label always has a stylish collection. And who doesn't love that darling alligator? The retro fit polo should stop at your beltline, and its sleeves are cut shorter than normal — allowing the hottie you've been checking out for months to drool over your he-man arms. The shirt comes in a variety of colors, but to make an impression, get it in black.

Find shirts that look and feel good on you. I suggest looking for V-neck shirts and

adding some variety to your necklaces and bracelets. I just picked up a handful of new Asian-inspired jewels at ArtAsia last week and I'll be sure to break out those out this season. Pair your new V-neck or Lacoste polo with a Buddha pendant or small cross and you'll be ready to hit the town.

Add some jewelry to finish off the look of jeans and a button-down shirt, too. Now I'm not talking the Johnny Depp look — a fistful of rings and a barrage of necklaces. Johnny Depp can get away with that because he's Johnny Depp; you are not Johnny Depp. But you can easily add a silver pendant chain or two. For extra flair add a ring, but avoid anything larger than a dime; unless you've got the cash to back it up you'll look like a struggling pimp.

Aldo has a great selection of necklaces that are part of their campaign to fight AIDS/HIV and make a great addition to any wardrobe. "Details" recently offered this simple rule: Matte pieces go with sneakers, shiny metals with dress shoes. Give up rubber bracelets, such as the yellow Livestrong bracelets, for something more

original.

Not sure of your look and want to make sure you don't make a fashion faux pas this season? Here are some tips on what to avoid:

The Jacket and Shorts: Although designers like Dolce & Gabbana, Louis Vuitton, Cloak and Dries Van Noten have loaded the runway with models in sport coats with shorts, you should never try this look at home — or in public.

The Cellphone: So maybe this isn't a fashion tip, but it's a tip nonetheless. Cell phones should not be treated as an accessory. Ever. Cell phones that are attached to your ear are so not hip anymore. And all those fancy hands-free earpieces with seizure-inducing flashing lights make you look like a Star Trek cast member. I have 11-year-old nieces and nephews with cell phones now. The novelty has worn off. Make your call and put it away. And please find someplace besides that cheesy phone clip on your belt to put it! Oh, and if you are talking with someone and your phone rings; it's rude to answer it, unless you absolutely have to.

The Double Polo: Avoid wearing two



FASHION

Kurt Dyer is a community activist, aspiring comedian and full of opinions. When he's not working with LGBTQ youth at Project Q or volunteering with the fashion police, he can be found at his home in Riverwest with his partner and two dogs, Comet and Pork Chop.

polo shirts. Even GQ recently discouraged it. First, it requires that you wear both collars up, Dracula style, which oozes more preppiness than a Brookfield high school. Second, it's a hard look to pull off without looking like an overstuffed sausage.

But above all, remember my golden rule: Wear what you are comfortable in. If you break out in hives when you wear a polo shirt, find an alternative. Everyone can tell when you hate what you're wearing, and at that point you just look ridiculous. So trust yourself and don't compromise your own instincts for fashion.



LESBIAN HEALTH

Lesley Salas is a Cuban-American lesbian with two children. She is currently pursuing her main interests: writing, dance, Scrabble and a variety of social justice issues.

Perks of Motherhood?

Let's assume for a minute that most lesbians have never been pregnant. (This is debatable, I know, but stick with me here.)

As with many women's health issues, the study of childlessness and its impact on health is in its — ahem — infancy. But let's look at what we do know.

Medically speaking, the female body benefits from pregnancy in early adulthood (less so for a first pregnancy after 35).

Breastfeeding gives even more protection.

Mothers have lower risk for cancers of the ovaries, the endometrium (the lining of the uterus) and the breast.

According to the National Institutes of Health, childless women over 30 are more prone to endometriosis, ovarian cysts and benign fibroid tumors. It seems the hormone rush of pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding counteracts these conditions.

Most futuristic of all is the current debate about fetal cells. Any woman who has ever been pregnant, including miscarriages and abortions, gets a certain measure of protection from cells the fetus releases into her bloodstream. Years, even decades later, these versatile "helpers" can morph into healthy cells in an ailing spine or liver.

More research is needed, but this could become a promising form of regenerative therapy for both men and women. On the other hand, autoimmune diseases sometimes attack middle-aged women who have been pregnant with a male baby, as if the fetal cells had "turned" on them. (Find out more about fetal-cell research in Robert Krulwich's Morning Edition story of Feb. 8 entitled "Babies' Cells Linger, May Protect Mothers" at www.npr.com.)

Childlessness may have psychological implications, as well. In the United States, about

80 percent of women are mothers. According to Dr. Mardy Ireland, author of "Reconceiving Women: Separating Motherhood from Female Identity," "There is an expectation that if you're female, sooner or later you will also be a mother. The fact of this expectation takes up a lot of psychic space." Some childless lesbians take a lot of flak from family; others mourn the fact that they will never bear children. Some explore alternative forms of parenting. And still others thank their lucky stars that they have no rugrats underfoot.

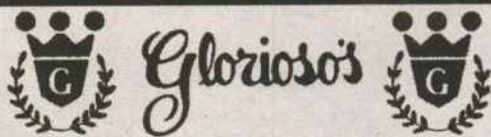
As far as depression is concerned, it's a wash. Postpartum depression is a relatively common (and sometimes serious) problem for new mothers. Child rearing can be challenging and stressful. On the other hand, the effects of discrimination and rejection make lesbians and bisexual women more susceptible to mood disorders. Pass the dark chocolate, please!

Since the advent of W-2, childless adults (including lesbians) in Wisconsin have very limited access to Medicare and other benefits. This is troubling, since many lesbian households take in less income than homes with a higher-paid male breadwinner. Those of us without adequate coverage must find other ways to take care of our health.

The news is not all bad for childless women. Lesbians who do not have sexual contact with men suffer from fewer sexually transmitted infections overall. Still, lesbians should address reproductive health concerns, including getting annual PAP smears to detect cervical cancer. Most of us have experienced the unmistakable presence of a yeast infection or vaginitis, but pelvic inflammatory diseases like chlamydia and gonorrhea can be symptomless. For more up-to-the-minute information on lesbian reproductive health, go to www.lesbianhealthinfo.org.

So, lesbians, for all of us who have ever been pregnant, let's hope our offspring left us some helpful fetal cells. For those raising other biological mothers' children, thank you for making this world a better place. Childless women, enjoy the peace and quiet.

Kathy Herbst will no longer be collaborating on this column. We thank her for her leadership on women's health issues in this community



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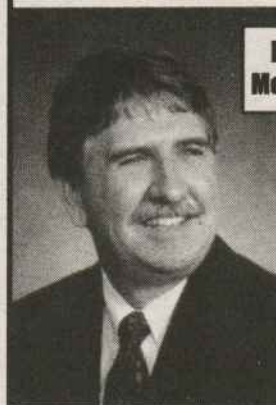
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Long Ago But Not So Far Away

Long ago when the city streets were cobbled and buildings were lit with gas, 1st Street was known as Clinton Street. In 1893, a house was built on the eastern edge of the property now known as 1110 S. 1st St. Seven years later, a larger two-story commercial building was erected in front of it. Today, that building houses the Clinton



Street Antique Center. Owners of both buildings are Doug Quigley and his partner, Curtis Beck, who live on the second floor above the shop.

I discovered this delightful place sometime in the early 1990s. The shop's windows always contain objects irresistible to a decorator's eye.

If you like antiques, memorabilia or a little kitsch, or if you are looking for something interesting for your home, you

should visit the Clinton Street Antique Center. The shop is filled with goodies at very reasonable prices. Quigley's taste runs to the architectural. As a paper boy pedaling in the older neighborhoods of the southwest side, he was fascinated by the details of the Victorian, East Lake and Craftsman style homes on his route. Like his grandfather and mother before him, he began a lifelong interest in collecting objects from the past. His finds become our treasures.

On a recent visit to the Clinton Street Antique Center I was particularly taken by numerous treasures. There was a Victorian bamboo easel that might be used, as originally intended, to display a framed work of art. Or it might hold a mirror in a bedroom. Or stand on a front porch with the occupants' name or street number. Or hold a chalkboard for messages. Or preside in the kitchen with a list of menu specials.

A maple buffet taken from a demolished house was also for sale. It would make a terrific room divider or could be built into a kitchen or dining room, as it was in its first life. The piece has drawers in the lower half, and it is topped by a center mirror, flanked by cabinets with lead-paned glass doors, and crowned with built-in lighting (not original, but still very attractive).

If you are looking for period lighting, there is always a nice selection: white porcelain wall sconces with frosted glass shades, hanging brass fixtures with white glass globes, chandeliers from many periods.

There is an entire area devoted to kitchenware from the 1930s, '40s and '50s, chrome legged chairs and tables, linens. A

couple of smoking stands were available; with their drawers and doors, they make great side tables, whether you smoke or not.

At the back of the shop was a long wicker plant stand designed to hold four or five pots. The day I saw it, it contained old gardening tools and a couple of vacationing geraniums. Behind the stand: the back door. Behind the back door: 1st Street's best kept secret.

Snow covered, cold and slippery, the bane of February couldn't disguise the bones of a walled garden. Talk about what the well-dressed garden is wearing in winter! Or how to decorate an old gravel driveway (which the area once was) — a lesson in perseverance, vision, hard work and faith.

Immediately outside the back door is a cobblestone patio made from stones that once paved 1st Street. At the eastern edge of the garden is the original house; it has been transformed with a porch and architectural details rescued from a house which previously stood at 4th and Walnut. To the south are a pergola and an outhouse imported from Wautoma. The two-holer is clad in weathered shingles and boasts a window with a window box.

Other garden highlights are a fountain, a small pond, two dovescotes,



DECORATING

Mary Stearns (mstearns@queerlifeneews.com) is the owner of Orientations, LTD., which she co-founded in 1977. Originally, the business imported Korean chests and other Asian antiques. Orientations now offers a full range of interior design services. Stearns is an allied member of the American Society of Interior Designers.

iron fencing, several bird houses and feeders, an Adirondack chair, statuary fragments, an ivy-covered arbor, trellises, a blue spruce and an ash tree.

Treat yourself to a visit. Stop and find something fun for the house. If you poke around, I guarantee you will discover a treasure. Or at the very least, the promise of spring out the back door.

The Clinton Street Antique Center, 1110 S. 1st St., Milwaukee, is open Wednesday through Saturday from noon to 5 p.m. or by appointment. The phone number is 414-647-1773.



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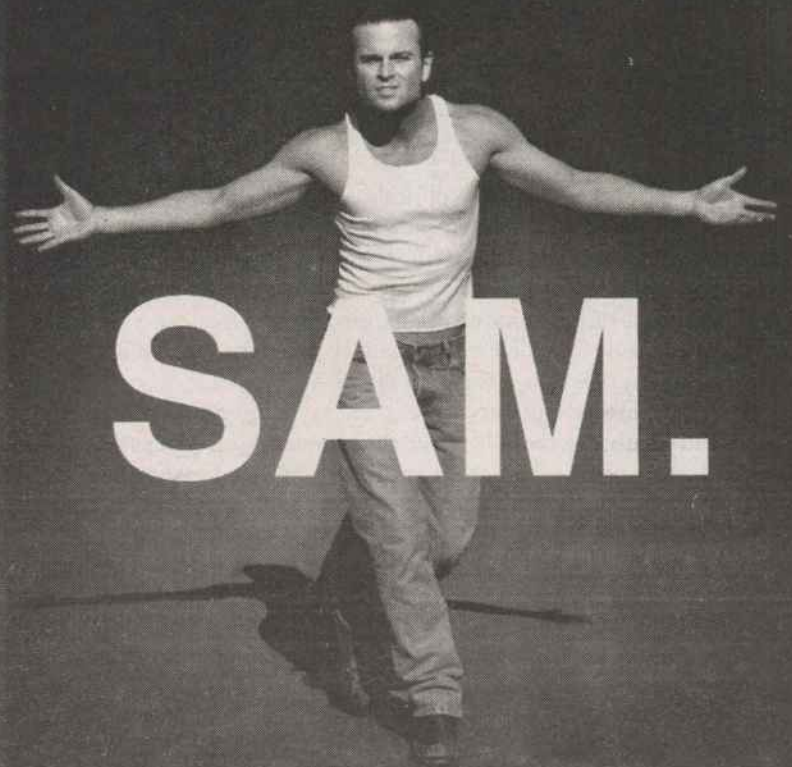
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The Fading Power of Bigotry

Every year there is a snowstorm during which I realize that winter has lost its power. This winter it came when I stepped outside to walk my dogs. It was cold. Fresh snow was falling. But I could hear birds. I knew that winter would end; spring was on the way. Even though it would snow again, I could tell that the power of winter was fading.

I'm getting the same sense with LGBT rights. It is true that we are in the midst of a significant fight against a marriage amendment that would write bigotry into our state constitution. The campaign against this amendment demands our greatest efforts.

Yet the signs are there that the power of bigotry is fading. The amendment is the creation of the religious right. But more pastors have publicly voiced opposition to the amendment than have supported it. Three of the four Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) Synods have come out against the amendment. Religious communities are opening their doors to host events against the amendment.

However, the real sign that the power of bigotry is fading comes not on the political front but within the religious sphere. More than 1,300 Christian congregations throughout the country welcome LGBT folks — not to mention the inclusive Jewish and other religious communities that do so.

LGBT-affirming congregations represent one of the fastest growing religious movements in America. A few decades ago such congregations were unheard of; today you can find a welcoming religious community in every city and in every state.

While the religious right is winning the political battles, having gained control of all three branches of the federal government, the religious left is winning the more important cultural battles. The cultural battles for LGBT rights are being fought on conservative grounds: gays in the military, lesbian weddings. We don't have to work to allow bisexuals to become ACLU lawyers. Our fight is for ordination of transsexuals to the ministry. In so many ways the work for our rights is on the cultural turf of conservatives.

And despite the home-field advantage, conservatives are losing the cultural fights. Ten years after President Clinton tried unsuccessfully to allow gays and lesbians to serve openly in the military, a majority of Americans now support LGBT service members. The cultural trends are similar



RELIGION

Rev. Andrew Warner (awarner@queerlifeneews.com) is a pastor at Plymouth Church UCC on the East Side. He lives with his partner Jay and their two children in Whitefish Bay. Your questions about LGBT spirituality are welcome.

on marriage. I know parents who harangue their LGBT children about marriage and grandchildren just as they would any heterosexual child.

We've seen this before. Eighty years ago, the religious right led a crusade against John Scopes, a Tennessee science teacher, for educating his students about evolution. The fundamentalists were successful in their case against Scopes. But they lost the culture; public reaction against the religious right at that time led to their ostracism.

As we enter into a significant political battle over the amendment to the Wisconsin constitution, it is important to remember that we are winning the even larger struggle for the culture. In the conflict with the religious right, LGBT folks are winning hearts and minds every day. The power of bigotry is fading. Alleluia.

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History Is Not Events, But People: Part 1

Many younger people take where we are today for granted: Although we still can't marry, gays and lesbians today are often out at work and with family and friends; many have employers that provide some benefits for same-sex couples; and we can generally gather and celebrate at openly gay events in the city. It's hard today to believe that until barely 20 years ago, no gay bar in the city dared have windows open to the street, for fear of hate crimes; today many of the most popular bars have picture windows to the street and welcome "straight" people to come in and dance or drink with us.

But it took a few people with exceptional courage and conviction, and the willingness to put in a lot of hard work, to get us here — and it will take more of the same to move us forward. In this issue I want to recognize some of those people who helped get us where we are today, people who made a real difference in developing and moving forward Milwaukee's LGBT community.

The following are just a few of the many people who gave of themselves, and nothing is meant by anyone's inclusion or exclusion except that they occurred to me as I was writing this article. I include only people who have passed on; many still alive have contributed just as much or more. And while this list features mostly men, a future article will focus on women's contributions. The

stories of these and many others who made a difference can be found on the history project Web site, www.mkelgbthist.org.

Bettie and Angelo Aiello. Who? Bettie and Angelo, a married couple, owned one of Milwaukee's original gay bars, the Mint Bar, in downtown Milwaukee (on the site of the present Bradley Center), for over 30 years — starting in 1949! The Mint was the first bar widely known to welcome gay people. All the other gay and lesbian bars followed in their footsteps.

Alyn Hess and Ralph Navaroo pushed the community in many directions in the early days of gay activism. Alyn made Milwaukee's Gay People's Union one of the strongest gay organizations in the nation, beginning with its founding right after Stonewall. GPU is no longer active, but one of their pioneering works, a gay health clinic, continues to operate today — 32 years later — as the BESTD Clinic. Ralph further contributed to the success of pivotal groups such as Cream City Business Association, Cream City Foundation, and Black & White Men Together. Ralph wasn't the most popular guy; he had a way of pushing hard and getting under your skin. But like Alyn, he made things happen.

Wayne Bernhagen (of Milwaukee) and **Rodney Scheel** (of Madison) balanced owning and running some of Wisconsin's most active gay bars (Wreck Room, Your

Place, Rod's, New Bar); organizing sports teams, leagues and national competitions (including baseball and the Wreck Room Classic, which continues today as the Milwaukee Classic); and community activism (Pride celebrations, street picnics, etc.).

Bob Moore and **John Cowles** are two people who were out at work before it was fashionable. They used their positions and skills to help various organizations take root and grow, including the social group GAMMA and various sports leagues and teams.

Christopher Fons and **Arnie Malmon** were two of the pioneers who confronted the "silent majority" with the reality of AIDS and made them take notice of the communitywide health threat. Chris took the in-your-face approach via demonstrations with ACT-UP. Arnie, on the other hand, became one of the most effective AIDS educators in the area, speaking passionately and intelligently to dozens of school and other groups.

Ron Geiman and **Dave Iraci** were



HISTORY

Don Schwamb has been active in the LGBT community since the early 1970s. He has served as president of CCF and GAMMA, vice president of ARCW, and in many other roles in other organizations. The LGBT history Web site, mkelgbthist.org, is Don's passion today, consuming much of his spare time.

among the people who put their life's savings and their careers at risk to produce local gay/lesbian publications to help bring the community together. Ron and Dave created one of the longest running LGBT publications, In Step, which went from "bar rag" to full-fledged, statewide newspaper over its nearly 20 years in operation.

Again, none of these people made things happen single-handedly; they all worked in cooperation with many others, some of whom are still with us, working to move us all forward.

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Adding Insult to Injury

An alarming number of us are afraid. I wish we were only afraid of the usual stuff like tax bills, getting stuck in traffic when we need to pee, or that nagging nastiness of yet another war. But LGBT people have greater personal fears than these. When asked if anyone has made us afraid for our personal safety in the past year, 30 percent replied yes in a 2005 survey of 650 Wisconsin LGBT people. And although nearly half of these respondents were frightened by a stranger, about one in four was frightened by a partner or ex-partner.

It seems like we have good reason to be afraid as well. In the same survey, 15 percent of respondents — or one in seven — stated they had been pushed, kicked, slapped, hit or otherwise physically hurt in the past year. Again, the chief culprits were mostly partners or ex-partners, but a significant number were hurt by acquaintances and strangers.

These data are very important for us to contemplate and address. When we compare these responses with the general population in Milwaukee County or the other counties that border Lake Michigan, we see that LGBT people as a group are four to five times more likely to express fear for safety and experiences of violence.

Sexual violence is also a major issue. One in three of our community reported that they had been forced to have sex at some time in their life.

While each of these issues likely has very different origins and widely varied presentations in the lives of the individuals involved, there are some remarkable similarities as well. While the women who responded to the survey were more likely to fear someone they knew and the men someone who was a stranger to them, their assessments of danger were often well founded. Younger and poorer respondents were also likely to experience greater fears and had more frequent experiences of violence in the past year.

This violence speaks volumes about



HEALTH

Gary Hollander, Ph. D. (ghollander@queerlifeneews.com) is president and executive director of Diverse and Resilient, a nonprofit committed to the healthy development of LGBT people in Wisconsin (www.diverseandresilient.org). He is also owner and principle consultant of Gary Hollander Enterprises, a firm that assists organizations with their development, emphasizing change management, team development, and cultural competency.

how LGBT people are devalued and targeted in Wisconsin today. The physical assaults reported in this survey are at epidemic proportions. But they are rarely considered hate crimes. Most will likely go unreported.

LGBT people must advocate for our safety in local communities, among decision makers and in the legislature. We must be vigilant as the hate-based anti-marriage amendment moves forward; it can catalyze the fringe who might otherwise manage their more aggressive hostility.

High on our list of priorities, however, must be an end to violence within the community toward one another. This re-enactment of the violence that is visited on us by others serves to confuse and limit our having big, beautiful lives. If you start taking action to hurt someone, get help right away. Contact the Counseling Center of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center or a therapist in your insurance plan. If a partner or ex-partner becomes threatening or strikes out, move away and get help — from the police if necessary.

We're already injured enough. We don't need the added insult.


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Time for a Lime

Most limes are a Tahitian strain that comes in two varieties: Persian and Bearss. The Bearss variety is a smaller, seedless California-grown lime. Both are greenish yellow when fully mature, but are sold at the green stage for better flavor. Key limes are smaller and rounder, with a higher acid content than Tahitian limes. Grown only in southern Florida, they are best known as an ingredient in Key Lime Pie.

Limes are perishable and should be refrigerated immediately. Limes stored in a plastic bag in the refrigerator will keep for up to six weeks. If you have extra limes on hand and want to save them before they spoil, squeeze the juice into an ice-cube tray, then transfer the frozen cubes to a plastic bag. To get the most juice from a lime, the fruit should be at room temperature or warmer. Then roll the fruit under your palm on the

countertop until it feels softened. Limes are available throughout the year.

Corn, Avocado, and Tomato Salad (recipe by Paula Deen)

- 2 cups frozen corn, thawed
- 1 avocado, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 1 pint cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup finely diced red onion
- Dressing:
 - 2 tbsp. olive oil
 - 1/2 tsp. grated lime zest
 - 1 tbsp. fresh lime juice
 - 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
 - 1/4 tsp. salt
 - 1/4 tsp. pepper

Combine the corn, avocado, tomatoes and onion in a large bowl. Mix together the dressing ingredients in another bowl, pour over the salad and gently toss to mix.

Key Lime Pie

- 1 9-inch prepared graham crust
- 3 egg yolks
- 1 14-oz. can sweetened condensed milk
- 1/4 tsp. grated lime zest
- 1/3 cup water
- 1/2 cup key lime juice
- 4 egg whites
- 1/2 tsp. cream of tartar
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla
- 1/2 cup sugar

Preheat oven to 325 degrees. In a large mixing bowl, beat the egg yolks with a fork. Slowly beat in the condensed milk. Stir in the zest, water and lime juice until well combined. Pour the mixture into the prepared graham crust. Place in oven and bake for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, prepare the meringue following the directions below. Remove the pie from the oven. Increase the oven temperature to 350 degrees. Spread the meringue over the hot pie making sure to seal the edge. Bake for 15 minutes. Cool on a wire rack for one hour. Chill in refrigerator for at least three hours prior to serving.



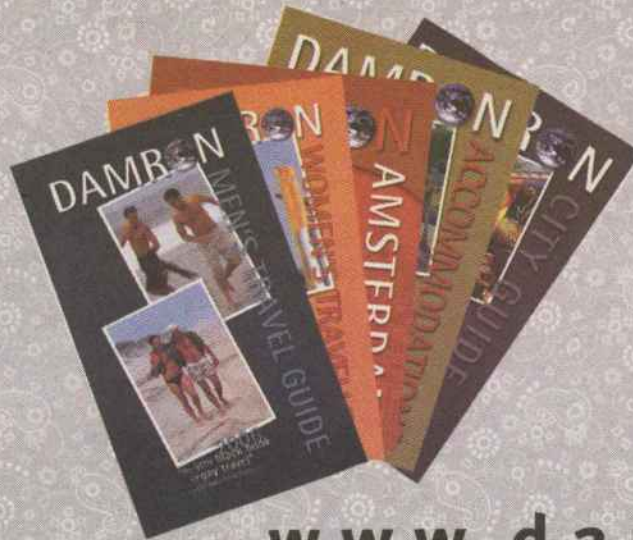
COOKING

Steve Ahl (sahl@queerlifeneews.com) resides in the Third Ward. He is employed as a chemist for a company located in the Milwaukee area.

To prepare the meringue: In a large mixing bowl combine the egg whites, cream of tartar and vanilla. Beat with an electric mixer until soft peaks form (approximately one minute). Gradually add the sugar, beating at medium speed until the mixture forms stiff, glossy peaks (about four minutes). Immediately spread meringue over the hot pie.

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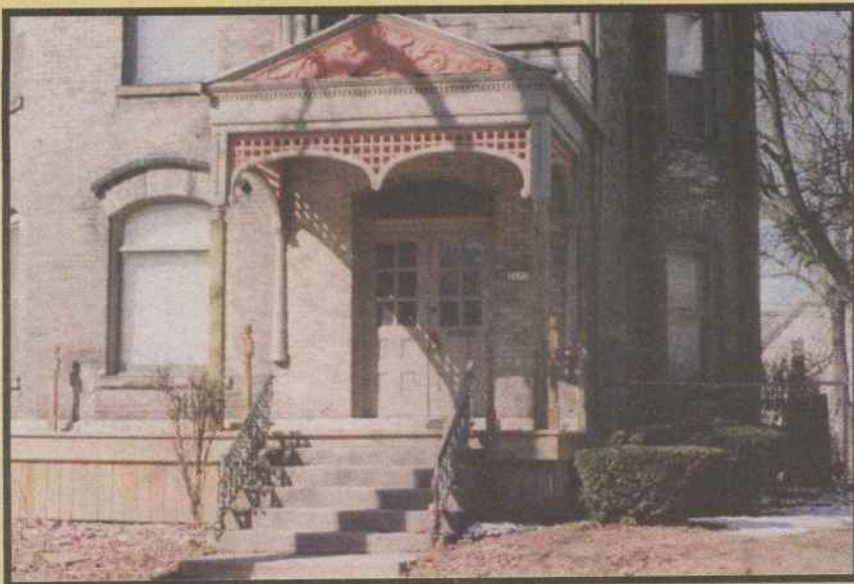
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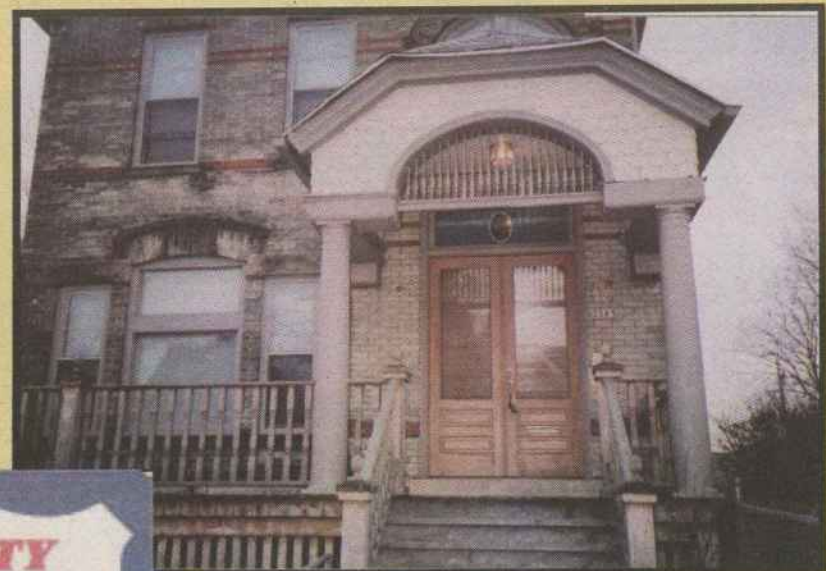
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To find out more, visit Fair Wisconsin's Web site, www.fairwisconsin.com, or call 608-441-0143.

Volunteer at OutReach

OutReach is looking for a few good facilitators. We need co-facilitators for several of our regular groups, including Rainbow Connections, for LGBTQ people who have experienced mental illness; Friends To Be With, a social group for LGBTQ people with developmental disabilities and their friends; and Sexuality Bi Design, for bisexual and questioning persons. These groups are central to OutReach's mission, so we need dedicated people to help keep them running.

If you are interested, contact Harry at 608-255-8582 or e-mail him at programs@outreachinc.com.

outreachinc.com.

Crossing the Bridge to Other Religions

A global community requires dialogue among world religions. Join us as we explore the bridges between Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam and Christianity. William Skudlarek, OSB, leads this year's annual Benedictine retreat. He is executive director of Monastic Interreligious Dialogue.

The event will take place May 5 through 7. Prices are: commuter, \$115; Monastery single, \$201; Monastery double, \$330 for two; Benedict House single, \$191; Benedict



MADISON

Bill Turner is president of the OutReach board of directors in Madison.

House double, \$320 for two.

For more information, visit www.sbcenter.org/crossing_the_bridge.htm.


Women's Coming Out Group Forming in Madison

Awomen's coming out support group is forming in Madison and will begin meeting in late April at OutReach Inc., 600 Williamson St.

The purpose of the group is to support women who are dealing with the realization that they are not heterosexual and how that affects their everyday lives. The group will identify and discuss the stages of coming out and explore topics such as how to deal

with family members, physical and sexual safety, legal rights and discrimination, and spirituality, among others.

Two trained volunteers will facilitate each meeting. The group is scheduled to meet Thursday evenings at 7:30 p.m. for nine consecutive weeks. Women who are interested in attending should call 608-255-8582 or e-mail programs@outreachinc.com by April 10.



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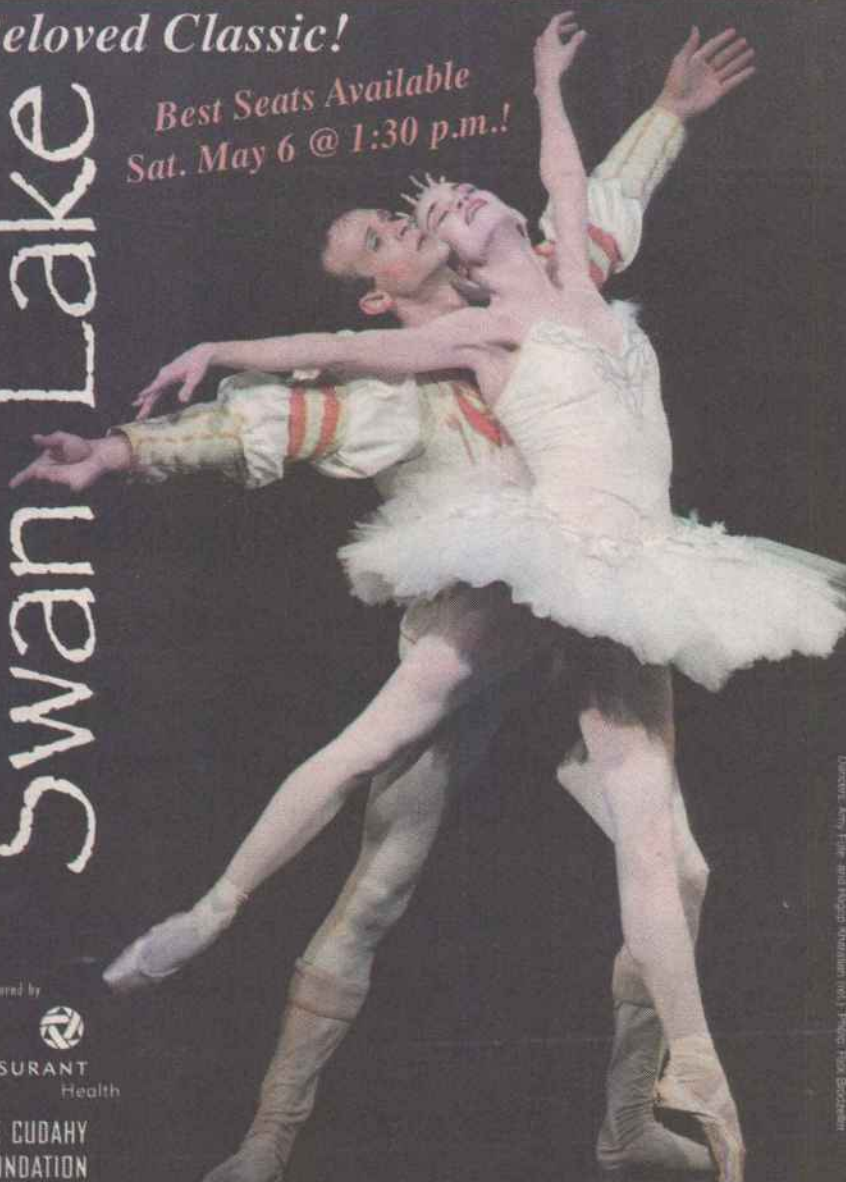
Unitarian Universalists The Uncommon Denomination UUA.org

<p>Unitarian Universalist Church West 13001 West North Avenue Brookfield (262) 782-3535 www.uuwc.org</p>	<p>Unitarian Church North 13800 N. Port Washington Mequon (262) 375-3890 www.uunorth.org</p>	<p>First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee 1342 North Astor St. Milwaukee (414) 273-5257 www.umilwaukee.org</p>
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Stringing Along

Coming Out over Brigitte's Scarves and Other Apparel

I waited in line at Kohl's Department store feeling so stylish in my new scarf. Handmade by Brigitte, a fellow PFLAG member, it had love knit into every stitch. Brigitte's scarves not only add panache to an outfit, they also raise funds to fight the homophobic constitutional amendment proposed in Wisconsin.

The clerk smiled and greeted me. "Hello! What a beautiful scarf," she said. "Did you make it?"

"No, a friend of mine knits them to raise funds for a community group," I replied. My stomach churned and my tongue tingled. This was the moment. I should "come out" to the clerk as the strong LGBT ally that I am. Ooooh, could I do it? Wait, she had another question.

"Where does your friend work?" she asked.

"A gourmet food store, I think. Oh, and she's a model for print and commercials," I added.

"Which cause does she make the scarves for?" Wow, it must be time for my story. I had never been asked this many questions about the scarf. Maybe the clerk knew from my pregnant pauses and prolonged eye contact that I had more to say. Did she want to buy a scarf? How would I manage the logistics of that? My thoughts rushed and my tongue tingled more. Words were on the tip of my tongue and my shoulders tightened as if I were getting a nudge. "Come out, come out,"

said the voice inside me.

"She knits these scarves for PFLAG, Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays," I blurted. Oh, what if the clerk thinks I'm a lesbian or a drag queen ... or Brigitte's partner! Well, what's wrong with that? I'm their advocate and friend. "Say it!" screamed the voice within.

"Brigitte and I both have gay sons," I explained. There, I said it. A double outing of two allies! A "safety in numbers" outing.

I continued: "Our group is raising money for a billboard to get people to vote no to changing the constitution." The clerk was nodding along with me by now. I gave a warm smile and strong eye contact. "We stand for fairness, justice, equality. We love diversity. We hope our sons can have long-term committed relationships some day. We want grandchildren. Oh, my son's only a teenager. I'm so proud of him."

There, I said it. Start me up and the words flow. I'm a walking talking MP3 player with endless advocacy messages. Why is it so difficult to get that player going sometimes? It plays a beautiful song.

The beautiful song of the parent advocate is not music to everyone's ears. Neither is the coming out story, a process for allies that parallels, in many ways, the coming out process of an LGBT person. At first, we tell ourselves, search our hearts and souls, practice in front of the mirror, write down our words. Then we tell those closest

to us or those we feel will best accept and embrace our news. We might tell those who probably know already.

As parents and allies, we must remember that coming out helps everybody. We need to celebrate the "out" so that the world becomes a better place for our children. LGBT youth who experience LGBT couples in everyday life report greater self-acceptance, higher self esteem, less promiscuity and fewer incidences of self abuse — overall, a greater chance at life. It makes sense to allow the song within to come out. It's just hard to get the words to flow sometimes. It gets easier as we tell friends, parents, brothers and sisters, known gay



PARENTING

Cyndie Ody-Weis is mom to two daughters and a son, all of whom date men. Cyndie is an active PFLAG member, college teacher and freelance writer, whose works have been published in *Roots and Wings*, *Adoptive Families*, *Adoptalk*, *Faithwriters* and *Advocate.com*.

allies, other relatives, community contacts, the Kohl's clerk.

At the first pause in my beautiful song, the clerk smiled and nodded and said, "Ooooh," as she looked at my bare left hand.

I wonder if she was hoping the size small men's string bikinis were for my husband.

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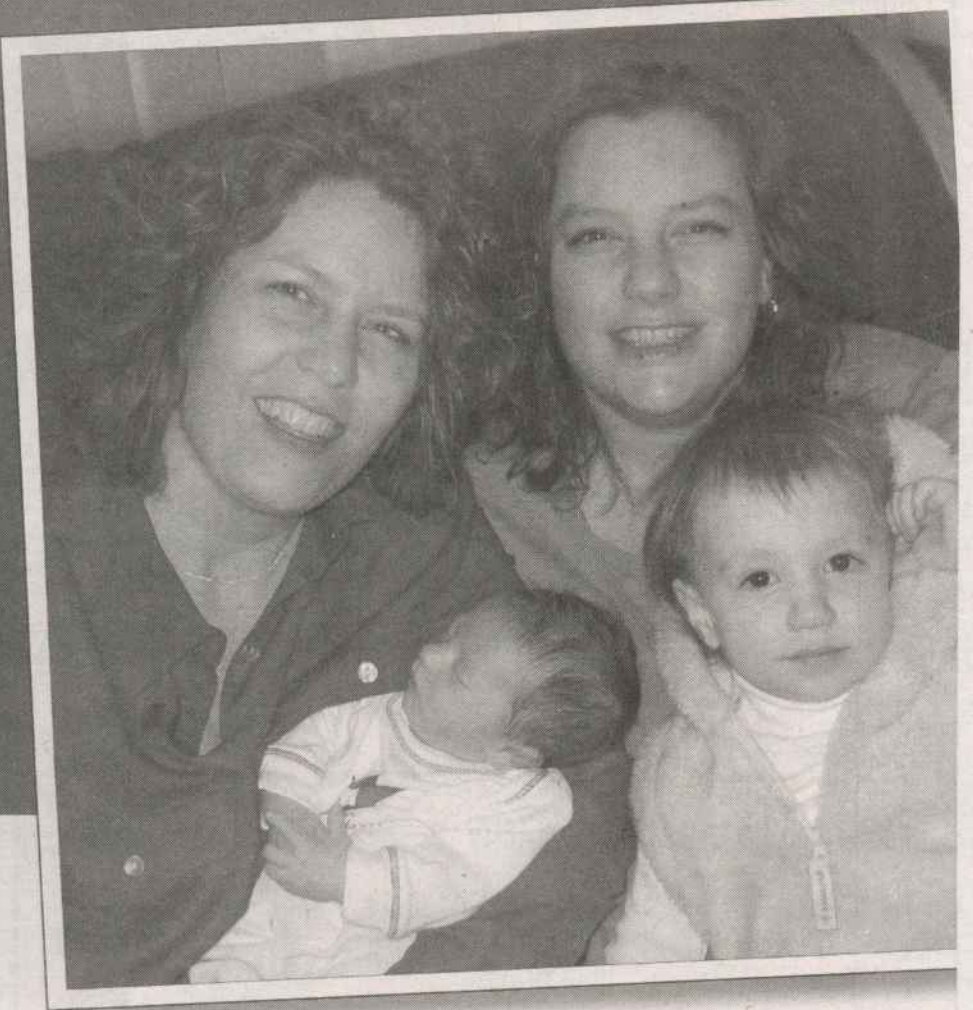
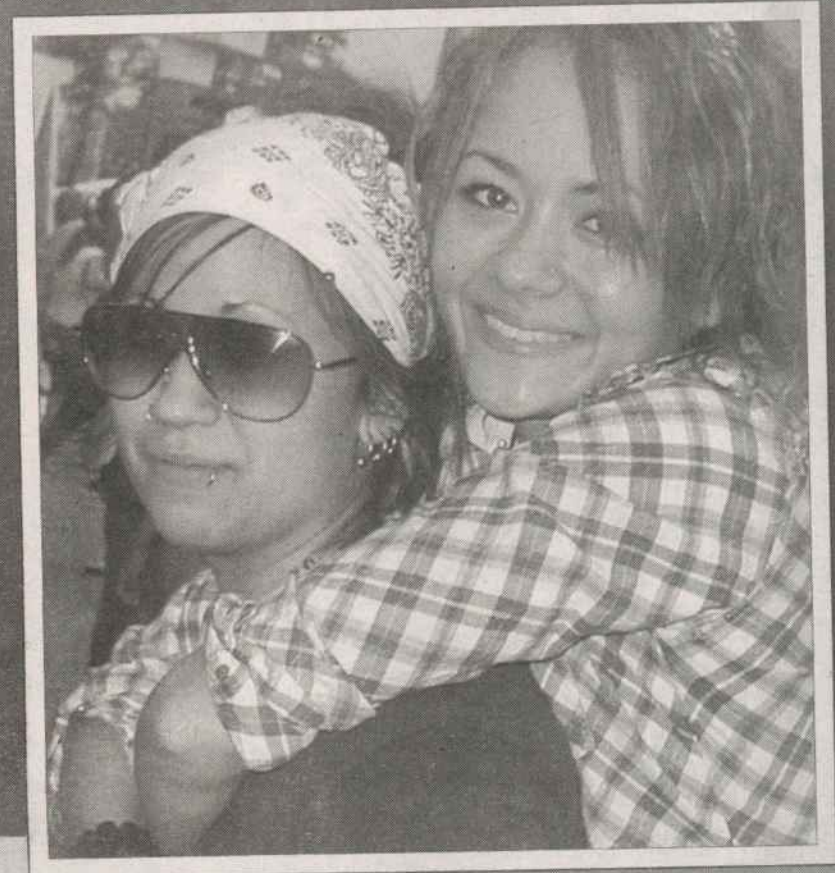
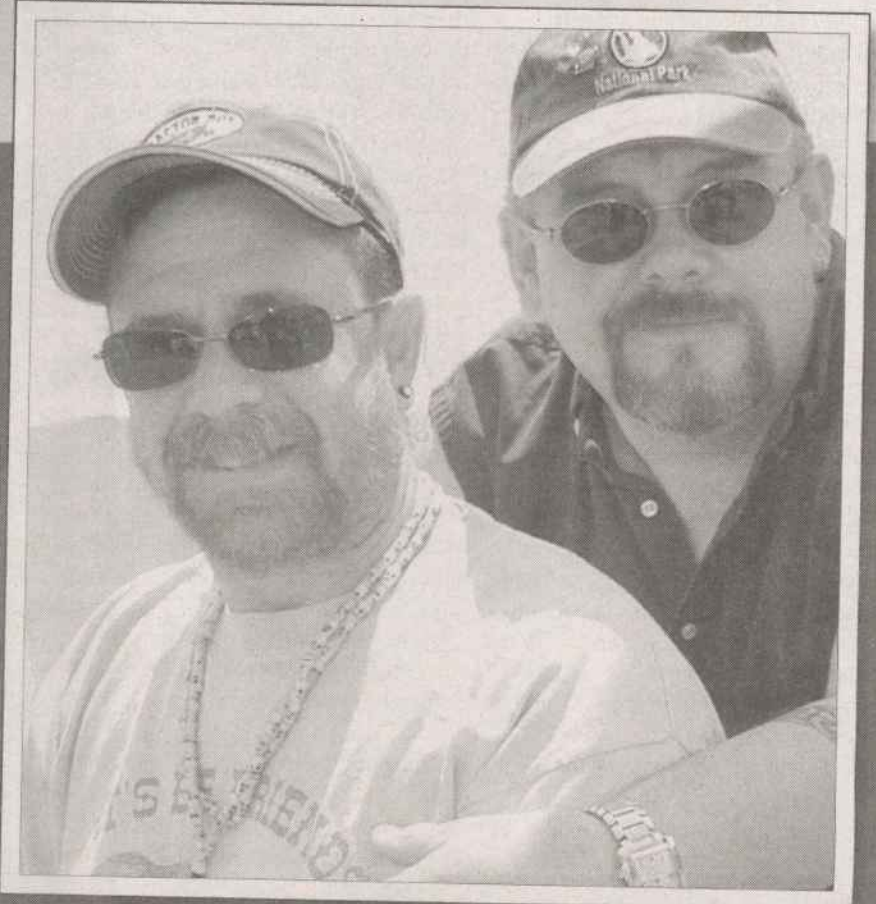
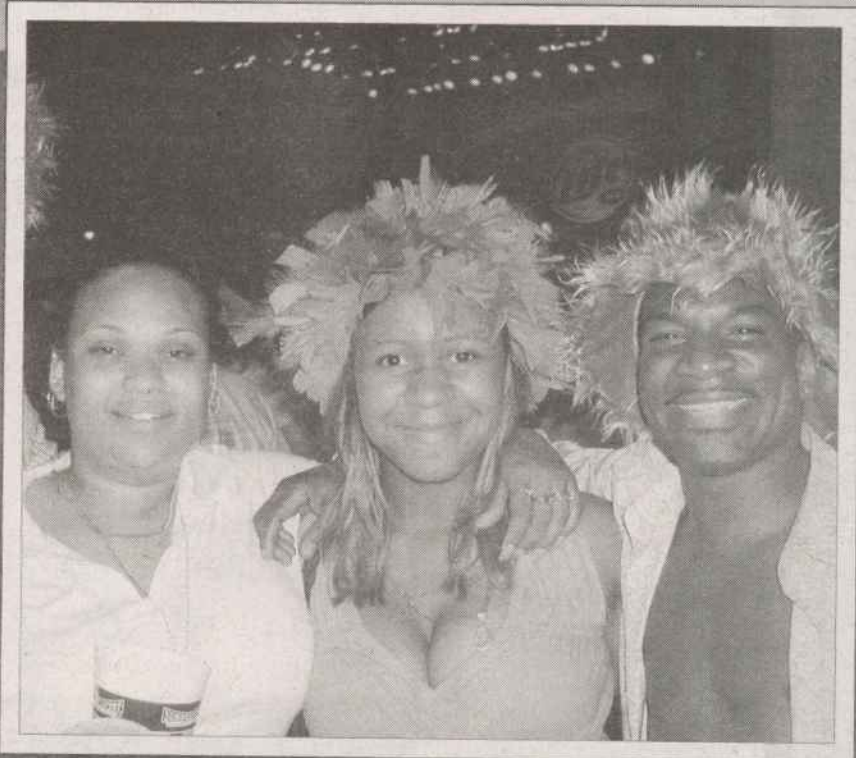
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Midwest Pride Meets on Milwaukee faces of pride...



June 9, 10 & 11th 2006

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"Pride means being proud of who we are, and PrideFest is a place for people to be proud of what's most important to them. We take our family to PrideFest because we want to teach our kids to be proud of themselves and to be proud of our family.

"Since the arrival of Nolan, Sienna has picked up on the fact that we are a family. She actually says it, 'We're a family!' and it makes us cry. We are so lucky.

"When we were young, PrideFest was a safe place to go and be ourselves. Now we like to bring the children down to enjoy the family area. We wish more parents would bring their kids and see how fun it is. There's a wonderful play area and activities just for the kids. It's important for us to be seen in public as a family.

"We still like to have time to spend with our friends later in the day, so we find a sitter for the kids. The shows at night are our chance to see great entertainment and reconnect with people we have lost touch with. We always see them at PrideFest.

"If people don't come out this year of all years, the Constitutional Amendment (banning gay marriage) will turn back the clock. We need people to be proud, be brave, or we will lose our rights."

June 9, 10 & 11th 2006

Friday, June 9th 6pm - midnight

New this year! Friday night's back in style! Start your weekend with a rousing *Community Rally* and a *major headline performance* that everyone will be talking about!

Saturday, June 10th 11am - midnight

We're just getting started! All of your favorite PrideFest activities including the *marketplace, dance pavilion, LGBT history exhibit, youth activities*, and a new, *bigger Rainbow Pavilion!* Saturday's headline show and the traditional *fireworks* extravaganza will rock your world!

Sunday, June 11th 11am - 10pm

Starts on a contemplative note and ends with a *musical show-stopper!* Don't miss the *interfaith service, the family area, the drag review, the annual leather show* and much more. Sunday's headline show will leave you wanting more!

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Supporting the Cream City Foundation means you are committed to that vision. It means you are willing to invest today for the foundation of strong and viable organizations and groups. Your donation has a stronger impact because it is used to create a larger pool of funds that go directly to the community. In addition, part of our annual income goes to establish a permanent endowment for future LGBT needs. Funds contributed to the Cream City Foundation support health care, human services, and cultural events that benefit LGBT people. Anyone,

LGBT or our allies can contribute to the Cream City Foundation.

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On the March

Within days of the bombardment of Fort Sumter that kicked off the American Civil War, governors of the free states rushed to out-do each other in pledging their militias to the national cause. Financiers helped raise funds for the Union, and ordinary folks rushed to enlist.

After Pearl Harbor, 20th-century Americans deferred consumer comforts like automobiles and stockings in order to make the enormous sacrifice needed to confront the Nazis and Imperial Japan.

Like many of you, I have often wondered if our generation would be capable of making similar contributions to history if presented with such stark choices. After all, our national government is defined these days by rewarding the wealthy and connected with tax cuts and cronyism, and asking the ultimate sacrifice of soldiers, generally from modest backgrounds, while running up the national debt and handing out no-bid contracts.

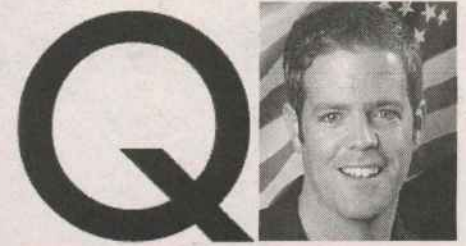
I wouldn't dare compare the heroic struggles to abolish slavery or Nazism to our battle in Wisconsin against the proposed ban on civil unions and marriage. But the scope of what needs to be done — thousands of people who must volunteer, millions of dollars that must be raised — compared to the relatively small number of people involved in equal rights for LGBT people prior to the amendment battle, presents us with our own mobilization challenge.

I am pleased to say that fair-minded Wisconsinites seem to be meeting our more modest trial with a response that is more and more vigorous each day. The state's largest LGBT organizations, Action Wisconsin and the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, have formed a unified campaign, Fair Wisconsin, and hired a terrific campaign manager, Mike Tate, to run a professional, aggressive operation. And they have done so earlier than any other state faced with a similar ban (a feat lauded with an award by the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin on March 19).

Wonderful straight and gay folks, never politically active before, have rushed forward to help, including Ray Vahey and Richard Taylor, celebrating their 50th year together by telling any group that will listen of how their love prevailed through the hostile '50s and '60s only to face this insult in its golden years.

Wonderful groups and organizations, large and small, gay and nongay, have pitched in to help defeat the ban, from the political Human Rights League Political Action Committee (HLRPAC), which made an early contribution, to the apolitical Front Runners, an LGBT athletic group that turned over money it had been saving for parties.

If there's any partying to be done in these dire times, it's at fundraising house parties for Fair Wisconsin. Dozens of individuals and groups across the state have



POLITICS

Patrick Flaherty (pflaherty@queerlifeneews.com) is a long-time activist for LGBT equality. He works at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center and lives with his partner in Milwaukee's Riverwest neighborhood.

stepped forward to host a house party to raise awareness and much needed funds.

I recently attended a party organized by Plymouth Church congregants in Brown Deer that was bursting with middle-aged straight couples determined to stop this wrong. The church even made an organizational contribution and encouraged other congregations to follow suit. Quaker, Unitarian and other congregations have fundraisers planned.

And at the wedding last month of Daniel Klingler and Jay Langhurst at Lake Park Lutheran Church, the grooms took time to announce a special collection for Fair Wisconsin. A huge fundraiser in Madison in late March brought in tens of thousands of dollars.

Social service organizations, dedicated to easing suffering, are working to help make sure the ban doesn't cause more suffering by taking away health care for domestic partners or eroding the rights of victims of domestic violence. Phone banks are running at ARCW, and Jewish Family Services and Sage organized an awareness event. The Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence and the Wisconsin Coalition of Aging Groups have come out against the ban because of its dire effects on unmarried couples, straight and gay.

The arts community, concerned that talented young artists will spurn a post-ban Wisconsin, has been organizing theater benefits from Madison to Milwaukee, including ones at Mark Bucher's Boulevard Theatre and the Gay Arts Center, and a special April 28 benefit at the Milwaukee Chamber Theatre of "Take Me Out," a Tony-winning play about a Major League Baseball player who comes out as gay. The "Take Me Out" benefit is sponsored by some of the biggest names in Milwaukee's arts community.

The stirrings of generosity and volunteerism are encouraging, but they are only beginning to meet the challenge posed by a well-organized opposition. So much more must be done. You can do your part by enlisting as a volunteer or making a contribution (better than war bonds!) at www.fairwisconsin.com.



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Outwords Books

'Top 5 Picks for April'

Spring 2006 Bestsellers!

Exclusive to Q Life.

FOR THE GUYS:

- 1. "Brokeback Mountain" by Annie Proulx.** This handsomely packaged paperback edition of the award-winning story was published to coincide with the release of the fabulously successful film starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Heath Ledger.
- 2. "You Can Say You Knew Me When" by K. M. Soehlein.** When Jamie Garner's father dies, he gets the call to come home to suburban New Jersey to face the family he left behind. What he learns on this visit will change his life forever.
- 3. "Mordred, Bastard Son" by Douglas Clegg.** Clegg reinvents the Arthurian legends with a decidedly gay twist: Mordred, the traditional villain of Arthurian legend, emerges as both a gay man and a heroic figure.
- 4. "Rainbow Road" by Alex Sanchez.** Jason, Kyle and Nelson set out on a cross-country road trip, where they encounter variations on the gay experience, including gay bashers, a boy who lives as a girl, and summer romance.
- 5. "Son of a Witch" by Gregory Maguire.** Ten years after the publication of "Wicked," Maguire returns to the land of Oz with a story of Liir, the adolescent boy left hiding in the shadows of the castle when Dorothy killed the witch.

FOR THE GALS:

- 1. "Honor Reclaimed" by Raddyffe.** Following 9/11, Secret Service agent Cameron Roberts and her lover, first daughter Blair Powell, must contend with recriminations from within the government and dangers from without as they struggle to uncover those who betrayed the nation.
- 2. "Grave Silence" by Rose Beecham.** When the body of Darlene Huntsberger shows up with a stake through her heart and missing her tongue, Montezuma County sheriff's detective Jude Devine finds herself leading an investigation no one wants to touch.
- 3. "Just Like That" by Karin Kallmaker.** Returning home to try to save the family vineyard from bankruptcy, Syrah Ardani believes she must safeguard her heart from beautiful Toni Blanchard, or must she?
- 4. "The Quokka Question: A Kylie Kendall Mystery" by Gerri Hill.** When Kylie Kendall's client is murdered, his irresistibly attractive sister hires her to investigate his death. Can Kylie keep from mixing business with oh-so-much pleasure? And will she be able to solve the murder?
- 5. "Facing Evil" by C. L. Hart.** In her debut novel, C. L. Hart has woven together a suspenseful mystery and a tender love story set amidst the struggle to bring a sadistic serial killer to justice.

Community**Calendar****WEDNESDAY, APRIL 5**

Body Mine. Monthly discussion group. Participants will discuss a variety of issues relating to the body, including health, body image, abortion and more. Led by Evelyn, nurse-in-training. Broad Vocabulary, 2241 S. Kinnickinnic Ave., Milwaukee. 6 p.m. 414-744-8384. www.broadvocabulary.com.

THURSDAY, APRIL 6

Legal Night. Free legal consultation with LGBT-friendly attorneys. First come, first served. Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. 6-8 p.m. 414-271-2656 ext. 111. www.mkelgbt.org.

Who Is Running Your Government? Getting elected is expensive and special interests are eager to pay up. Is this fair game? Is the public interest left out? Panel will include Mayor Tom Barrett. Moderator: Enrique Figueroa, PhD, director, Roberto Hernandez Center, UWM. Bring your lunch or purchase it from Turners Restaurant. Historic Turner Hall, 1034 N. 4th St., Milwaukee. Noon. Free. 414-272-2833. www.4thstreetforum.org.

SATURDAY, APRIL 8

Gemini Gender Group. Support and social group for cross-dressers and transsexuals. 6-9:30 p.m. Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. gemini_gender_group@hotmail.com.

Pet Wellness Fair. Exhibitors include animal rescue organizations, dog trainers, boarding or pet sitting services, pet stores, and vet clinics. Goody bags for the first 100 to enter. Silent auction to benefit the spay/neuter program at the Lakeland Animal Shelter in Elkhorn. Please leave your pets at home. Burlington High School, 400 McCanna Pkwy., Burlington. 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Free. 262-767-9392. www.creaturecomfortshousecalls.com.

Quaker Spring International Gift Shop. Colorful and eclectic handmade crafts from Africa, Asia, India — and Wisconsin. All proceeds support self-help projects and peace-making efforts locally and around the world through the American Friends Service Committee. Proceeds this year will go to Task Force on Family Violence, Casa Maria, Center Advocates, Quaker Earthcare Witness, Camp Woodbrooke and Friends Peace Teams. Quaker Meetinghouse, 3224 N. Gordon Pl., Milwaukee. 9 a.m.-4 p.m. Cash and checks only; no credit cards.

Schwartz Supports the Fine Arts — for Kids. Music class for children ages preschool through 6. Led by instructors from the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music and centered on the book "Ah, Music!" by Alike. At all five Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops: Bay View, Downer, Brookfield, Mequon and Shorewood. www.schwartzbooks.com.

MONDAY, APRIL 10

Bay View Arts Guild. Election of officers

followed by open networking meeting for the public. Bay View Library, 2566 S. Kinnickinnic Ave., Milwaukee. 6:30 p.m. 414-482-1543. www.bayviewarts.org.

Outwords Book Club. Come and join the discussion of Bart Yates' "The Brothers Bishop." New members welcome! Outwords Books, 2710 N. Murray Ave., Milwaukee. 7:30 p.m. 414-963-9089. outwordsbooks@msn.com.

TUESDAY, APRIL 11

Lesbian Reading Group. Lee Lynch's new novel, "Sweet Creek," will be discussed. Everyone is welcome. Outwords Books, 2710 N. Murray Ave., Milwaukee. 7 p.m. 414-963-9089. outwordsbooks@msn.com.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12

Greening Your Interior. Lecture by Dr. Patti Nagai on choosing the right plants for the right spots and how to keep them happy and healthy. Villa Terrace Decorative Arts Museum, 2200 N. Terrace Ave., Milwaukee. 7 p.m. \$9/ \$11 non-members. 414-271-3656 ext. 11.

THURSDAY, APRIL 13

Money, Politics and Campaign Integrity. It's all about the money in political campaigns. Can the system be reformed? Can new rules help to make this serious game work for the common good? Moderator: Denise Callaway, director of communications, Greater Milwaukee Foundation. Bring your lunch or purchase it from Turners Restaurant. Historic Turner Hall, 1034 N. 4th St., Milwaukee. Noon. Free. 414-272-2833. www.4thstreetforum.org.

SATURDAY, APRIL 15

BWMT (Black and White Men Together). Open to all members, guests and visitors. Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. 7-9 p.m. 414-540-9437 ext. 3. bwmtmilwaukee.org.

Rainbow Families Milwaukee. Support and social group for LGBT parents and kids. 3-6 p.m. 414-447-0251. mkerainbowfamilies@hotmail.com.

SUNDAY, APRIL 16

Open Space. Lesbian drop-in discussion group for real talk and new friends. Counseling Center of Milwaukee, 2038 N. Bartlett Ave. 6-8 p.m. Please be prompt. Door locked at 6:15. Contact Cheryl at groups@execpc.com or 414-271-2565.

THURSDAY, APRIL 20

Deaf, Deaf, Diverse World '06. A clearly evolving, highly dynamic event within the Interpreter Training Program. The graduating class of 2007 hosts the festivities! Boosting community

awareness, celebrating the diversity in our own back yard, and bringing the deaf/hard of hearing and hearing cultures together. UWM Student Union, 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee. 6 p.m. \$10. www.dddw06.org.

Grant Writing Workshop. Jean Gurney will lead us through the grant writing and fundraising processes. Learn how to research grant opportunities, the do's and don'ts of grant writing, and how to present your project and yourself to potential funders. Hotcakes Gallery, 3379 N. Pierce St., Milwaukee. 6-8 p.m. \$15/\$10 MARN members. Contact melissa@marnonline.com to reserve a spot and pay at the door.

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

MILMAIDS Bowling Tournament. Benefit for Madison's AIDS Network. Price includes bowling, buffet, prizes and donation. Bowl-A-Vard on Madison's east side. \$25 in advance, \$30 after April 3. For a registration form, contact the AIDS Network at 608-252-6540 or Bret Dougherty at 608-223-0488 or bddougherty@sbcglobal.net.

WI Rainbow Alliance for the Deaf. Meeting and socializing for deaf and hearing-impaired LGBT people. Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. 6-10 p.m. www.wiscrad.org or sgaray@uwm.edu.

THURSDAY, APRIL 27

Ladies Night! Women-only consciousness raising groups are still alive! Topics will change month to month depending on the direction the group takes. Open to all who identify as a woman, FTM and MTF folks. Broad Vocabulary 2241 S. Kinnickinnic Ave., Milwaukee. 6 p.m. 414-744-8384. broadvocabulary.com.

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Bicycle! Bicycle!

Off-beat cultural wisdom suggests that in the event of an "ohrwurm" (German for "ear worm" — a tune that gets stuck in your head), clear it from your head by singing Queen's "Bicycle Race" out loud. As winter turns to spring, many folks will be returning to the bike lanes, to join those intrepid all-season riders. Bike riding and head clearing seemingly go hand in hand, much like the intertwine between zinesters and bikes.

Recently in San Francisco, a lesbian activist was struck and killed by a hit-and-run driver while riding her bike. Bicyclists are a hearty bunch, as evidenced by **letters from a bicycle**. Issue 1 from 2002, [32 pages] employs an interesting method to plumb the intricacies of processing grief.

Comprised of letters never sent, the focus is a high school auto accident, not unlike ones we hear about in the news. The difference here, though, is that we learn a great deal about human nature through writer Five's gut level feelings and his

unflinching honesty. The accident involved one of his friends, and others he knew mostly in passing. What struck me from the first read through each subsequent rereading is that this is not a lame attempt at maudlin commentary on "tragedy" or sycophantic remembrances.

The first letter is addressed to one of the passengers who died, a stereotypical homophobic jock character. Five says bluntly he has no memory of this guy ever saying anything nice to him, only of how he took every opportunity to cause Five to feel miserable. He next moves on to the only survivor. Rather than hurl epitaphs at her like others at their high school, Five peers beyond those emotions to speculate on the long-term impact of the accident on her life.

The final letter is to a woman named Rachael, with whom Five was well acquainted. He talks of how purple was her favorite color, so with help from his mom, who owned a fabric store, he made purple ribbons for those who wished to honor her memory. He tries to wrap his head around how she could have been riding with these other people, since he wasn't aware there was much of a connection between Rachael and the other passengers. **Letters from a bicycle** is a powerful zine, poignant and deeply personal without being morose.

While "riding my bicycle," **Lala of Quarter Inch Squares** [Issue 2/3, 1995, 32 pages] reveals in prose that she thinks of a list of friends and lovers who have died, and she implores the unknown subject of the piece not to become an addition to the list. **QIS** combines strong written content



Zines

Christopher Wilde (chris@qzap.org) is a co-founder of QZAP, an artist, DJ and MAC tech support specialist building community in Riverwest.

with a clever graphic style, like the send-up ad for "Laurie's house of bald," which offers to transform Marcia Brady types into bald punk dykes. The cover bears a Polly Paganheart photo of a woman holding up a T-shirt that reads "Assimilate my fist!" and is beautifully rendered in red copier toner on purple paper.

The zine bounces queerly along through narratives, poetry and hand-written layout to bring to the world the musings inside the head of Lala, who at the time this was written had yet to become the Fairy Dishwasher character. The seeds for the character, though, are easy to discover in "my faerie godmother wore green chiffon" describing an encounter at a drag show. Of special interest to punk fans is "henry and me," stories about two different Henry Rollins performances over a span of about a decade. The cuteness factor goes through the roof with the story of Esmelda (goddess in training) who sports six arms and a tail!

For these and other zines, visit the Queer Zine Archive Project at qzap.org.

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Arts



Calendar

OUT NOW

The Book as Sculpture. Thirteen book artists from around the country will present their interpretation of the book as a sculptural form.

Continuum Project. The Continuum Project is part of a campaign to build a visual art alumni/student community in the Peck School of the Arts.

Elington: The Life and Music of the Duke. Milwaukee Repertory Theater, 108 E. Wells St. 414-224-9490.

Hainsworth Collection of American Paintings. Exhibition of 67 paintings accompanied by a scholarly color catalogue.

Happily Ever Once Upon. A fairy tale parody for adults. The Bay Players, 1200 E. Fairmount Ave., Whitefish Bay. 7:30 p.m. 414-299-9040.

Rappaport and Vern: Inner Spaces/Outer Limits. Blurred strokes. Sharp angles. Muted colors. Vivid works.

Seduction. Sexy, decadent and immoral, "Seduction" holds up a mirror and lets us see what's good, bad, sad or hilarious in our search for human connection.

Textures of China. An exhibition derived from studying abroad by Jeremy Novy. Riverwest Co-op Cafe, 733 E. Clarke St., Milwaukee. 414-264-7933.

Tom Sawyer. First Stage Children's Theater. Whether Tom is wangling his way out of chores or making mischief on the Mississippi River, you can be sure that an adventure is close at hand.

THURSDAY, APRIL 6

Mame. The Broadway classic. UW-Whitewater's Irvin L. Young Auditorium, 930 W. Main St., Whitewater. 7:30 p.m. \$14-32.

Tranny Roadshow. A multimedia performance art extravaganza. A fluid entity, changing to suit the artists and the crowd.

FRIDAY, APRIL 7

13 Lakes. Film by James Benning. UWM Union Theater, 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee. 7 p.m. Free.

Art of Nature. An exhibit of nature based artwork by local artists. The opening will include appetizers and live music.

Tuesdays With Morrie. A dying professor imparts his feisty wisdom to a former student. Milwaukee Repertory Theater, 108 E. Wells St., Milwaukee. 414-224-9490.

Q Pick Hate Mail. One night only. Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. 2nd St., Milwaukee. \$10. 414-383-3727.

Willing to Risk. What began as a simple question about risk has turned into a multimedia performance event, a community-inspired production that integrates powerful, original dance and music.

SATURDAY, APRIL 8

Taken In. A funny, poignant and revealing story of looking for love in all the wrong places. Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. 2nd St., Milwaukee. 2 p.m. \$10.

Ten Skies. Film by James Benning. UWM Union Theater, 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee. 7 p.m. Free.

SUNDAY, APRIL 9

The 3rd Annual Peep Show. A fun and fluffy exhibition of artworks made from or inspired by marshmallow peeps.

No and Teatros Amazonas. Films by Sharon Lockhart. UWM Union Theater, 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee. 7 p.m. Free.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 12

Q Pick Kerse, Taste Emcees, and DJ White Bread. Benefit hip-hop show with all proceeds for the Cream City Collectives.

Open Mic Night. Broad Vocabulary, 2241 S. Kinnickinnic Ave., Milwaukee. Sign up 5:30 p.m., show 6 p.m.

Rouge. A relaxed version of PUMPI! with down-tempo music, specials on a selection of wines and small appetizers.

FRIDAY, APRIL 14

Saving Jane and Teddy Geiger. Majestic Theatre, 115 King St., Madison. 7:30 p.m. \$15.

SATURDAY, APRIL 15

Hansen and Ughi. Saxophone, drums and digital delays are the tools that Hanson & Ughi use to sculpt sound.

Ken Vandermark. Part of the Livingroom series. Vandermark is an explorer of improvised and composed music.

Mafian Blues Group. This show is about producing good vibes and funds for the African United Athletic Club.

Yeah Yeah Yeahs. One of the most creative and unmistakable bands in music today with a tenacious approach and brilliant songwriting.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19

Leo Kottke. Irvin L. Young Auditorium, 930 W. Main St., Whitewater. 7:30 p.m. \$16-24.

Pilobolus. One of the most innovative modern dance troupes in the nation. Fox Cities P.A.C., 400 W. College Ave., Whitewater.

FRIDAY, APRIL 21

CoPA Photo Exhibit. This first ever exhibit will feature photographs from its 100+ members.

Q Pick Take Me Out. The star center fielder of the world champion New York Empire's is young, rich, famous, talented, handsome and so convinced of his popularity that when he casually announces he's gay at a press conference,

Quilting: Fibers of our Community. Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. 2nd St. 414-383-3727.

The Special Consensus. This Chicago bluegrass group celebrates 30 years together. Schauer Arts and Activities Center, 147 N. Rural St., Hartford.

The Tyrant. A king, unable to physically leave his throne for fear of being overthrown, experiences his kingdom entirely through sound.

SATURDAY, APRIL 22

All Star Trio. A Baker, Genetti and Mueller play. Hotcakes Gallery, 3379 N. Pierce St., Milwaukee. 9 p.m. \$7.

Capoeira and Livin' Will. Smoke-free show. Performances by the Associação de Capoeira Corpo e Movimento and a new blues band from Kenosha.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 26

Ballet Hispanico. Ballet Hispanico brings that music to life through a fusion of contemporary style and Latin dance.

FRIDAY, APRIL 28

A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum. Based on the comedies of Plautus, this musical comedy classic combines the infectious energy of

vaudeville with nearly nonstop laughter. Cardinal Stritch University Theatre, 6801 N. Yates Rd., Milwaukee. 414-410-4171.

Range. Filmmaker Bill Basquin will present his recently completed, black-and-white, 16-mm triptych on the lives of certain men — hunters, a sheep shearer, and a farmer — and their relationship to the land.

Seussical. Todd Wehr Theater, 929 N. Water St., Milwaukee. 414-273-7206.

Zoo Story. Edward Albee's breakthrough play where words bite like a rabid dog. Bialystock & Bloom, 158 N. Broadway, Milwaukee. 7:30 p.m. 414-291-7800.

SATURDAY, APRIL 29

Mozart, Brahms and Bernstein. Organ, percussion, harp and the Master Singers of Milwaukee's own popular soloists join the choir for a moving and memorable evening.

Tony Bennett. A self-proclaimed live performer at heart, Bennett has thrilled audiences for over half a century with his legendary vocals.

SUNDAY, APRIL 30

Together with One Voice. Bel Canto features classic masters and the greatest hits of musical history.

THURSDAY, MAY 4

Swan Lake. Uihlein Hall, 929 N. Water St., Milwaukee. 414-273-7206.

FRIDAY, MAY 5

Grease. Modjeska Youth Theatre Company, Modjeska Theatre, 1134 W. Mitchell St., Milwaukee. 414-384-4550.

The Wizard of Oz. Waukesha Civic Theatre. Margaret Brate Bryant Civic Theatre Building, 264 W. Main St., Waukesha. 262-547-0708.

Deadline for May is April 20. Deadline for June is May 23.

Advertisement for Vans Mens Shoe Shop. Features the Vans logo and text: 'COOL Men's Shoes and Accessories', 'MENS SHOE SHOP', 'DOWNTOWN SINCE 1939', '631 N. PLANKINTON AVENUE', 'Shops of Grand Avenue MILWAUKEE (414) 271-5175', 'www.VansShoeShop.com'.

Advertisement for Dancin Tastebuds, LLC. Quality Dry Mixes. Features images of parrots and text: 'Cornbreads', 'Soda Pop Breads', 'Beer Breads', 'Bread Machine', 'Beer Batter', 'Moose', 'Specialty Items', 'Martian Pancakes', 'Your mouth never had it so Good!', '414-313-7276 Milwaukee, WI', 'Sherrie Howe President', 'www.dancintastebuds.com'.

Advertisement for KOALASWIM. Home To The Worlds Smallest Swimsuits. Features a man in a swimsuit and text: 'KOALASWIM.com', 'Men's Exotic Swim & Fetish Wear', 'Male Erotic Modeling DVD's', 'KOALASWIM.COM', 'Home To The Worlds Smallest Swimsuits', 'Call For a FREE Catalog 800-238-2941'.

Stuck in the Middle

If others' experiences are anything like mine, I won't be out of line saying that bisexual coming-out stories are anticlimactic at best.

Everything began for me in high school. When I was in the drama department, I briefly dated a guy who was a year or two older than me.

Even before I graduated high school and moved to Chicago, six years of gray hairs ago, I considered myself bisexual and told my parents so in the middle of an argument they claim to have forgotten.

Most gay men, lesbians and trans individuals would say I'm just confused, that I was either experimenting or afraid to embrace my gayness.

femme boys who called themselves lesbians in the '80s.

But I've been attracted to guys and slept with guys and dated guys over the course of my life. I dated a trans-guy for a little bit, too.

Now I'm in a monogamous relationship with a woman who also identifies as bi. We've both had polyamorous relationships in the past, but have agreed that they were too complicated and painful for us to try one again.

When I introduced her to my mother and said that we met last year at a Rainbow Alliance meeting, Mom was slow with the question, "Isn't that a group for gays?"

"... and lesbians, transgenders, queers... and bisexuals, Mom," I finished for her.

"Whatever," she said, shaking her head dispassionately.

Needless to say, we've had larger ethical dilemmas planning our wedding than simply deciding on the guest list or the floral arrangement. For me, it gets harder every day to justify the fact that we can get married while others' rights to the same ritual and its subsequent legal implications are denied.

Maybe if I had told my parents I was gay, they wouldn't have just brushed it off. Maybe they would have been more supportive, or



Bi-Ways

Nicholas Michael Ravnika lives in Kenosha. His poetry has appeared in Columbia Poetry Review, Small Town, and Conundrum literary journals, among others.

maybe I would have a more painful story to tell. As it stands, though, it feels like people on either side of the fence I'm supposedly riding are disqualifying the way I've felt.

I realized today that some guys on the down low might even be pegged unnecessarily as gay when they come out. They're forced to choose between one of two "lifestyles," which is part of the conundrum bisexuals face.

Maybe I am riding the fence. That would explain why it hurts so much. But even if I've come out of the closet, it feels like I'm just milling about the hallway while everyone else rents rooms of their own.



THEATER

Raymond Bradford (rbradford@queerlifeneews.com) is a freelance director, choreographer and actor. Ray lives on the East Side of Milwaukee and is the artistic director of R.S.V.P. Productions. Ray also teaches acting.

The life of a director is so exciting, so challenging! I am very fortunate to be doing what I want with my life and career. I am making a living in the arts; I know lots of actors; I have met many celebrities. I would imagine I've directed well over 200 shows in my lifetime! It may be amazing and exciting — so why is it so lonely?

Behind a Life. Behind a Wall

And do people really know what a director does? No! My own family comes to see my plays and can't seem to understand what I actually did. Sometimes I will stand in the back of the theater during my shows. People will ask me where the restrooms are. Or they might even tell me to please be quiet. They applaud the actors — not me. Yet, deep down inside, I feel I am the one they are really applauding. I was the one who made the script and performers come to life. A director works alone a lot prior to the rehearsal process. The actors work more as an ensemble putting the show together.

Actors may love me or hate me! It can depend on whether they are cast in the show or whether they get the part they want. It can depend on the reviews. A critic may place the entire show on the director's shoulders and cut it to pieces. If a show is good, some performers will tell their guests, "Thank you!" If the show is bad some performers will say, "It wasn't directed right."

How often one wonders if theater friends are true friends. Might they only pretend to be a friend to get a part? It happens in Hollywood, so it might happen in Milwaukee! Unfortunately I have put a professional wall up for my own protection. I am lucky and proud to say I have five or six real true friends. Some do theater, some don't. I like "real" people — on and off stage. I dislike drama queens!

As a director, one can be lonely. But I direct "real" people who just happen to be actors! Life is fabulous!!

Upcoming John McGivern Play

There will be plenty of theater this month again. The **Milwaukee Repertory Theater** will present "**Sherlock Holmes: The Finale Adventure.**" **Renaissance Theater** will open "**Burn This.**" **Next Act** brings us "**An Infinite Ache.**"

Cornerstone Theatre is looking for a new space for next season, but they will present "**The Diary of Anne Frank**" at the intimate **Brumder Mansion** theater. **Boulevard Ensemble** will bring us the well-known playwright **Harold Pinter** with "**The Birthday Party**" and **Sunset Playhouse** brings us the Easter rabbit with the classic "**Harvey.**"

"**The Fifth of July**" at **Dramatists** and "**Take Me Out**" at **Chamber Theatre** will offer some exciting gay themes. Milwaukee has a favorite in **John McGivern**, and he stars in the Chamber production. This play by **Richard Greenberg** concerns a gay baseball player. "**Seduction**" comes from London to the **Gay Arts Center** stage by **Uncommon Theatre**. Don't miss it!

From Astor to Writer

For many years now **James Searles** has run the **Brady Street Pharmacy**, with its great diner and unique following. Two years ago, James added the **Astor Theatre** to his list of successes. And now he has written his own play.

Stop in and talk to James about "**Behind a Wall**," his powerful play about three people — one gay, one lesbian and one anti-gay — who share an apartment.

The play makes strong points about

treating people with love, not hatred. **Astor Theatre** accepts donations, and this play could be an upcoming **Astor Theatre** production or an independent film. The pharmacy can then add a **Tony** or **Academy Award** to its show business collection! Watch James get on stage in the future with **R.S.V.P. Productions**.

Speaking of the Academy Awards

Why did Hollywood go so homophobic right before the awards? I can't believe "**Brokeback Mountain**" lost to "**Crash**" for best movie. I guess it takes wholesome **Tom Hanks** to play a gay man in order to win. "**Capote**" won for best actor, but it's not actually a film with a gay plot.

Watch for **Cynthia Pappalazyk** in "**The Birthday Party**" and **Tami Rentmeester** in "**Diary of Anne Frank**" — plus popular **John McGivern** in "**Take Me Out**"!!!

I hope to see all of you in the bars since winter is now over!!! Go out!!!

Last Month's Trivia Answer
Yes, **Sarah Jessica Parker** starred as **Annie** as a child on **Broadway**.

This Month's Trivia Question
Did the play "**Take me Out**" win a **Tony Award** on **Broadway**?

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Gay Identity Provides Insight About Justice

Every once in a while, I have the profoundly irritating experience of being told by one of my fundamentalist Christian friends (yes, friends) that it's easier to be gay in this country than it is to be a Christian.

Not knowing whether to laugh or express frustration, and in search of comfort, I fall back on a recent piece of satirical wisdom from comedian Jon Stewart: "I pray that one day, we may live in an America where Christians can worship freely. In broad daylight. ... And maybe, dare I dream, maybe one day, there could even be an openly Christian president. Or perhaps 43 of them. Consecutively!"

Imagine that.

Obviously, in a society as heterosexist as ours, even LGBT folks who experience earnest acceptance from family, friends, employers, neighbors and religious

community hardly have it made. We are still, after all, collectively couching fundamental rights like marriage equality in the language of "political issues" that are up for debate. There's no question: It's hard to be gay.

But let me be the first to admit that, like Christians and heterosexuals, I am the beneficiary of many forms of unearned privilege. Dr. Peggy McIntosh, whose pioneering work on privilege continues to inspire many of us, describes white privilege as an "invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks."

But my list doesn't end at white privilege. I'm also male, middle class, a suburbanite, tall and, through choices made by my parents, receiving a high quality secondary education. I'm neither physically nor mentally disabled. My invisible knapsack

is more like an invisible, oversize, heavy duty garbage bag.

I made my way through childhood, as all privileged children do, completely unaware of this garbage bag or the abundant advantages it contains. Sure, for a little kid in the suburbs, I was notably politically aware and outspokenly liberal. But I can say truthfully that living such a comfortable, unchallenged early life stunted the growth of an authentic sense of justice.

That is, of course, until the bomb was dropped. As I became aware of my sexuality and how LGBT people are treated by our larger society, the perfect storm of privilege and simplicity that marked my pre-adolescence could rage no longer. I began to understand on the most fundamental, most visceral level what it means to be the victim of oppression, of discrimination both overt and institutionalized.

The inextricable link between all forms of oppression became clear to me. Through my own experience of the nature of heterosexism, I've come to understand more fully what the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. meant when he wrote, "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

This shift in consciousness radically changed my liberalism. I could no longer support the death penalty or the so-called war on drugs, which has, through selective enforcement, morphed into a war on people



YOUTH

David Seitz (davidkseitz@yahoo.com) is a senior at Wauwatosa East High School. He is opinions editor of the nationally recognized East High School Cardinal News and an active member of Amnesty International and Unitarian Universalist Church West in Brookfield. Questions and comments are welcome.

of color and the poor. I became an ardent supporter of affirmative action programs. Many of my other views have remained unchanged in terms of their conclusions but now incorporate the dynamics of the struggle between oppression and human freedom.

Had I been born heterosexual, I might well have undergone a somewhat similar evolution. But as a gay man in a heterosexist culture, I experience an enduring sense of connection to oppressed people, people I wouldn't otherwise be able to empathize with as authentically.

An unsettling thought about my own personal failings? Absolutely.

A challenge, a blessing intended to inspire action?

Imagine that.

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Playhouse Gets Edgy

I normally develop a nervous twitch if I stray too far from the East Side, where I live, or downtown. But you have got to check out Sunset Playhouse. It's not just for suburbia anymore!

Mark Salentine, artistic director of the Sunset Playhouse in Elm Grove, is taking this year's season in a new direction that will not only please Sunset's current Elm Grove audience base but will likely attract a younger, more urban set as well.

Sunset Playhouse, a marvelous 300-ish seat theater established in 1960, has just finished performances of two plays that are not its usual fare. "Sylvia," a play by A. R. Gurney, explores what happens when a middle-aged guy takes in a feisty stray dog. When his wife disapproves, the talking canine makes biting remarks about his marriage and almost brings it to an end.

Add a dash of Tennessee Williams with the Sunset production of "Cat on a Hot Tin Roof," which includes a sexually ambiguous main character, and you have Mark

Salentine's recipe for the beginnings of a spicier season than ever.

In a discussion comparing gay plays and theater to straight theater, Salentine explained, "Theater is theater. Good theater can be appreciated by everyone: gay, straight, bi, black, white ... no boundaries. And we do good theater."

"Harvey" is Sunset's current production, and I can't wait to see what they do with this classic. Besides, I never could resist a six-and-a-half-foot rabbit ... or bear ... anyway.

With all the exciting new entertainment



HOOKER'S CORNER

Mark Hooker

going on at Sunset Playhouse, the urban theater-goer certainly has a reason to venture away from downtown Milwaukee. Sunset has a beautiful theater building — with renovations planned — as well as fantastic production values.

The resident set designer, J. Michael Desper, has an impressive array of credits, and his designs rival the best that I've seen in any big regional theater.

Add to that the forward-thinking leadership of Mark Salentine and a steady stream of talented actors (Anthony Crivello, an ex-Sunset actor, won a Tony Award in 1993 for his role as Valentin in the Broadway production of "Kiss of the Spider Woman") and you have a recipe for a great evening's entertainment.

While you're at Sunset, check out the season in their black box theater, which houses The Actors Group. Their offerings so far have included "Extremities" and "Zoo Story." Edgy, edgy, edgy!

Oh, and did I mention? — there's parking!

For more information on Sunset Playhouse productions, call 262-782-4430. Sunset Playhouse is located at 800 Elm Grove Road between Wall Street and Highwood Drive.



What's Happening at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center

JACK HEIFNER'S 'SEDUCTION'

Featuring the "Shamelessboyz" London cast
Through April 9, 7:30 p.m.
Tickets \$20

Sexy, decadent and immoral, "Seduction" holds up a mirror and lets us see what's good, bad, sad or hilarious in our search for human connection.

THE TRANNY ROADSHOW '06

One performance only!!!
Thursday, April 6, 10 p.m.
Tickets \$10

The Tranny Roadshow is a multimedia performance art extravaganza. It is composed of an eclectic group of artists, each one self-identified as transgender, and includes poets, rappers, filmmakers, storytellers, break-dancers, rock bands, comedians, actors, folk singers, photographers, zinesters and more. The show is a fluid entity, changing to suit the artists and the crowd, but always it is full of intelligence, fun and humor. Although the Tranny Roadshow is done entirely by transpeople, it is not exclusively for transpeople. It is a raucous evening of entertainment, open and accessible to people of all backgrounds. In the show, performers present a wide spectrum of gender identities, a brilliant array of living art, and the ties that bind these identities to their artwork and to the world.

'HATE MAIL'

World premier of Jack Heifner's new play
Friday, April 8, 2 p.m.

Be the first to see Jack Heifner's hilarious parody of "Love Letters" in a special benefit performance for one night only.

'TAKEN IN'

Saturday, April 8, 2 p.m.
Tickets \$10

Uncommon Theatre-Company presents a special showcase performance of "Taken In," by John W. Lowell. A funny, poignant and revealing story of looking for love in all the wrong places.

BENN SETFREY

Reading and book signing
April 9, 2 p.m.

Benn Setfrey, African-American author of "Don't Shoot! I'm Coming Out," declares homosexual men will no longer be target practice for heterosexual predators. Setfrey turns the tables on the black community for atrocities perpetrated against homosexuals.

GALLERY NIGHT AND DAY

Through Our Eyes: Quilts and Fiber Art from the LGBT Community

A special exhibition by guest curator Denise Cawley, Pizzazz Studios

Friday, April 21, 6-9 p.m.

Saturday, April 22, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Hand-quilting, machine embroidery, felting, hand-dyed fabrics, traditional quilts and artistic fiber art are all included in this exhibit of gay and lesbian art. Art quilts submitted represented a range of personal expression of the fiber and quilt medium. Awards and ribbons of merit will be presented by the jurors at 8 p.m. at the exhibit opening. Approximately 15 quilts in all media are being exhibited.

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May 13, 9 p.m.

Rhythm & Torch

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Hooker, MC and performing "songs men don't sing"

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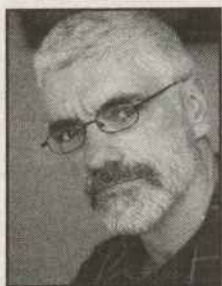
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Paul Masterson - Director



Through Our Eyes: Quilts and Fiber Art from the LGBT Community

Hand-quilting, machine embroidery, felting, hand-dyed fabrics, traditional quilts and artistic fiber art are all included in the upcoming exhibit of gay and lesbian art at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center. Art quilts submitted represented a range of personal expression of the fiber and quilt medium. Awards and ribbons of merit will be presented by the jurors at the exhibit opening. Approximately 15 quilts in all media are being exhibited.

Depicting LGBT issues was an option for submissions, but not required. Most of the quilts are not LGBT-themed but instead are created by LGBT people who quilt. Artists include: Amy Climer, Madison, Wis.; Diane Johns, DeKalb, Ill.; Cathleen Nagle, Chicago; David Bostwick, Westminster, Colo., Corvallis Lesbian Sewing Circle (Roberta Bishop, Jo Casselberry, Karin Fassnacht, Diane Haase, Liz Yoon), Corvallis, Ore., and Brown Deer, Wis.; James Lawrence, Minneapolis, collaborating with Kanti Jocelyn-Bisgaard, Kanagawa-Ken, Japan; Gillian Rodger, Milwaukee; Mark Mulder, Milwaukee; J. Bruce Wilcox, Denver; and Denise Cawley, West Milwaukee.

Jurors for the exhibit were Maureen Kane and Michael Proft. Jurors were chosen for their long commitment to the arts and their exquisite taste in and appreciation of fiber art. They had an interesting debate selecting the pieces and have decided to award ribbons to the entrants.

Michael Proft, owner of MP Design, has been a graphic designer and art director for the past 10 years, including stints with some of the leading agencies in Milwaukee. A graduate of New York University and MATC, Michael began his marketing career in the creative services department of Arista Records in New York City.

Maureen Kane has over 18 years experience in designing, illustrating and bookmaking, with a B.F.A. in graphic design from Arizona State University. She also exhibits her art work of collage, painting and mixed-media assemblages. Maureen worked for various design studios in and around the Milwaukee area before settling down to concentrate on her own business, MMK Design. An adjunct professor at MIAD, she has taught the sophomore level computer studio class and continuing ed classes.

The opening for "Through Our Eyes: Quilts and Fiber Art from the LGBT Community" at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. 2nd St., will be Friday, April 21, from 6 to 9 p.m., with an awards presentation at 8 p.m.



So, What About ... An Interview with Shaia Fahrid, a Belly Dancer Who Shimmies and Shakes Her World

By Paul Masterson

Shaia Fahrid owns Shaia Fahrid Egyptian Dance Studio. Trained in Egyptian cabaret belly dance, she instructs all levels of belly dance at her studio on Milwaukee's East Side. She also teaches and performs at other venues, including the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, where she conducts the region's only belly dance class for men. **Q Life** recently spoke with Shaia.

When we met, I expected a Middle Eastern diva with black hair and Nefertiti features but was surprised to find Shaia Fahrid to be an unassuming and entirely Western woman.

Q Life: To be honest, you're not quite the person I expected. Can you tell me about your name, Shaia Fahrid?

SF: My real name is Barbara Johnson. Shaia Fahrid is my professional name. Shaia is a Basque gypsy word for "sister." If you pronounce it "Shah-eee-ya," the Arabic way, it means naughty playful dancer. "Fahrid" is the middle name of my best friend. It means kind and gentle. I liked its softness and the way it sounds with "Shaia."

Q Life: Why belly dancing?

SF: I've danced my whole life. My earliest memories are of dancing to the "Nutcracker" in my living room as a child. When I quit my job and went back to school, I took a sports and recreation course that happened to be belly dancing. I was completely drawn to its mysterious, exotic qualities and became totally immersed in the costumes, the culture and the music. Then I found the best local instructor, took four classes a week, plus private lessons and workshops.

Q Life: Why do you enjoy it so much?

SF: Belly dance is multi-dimensional: the sensuous moves, the veil work, the variety of styles from Egyptian to Turkish, tribal and ethnic. It's difficult and works the core of the body but also has a spiritual quality. I also

enjoy performing one of the oldest forms of dance.

Q Life: You also promote and organize hafla. Can you tell our readers exactly what that is?

SF: A hafla is a belly dance party. It can be just a few people gathered together or a big extravaganza like the one at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center held in March. That was an amazing one — we had 25 performers including dancers and drummers. There was wonderful Middle Eastern food provided by MO'NA's and all in all it was incredible. It was such great success that we're doing another at the center on June 17. It'll be called "Heat of the Hafla" and we're already lining up acts.

Q Life: So, what about the class for men?

SF: A lightning bolt struck me after so many men asked about learning belly dance but didn't feel comfortable among women or didn't know if the moves taught to women would be appropriate for a man. When my schedule allowed a class exclusively for men, I did it. Out of that came Extreme Taqisim, a men's belly dance troupe formed with members of the class held at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center.

Q Life: Is this your own innovation?

SF: No, men have a long history of dancing in the Middle East and today there's a large international group of famous male dancers. Besides, I'm a rebel — if someone has a passion they should do it.

Q Life: And how did Extreme Taqisim perform?

SF: They absolutely wowed the audience. In fact, they've been invited to dance at a hafla in Chicago in May. And, of course, they'll perform in the "Heat of the Hafla" in June.

Shaia Fahrid's belly dance class for men takes place at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center Sundays from 4 to 5:30 p.m. For information, call 414-383-3727.





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Inservice on Resources/ Services for LGBT Seniors and Caregivers

An inservice on Resources/Services for LGBT Adults Over 60 and Caregivers will take place at OutReach on Thursday, April 27, from 4 to 5:30 p.m. Case managers from the West Madison Senior Coalition and the North East Senior Coalition will talk about what the coalitions offer seniors and answer questions like: How do I get around when I can no longer drive? Can I get help with my home chores? Is there

funding to support caregivers who are LGBT and want to keep their ailing partner at home?

OutReach, Madison and south central Wisconsin's LGBT community center and safe space, is located at 600 Williamson St.

Space for the inservice is limited. If interested, contact Harry at 608-255-8582 or programs@outreachinc.com.

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Stayin' Alive

While there is no conclusive, comparative data on suicide rates and depression within the transgender community, it's well accepted that trans people (just like LGB folks and non-queer people) can and do suffer from depression, anxiety and other mental health conditions that sometimes lead to suicide.

We all have unique paths in life and it would be egocentric to presume that being transgender (or a SOFFA of a transperson) is a life journey more challenging than any other.

Life is hard. Trans or not.

It's painful to look at the piercing reality that depression and suicide exist. In our community. In every community.

Sometimes I wonder, though, if the backbiting and competitiveness within the trans community adds to the widespread depression in our community. Sometimes I wonder if the medicalization of transgender people — and the unaffordability (financially, logistically, emotionally) of professional services and hoop-jumping — raises rates of dis-ease. Sometimes (actually, often) I wonder how binary thinking chokes the life out of iconoclastic expansive thinkers.

Sometimes I wonder if we fail to see some deaths as suicides, because it's less painful that way — it's easier to blame the victim, rather than examine societal and community dysfunction. For example, take a 14-year-old MTF who smokes and doesn't have access to medical advice or monitoring. If she ends up dying by mixing street hormones and smoking, is it suicide? Or is it that she was just doing the best she could, in the absence of systems designed to educate and support her?

It's painful to look at the piercing reality that depression and suicide exist. In our community. In every community.

It's hard to accept that suicide is the third leading cause of death among young people 15 to 24 years old (or the second leading cause of death among college students). It's tough to acknowledge that the suicide rate for children 10 to 14 years old has more than doubled over the last 10 years.

My 11-year-old son's best friend is bullied at school and has actively tried to commit suicide. He has a loving family and ample mental health/medical support, but he's still depressed from the bullying or resultant isolation and wants to die.

The pattern of depression and suicidal thought often starts at this age and some of us never quite "outgrow" it. Likewise, the blueprint of bullying often starts early and lasts a lifetime.

Kate Bornstein — award-winning, progressive, transgender author — has a new book coming out May 15, "Hello Cruel World: 101 Alternatives to Teen Suicide." When Kate spoke at UW-Milwaukee a few months ago, she noted that the majority of her 101 alternatives to suicide aren't legal,

Q

TRANSGENDER

Michael Munson (mmunson@queerlifeneews.com) is an emotionally intense, transgressively gendered, passionate social agitator who strives for inclusion and harmony by focusing on our human similarities and strengths. He is lovingly committed to his partner and their 10 year old son.

but they might be enough to keep people alive. Her only edict in helping teens choose life is "Don't be mean."

Sometimes — no, all of the time — I think Kate's right. The only directive to staying alive and creating a world where others can also feel good about staying alive is "Don't be mean."

When FORGE meetings discuss ground rules for creating a space that is "safe" enough for everyone to share, we often generate long lists of detailed guiding principles. However, almost all of them can be replaced by one simple phrase: "Be nice."

Suicide is never the only answer, but it's sometimes difficult to see other options. Try kindness: Don't be mean to others, and if nothing else, "be nice" to yourself. Kindness has probably saved more lives than psychotropic medications, therapy, religion or self-help books.

FORGE is a social support group for trans-masculine and SOFFA individuals meeting at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center on the first Saturday of every month.

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<p>Sat. 1 The Metroids, Little Headhunter, The E.R.E.</p> <p>Tues. 4, 18 Matt Hendricks Experience</p> <p>Fri. 7 Emily White, Drops of Blue</p>	<p>Sat. 8 Inkwell Collective w/ Juniper Tar</p> <p>Sun 9th Marine Corpse, The Prophet Doomlicker 11, Show Me the Pink, Dites Donc, and Mike Stansy</p>	<p>Fri. 14 Salvage w/ John Kocher</p> <p>Wed. 19 Women take back the Mic open mic</p> <p>Fri. 28 Otis Gibbs and Scott Hanson</p> <p>Sat. 29 Randy Martin</p>
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