



Foster and Adoption Options for Gay and Lesbian Couples and Singles
By Cyndie Ody-Weis

Donald, age 66, laments on his "greatest loss" in life and continues, "All of those years living a gay lifestyle; now I am older and have no children or grand-children. Something is missing from my life."

While other gay and lesbian folks of Donald's era parented in alternative ways, options were limited.

In sharp contrast, visits to Pridefest's playground, Rainbow Families meetings, Gary and Rich's kitchen or Patti and Beth's playroom reveal happy families and ample children all around, calling "mom and mommy, come play with me," "papa and daddy,

watch me." The pews of Plymouth Church UCC or Underwood Memorial Baptist Church (and countless other "welcoming and affirming" churches and community organizations in SE Wisconsin) are filled with gay and lesbian singles and couples and their children.

Robert Bernstein, author of *Families of Value: Personal Profiles of Pioneering L and G Families* estimates that 1 to 14 million households of L-G parents raising children populate the U.S. Evidently, Milwaukee is home to many.

Yes indeed, L-G families have stepped into the mainstream with a burst of parenting options. Infant adoption, adoption of older children, surrogacy, assisted conception and foster care are some

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Cover Artist:

The artist, Raphael Perez, was born in 1965 and was raised in Jerusalem. He currently resides and works in Tel-Aviv. He is a graduate of the Jerusalem school of Visual Arts



Raphael Perez

where he studied from 1988 through 1992 and where many of his acrylic, oil, laminated wood pieces and drawings can be found. Beginning in 1995, the artist's drawings depicted intimate relationships

between two people whether man and woman, two women and two men. The entire concept of a relationship and sentiments between two people is

brought to light. In each painting there is an evident contrast between shade and light. The color red is central to his paintings and consistently symbolizes masculinity, passion and dominance. Perez's creations deal with the subject of homosexuality. He puts a strong emphasis on single-sex families, pride parades, soldiers, male birth giving, portraits, male nudity, as well as male, female and heterosexual couples. His paintings put to test the boundaries between eroticism and art, while characterizing gay relationships and love as they are expressed in everyday life.

Homepage: <http://www.gaypaintings.com>

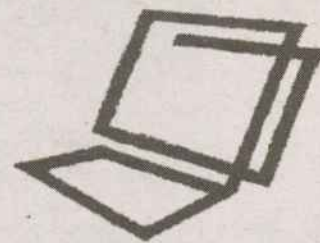
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FAMILIES *continued from page 1*

paths to parenthood open to gay and lesbian couples and singles.

Numerous studies find that children raised by gay and lesbian parents fare quite well. Some studies even conclude that children of gay and lesbian parents

turn out better, possibly due to more intense nurturing and more equitable sharing of parenting tasks that parents provide when they rise above the constraints of gender roles. While the research on L-G parenting is limited, it is growing and varied, crossing lines of academic disciplines. Also expanding is research on children joining families through adoption or foster care by L-G parents.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) reports in their 2004 research review that L-G parents "have not been found to differ markedly in their approaches to child rearing." Further, the APA report concludes that "results of research suggest that lesbian and gay parents are as likely as heterosexual parents to provide supportive and healthy environments for their children."

Another national organization, The Child Welfare League of America (CWLA), supports children growing up in families, whether by birth, adoption or foster care. The CWLA says "families with LGBTQ members deserve the same levels of support afforded other families. Any attempt to preclude or prevent gay, lesbian, and bisexual individuals or couples from parenting, based solely on their sexual orientation, is not in the best interest of children...CWLA, therefore, affirms that gay, lesbian, and bisexual parents are as well suited to raise children as their heterosexual counterparts."

The CWLA sets standards for best practices in adoption and foster care. While most states have some provision for adoption by L-G families, a big difference among the states, however, is whether they allow dual or "second parent" adoptions, which give full parenting rights to two parents. These

laws, while protecting L-G families, also support other parents such as a single dad and an "auntie" co-parent or a grandma/pa and a single mom having dual parenting rights. The CWLA and the APA both support dual parenting laws in adoption. The APA filed position papers in December 2006 in support of gay marriage as one additional safeguard for children.

Despite strong support for dual parenting, Wisconsin law allows only married couples or single people to adopt. Because of this, L-G couples usually designate one partner as legal parent and arrange guardianship rights for the other in a will. While few states prohibit L-G adoptions, private agency policies do. Some agencies allow L-G folks limited options, for example, adoption and foster care only through programs under contract with the state that place children who have been removed from birth families for abuse or neglect. L-G families may qualify for these "child welfare" adoptions but not other agency programs or international adoption - which sometimes require that applicants abide by strict rules, even signing a statement of heterosexuality.

Some prospective parents choose foster care paths to parenthood or pursue foster-to-adopt placements, perhaps fulfilling the dire need for homes for LGBTQ youth in care. Jane Ottow, LGBT Youth Program Coordinator for Children's Service Society of Wisconsin (CSSW), seeks foster and adoptive families for LGBTQ kids. She also leads a support group for LGBT/ ALLY parents and provides youth and family counseling. CSSW joined a nationwide coalition with CWLA and Lambda Legal and formed a local alliance that includes Pathfinders, Project Q, Walker's Point, Path Inc.,

St. Aemilian-Lakeside and PFLAG Milwaukee, agencies working together to support LGBTQ youth.

According to Ottow, a major "challenge is the lack of awareness by social workers, as well as foster parents of the existence of LGBT youth within the foster care system. (They) may be more naïve about the needs of LGBT youth in care, rather than opposed or apathetic." Ottow is optimistic that people "are willing to learn more about the current status of LGBT youth." To that end, Ottow and others provide training to increase awareness about LGBT youth in care.

Ottow expresses a need for "more LGBT/ALLY foster parents." She adds, "Overall, our local LGBT youth in care have expressed this as their primary need. All children deserve to grow up in a home where they are unconditionally accepted, nurtured and supported."

With hundreds of children in need of homes, L-G parents are an important resource for the child welfare system. Adam Pertman, Executive Director of the Adoption Institute sums it up, "there's simply no credible research to indicate that children are harmed in any way when they're adopted by gay and lesbian parents, but there's lots of evidence to indicate that they do well in those homes. So, if we as a society believe that kids should be our primary concern, we have to put aside our prejudices and preconceived notions, and do the best we can for them."

Sounds like the future rainbow of L-G families will reach wider, shine brighter and provide a safe arc for children in need, thanks to dedicated professionals working locally and nationally and L-G couples and singles who long to be parents.

Thinking about Adoption or Foster Care?**Resources and First Steps**

1. Call or email Adoption Resources of Wisconsin (a neutral agency partially funded by the state) and indicate you are exploring options. They will send general information and a list of adoption and foster care agencies serving LGBT folks in Wisconsin. (They are located at 6682 W. Greenfield—call first at 414-475-1246 or visit www.wiadopt.org)
2. Read and research your options. Try local libraries, the library at Adoption Resources or the Internet for lots of information.
3. Talk to your support system which may include your partner, family, friends or adoptive parent groups.
4. Contact Rainbow Families-Wisconsin www.geocities.com/rainbowfamilieswisconsin
5. Contact COLAGE-Wisconsin (Children of Lesbians and Gays Everywhere) milwaukee@colage.org
6. You may wish to try foster parenting first or perhaps a "foster/adopt" arrangement. Call Children's Service Society 414-453-1400 or see <http://www.chw.org/display/PPF/DocID/35803/Nav/1/router.asp>
7. Other websites to visit www.adoptioninstitute.org
<http://www.cwla.org/programs/culture/glbqt.htm>
www.adoptuskids.org

LGBT Organizations Honored

As part of the Lesbian and Bisexual Women 25/25 Venture, over 60 LGBT leaders, their work, and their organizations, were honored at a unique reception held this January.

"For many of these groups, this was the first time they realized how many leaders we have in Milwaukee working for LGBT issues," said Maria Cadenas, Executive Director of the Cream City Foundation (CCF) and member of the Lesbian and Bisexual Women 25/25 Venture. "It was wonderful to see ideas about future projects being created in a social atmosphere."

Other Venture members include Brenda Coley of Diverse & Resilient, Fai DeMark of the Lesbian Fund of the Women's Fund, Tina Owen of The Alliance School of Milwaukee, and Dawn Schmidt of Lesbian Alliance.

Funded by the Cream City Foundation's Joseph R Pabst LGBT Infrastructure Fund, the Lesbian and Bisexual Women 25/25 Venture —a

panel of five Lesbian and Bisexual women leaders in southeastern WI, were responsible for distributing \$25,000. Each Venture member was informed that they were being honored for their work in LGBT communities - with a separate distribution of \$2,500 to each of their respective organizations; as long as they did not fund the organization they were directly associated with.

"We wanted to highlight these women who have worked hard to create a great space and community for LGBT individuals," said Joseph Pabst. "And at the same time trust them to make a difference in a new way."

The group focused their giving on organizations working to improve the lives of LGBT individuals. "It was such a gift and privilege to give away money to so many deserving organizations!" said Fai DeMark.

A total of thirty-three organizations were honored through the Venture including The Children Service Society of Wisconsin, The Counseling Center of Milwaukee, For Ourselves: Reworking Gender Expression (FORGE), The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, and Senior Action in a Gay Environment (SAGE).

Founded in 1982 with \$500 in seed money, Cream City Foundation has grown to provide over \$500,000 in grant dollars to many organizations and projects working to improve the quality of life for LGBT people.

Cream City Foundation will celebrate the start of its 25 Year Anniversary Celebration with a Winter-Get-Away at the Mitchell Park Domes on February 22, 2007. The Cream City Foundation's 25 Year Anniversary Celebration is sponsored by MMK Design, Clark Graphics, Queer Life News, Roundy's Supermarkets, Ritz, Holman, Butala & Fine LLP, and Kevin Flaherty. For more information or tickets to the Winter-Get-Away call 414.221.0244 or visit www.creamcityfoundation.org

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Wisconsin



Happenings

MMCC elects new pastor

Milwaukee - Milwaukee - Rev. Wendy R. Woodruff has been elected pastor of Milwaukee Metropolitan Community Church. MMCC is a part of the worldwide fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches serving the diverse religious and cultural population of the greater Milwaukee area.

Rev. Woodruff comes to MMCC after nearly thirty years in the telecommunications industry. After retiring in 2003, she received a Master of Divinity degree from Chicago Theological Seminary. She has been an active leader in MCC for the past fifteen years, as a board member and lay representative. She participated in two church plants in Geneva, Illinois and Cleveland, Ohio. While in seminary, she was an intern at Open Door United Church of Christ, which is located on Chicago's South Side and has a primary ministry to the African American LGBTQ community. Just prior to coming to Milwaukee, Rev. Woodruff served as Associate Pastor for Leadership Empowerment at MCC Illiana in Lake Station, Indiana.

"I am excited about the opportunity to

serve the MMCC congregation and the larger Milwaukee community," Rev. Woodruff said. "My passion is outreach to those who are on the edges of society: the elderly, young Queer folk, people who are differently-abled -- anyone who struggles to be an active, accepted part of society. Christ calls us to reach out to those on the edges and to care for the stranger."

Mary Woodruff, Rev. Woodruff's spouse of eight years, manages the computer library systems for the Public Libraries in Naperville, Illinois. The Woodruffs plan to make their home in the Bayview neighborhood. They have one son, John Shields, who lives with his wife, Jennifer Shields, in Warrenville, Illinois.

Milwaukee MCC meets at 11:00 am Sundays at 1239 W. Mineral Street. (www.queerchurch.org)

As one of the world's emerging churches, MCC proclaims a spirituality that is liberating and sufficiently profound to address the issues of our chaotic and complicated world. MCC is a place where all are welcomed.

LGBT Center's Black History Celebration Extended

Milwaukee - The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center's annual Black History program will be expanded to three weeks. This year's celebration encompasses a film festival showcasing three films about and/or created by African American LGBT people. The festival begins on Thursday, February 8, at 5:30pm at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center and will feature the film 'Brother to Brother'. On Thursday February 15, the Center will show the film 'The Aggressive' a documentary set in New York City about a diverse group of individuals who cross the lines of gender expression. Finally, in closing on Thursday, February 22, the Center will celebrate with a closing reception spotlighting area talent, community leaders and the final film, 'Just Between Us'. All films begin at 5:30pm with a short welcome program.

"We are very excited about the African American LGBT film festival we have put together in honor of black history month and are looking forward to a great turnout," said Corinne Rosen, a community organizer at the Center and one of the planners of the celebration. For more information call (414) 271-2656 x111.

Printing of the series is donated by Graphiccolor Printing. About 5,000 people visit the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center annually at its facility at 315 W. Court Street. Services are provided by fourteen professional staff and a budget of \$750,000. More information about the Center can be found online at www.mkelgbt.org.

Fair WI Moves Ahead

Madison - Fair Wisconsin, the statewide campaign that worked to defeat the civil unions and marriage ban, will continue as a statewide organization committed to promoting fair and equal treatment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Wisconsinites and their families.

Action Wisconsin, the statewide organization founded in 1994, launched the Fair Wisconsin campaign in 2006. After seeking input from thousands of statewide supporters, the leadership of Action Wisconsin determined that it would retain the Fair Wisconsin name. Despite the loss at the ballot box, Fair Wisconsin built a massive base of volunteers and financial supporters across the state and is widely recognized as having a critical impact on statewide turnout.

Fair Wisconsin is implementing a 100 Day Plan that includes educating Wisconsinites about the impact of discrimination on LGBT people, working to limit potential far-reaching consequences of the constitutional amendment, building a political program to help influence future public policy debates, and continuing Fair Wisconsin's grassroots presence in communities across the state.

Leaders of the campaign have made a commitment to help transition the organization through the end of March.

Joshua Freker, the communications director for Fair Wisconsin and Action Wisconsin before that, will serve as interim executive director. Heather Colburn and Mike Tate will work as consultants to develop the organization's fundraising, public education, and political strategies. Colburn was the deputy campaign manager, and Tate was the campaign manager for Fair Wisconsin.

The organization has launched a search for a permanent executive director. The job description can be found online: <http://fairwisconsin.com/downloads/EDjob.pdf>

PrideFest Announces Dates

Milwaukee - PrideFest announced that the 2007 festival dates will be June 8, 9 and 10th. Wisconsin's largest lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender event will be held at the Henry W. Maier Festival Grounds (Summerfest) on Milwaukee's lakefront.

A community town hall will be held at 7:00pm, Thursday, February 15th at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court Street. The town hall will review the successful 2006 festival and preview the 2007 season. Volunteers are being sought for help in planning and implementing this year's festival. Skills needed include public relations, web/IT development, publishing/ad sales, and financial management. For more information, visit www.pridefest.com or call (414) 272-3378.

National



Happenings

Lesbians!

Olivia Launches Lesbian Social Networking Site

San Francisco - Olivia, the world's leading lesbian lifestyle company, announced the launch of the first fully interactive online social networking site for lesbians - "Olivia Connect." The site can be accessed at www.olivia.com/connect. "Olivia has been serving the lesbian community for 34 years, and this is a natural extension of our sector-leading brand," said Amy Errett, CEO of

Olivia. "Our vision is to provide and facilitate an authentic, grass-roots social network for the lesbian community that is user-focused and features user-generated content. We foresee friendships being forged, people reaching out and building community and a sense of empowerment realized as these powerful connections are created." Olivia is the leading provider of luxury travel services for the lesbian market.

Women's eNews honors Mautner Project's Executive Director

Washington - Women's eNews (www.womensenews.org) this week announced its 21 Leaders for the 21st Century. Kathleen DeBold of the Mautner Project, the National Lesbian Health Organization, was among those honored and is the only openly-lesbian honoree on the list. Among those honored were nineteen women and one man. All were recognized as having dedicated their life's work to improving the lives of women worldwide in the workplace, in schools, in the media and in the home.

"Women's eNews is delighted to include Kathleen DeBold in our list of 21 Leaders for the 21st Century 2007," noted Rita Henley Jensen, Editor-in-Chief. "Kathleen was nominated for her vision, her willingness to mentor and her inspiring spirit." DeBold, who champions the rights of women who are often ignored, works to ensure that lesbian, bisexual and transgender-women receive equal access to quality health care and that they are not discriminated against based on their economic status or sexual orientation.

"The idea of women taking care of women and fighting for health care equality has touched every chord in my lesbian-feminist heart," said DeBold, 51. "I'm blessed to work with wonderful staff members, volunteers, and clients who nurture the Mautner Project's community of caring."

Under DeBold's leadership, the Mautner Project has evolved from a local health group that primarily supported lesbians with cancer, to a national lesbian health organization that works to improve the health of women through advocacy, education, research and direct services.

Were here...and in Larger Numbers, Apparently

National - According to a recent article in the Atlantic Monthly, the number of gay couples willing to identify themselves as gay in government surveys grew by more than 30 percent between 2000 and 2005. This is five times the growth rate for the U.S. population as a whole. The largest percentage increase in self-identified same-sex couples occurred in the Midwest, and the study notes that the percentage of same-sex couples rose faster than the national average in six of the eight states where a ban on same-sex marriage appeared on the 2006 ballot. The study estimates a nationwide total of 8.8 million gay, lesbian, and bisexual Americans, roughly 3 percent of the population.

International



Happenings

Iraq blasts U.N. Report

Iraq - Iraq's government criticized a U.N. Assistance Mission report on human rights that listed its civilian death toll in 2006 at 34,452, saying it is "superficial" and discussed subjects that are taboo in Iraqi society such as homosexuality.

"There was information in the report that we cannot accept here in Iraq. The report, for example, spoke about the phenomenon of homosexuality and giving them their rights," spokesman Ali al-Dabbagh said. "Such statements are not suitable to the Iraqi society. This is rejected."

"The current environment of impunity and lawlessness invites a heightened level of insecurity for homosexuals in Iraq. Armed Islamic groups and militias have been known to be particularly hostile toward homosexuals - frequently and openly engaging in violent campaigns against them. There has been a number of assassinations of homosexuals in Iraq" the U.N. report read.

Such a topic is widely frowned at in this predominantly Muslim country and gays usually keep their sexual orientation a secret.

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MGAC Making Music

LGBT musicians and songwriters are needed to provide their talents to a new music CD in the works. Shelly Herrmann and Yolanda Roth (of Rhythm & Torch) are producing a music CD featuring local and national artists, including both bands and soloists. CD will include up to 20 songs. Release is planned in time for PrideFest, 2007, with proceeds benefiting the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center. Producers Herrmann and Roth have solicited their favorite LGBT musicians including Tori Fixx, Ronnie Niles, Scott Malcom, and Corky Morgan to compose and record the CD's theme song. Music submissions may be any genre. Must be original copy written material in CD format with lyric sheets. For info: call 414-418-6831 or yogi2732@gmail.com

Seeking committed couples for photo exhibit

Milwaukee photographer Jeff Percy and author Will Fellows are teaming up to create an exhibit of portraits of same-sex couples in long-term, committed relationships. In the exhibit, these photographs will be accompanied by the words of the individuals pictured, expressing their thoughts and feelings regarding their relationships. The title of the planned exhibit, "Shall Not Be Recognized", is a phrase from the recent amendment to the WI Constitution barring legal recognition of same-sex unions. The exhibit will include photographic and verbal portraits of approximately 15 same-sex couples who have

been in a relationship for at least seven years—the average length of marriage for U.S. couples who divorce. Fellows will first conduct interviews with each couple, and Percy will then schedule a photo session. A variety of organizations will be invited to host the exhibit. Any proceeds from this project will be donated to Fair Wisconsin in support of their continuing work for marriage equality. This project's success depends on the voluntary participation of same-sex couples who have been in committed relationship for at least seven years and who live in the Greater Milwaukee area. If you fit this profile and would like to participate, contact Will Fellows at 414-963-1152 or at will@bronzoptical.com.

Show your Sappho Spirit!

In June of 2007, the Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee in collaboration with The Milwaukee Gay Arts Center will host "Daughters of Sappho", an exhibition of visual artwork created by Wisconsin women who identify as lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender.

The ancient Greek poetess Sappho, born between 630 and 612 BC., was romantically involved with women as well as men. She founded a school for girls on the Island of Lesbos—the root of the word "lesbian." In the spirit of Sappho, the LAMM invites any woman who identifies as lesbian, bisexual and/or transgender to express and educate artistically about her experiences. Please send jpeg photos of work, with dimensions, media, year created, price, artist's name and a brief artist's bio (300 words or less) to: lesbian_alliance_art_show_entry@yahoo.com. Any medium is acceptable. Please price works to include a 30% commission for artwork valued under \$149 and a 40% commission for artwork over \$150. Submit entries by e-mail by April 1, 2007, and works postmarked or hand delivered by May 15, 2007.

Does your doctor know you're gay?

LGBTQ panel talks with Medical College of Wisconsin students

By Paul Masterson

Should you tell your health care provider you're gay? Should a medical history questionnaire ask? These are just two of the many questions raised during a panel discussion held on January 16 as part of the Medical College of Wisconsin's (MCW) mandatory "Human Sexuality" course for second year students. The course addresses a broad spectrum from history to health and from emotion to orientation.

MCW's collaboration with the LGBT community has existed for over 15 years. Kristine James, MCW's medical education coordinator and ten year veteran of the program, facilitates the collaboration assisted by community activist Michael Lisowski as liaison and participant recruiter.

James sees the panel's purpose as a means to offer an introduction to the realm of LGBTQ patients to future health care providers. According to James, medical students often come from conservative, religious and otherwise sheltered backgrounds so even this brief exposure helps broaden horizons.

This year, there were 14 panel members. They were divided into three groups, each including lesbian, gay and transgender participants, speaking before 60-75 students. The session opened with introductions, coming out stories and experiences with the health care system.

Although some revealed understanding and empathy, most documented a palpable inequality of care. LGBTQ patients and their partners face a system fraught with institutionalized ignorance, blatant homophobia, and legal restrictions. Many stories detailed situations in which health care was denied or doctor-patient confidentiality ignored because of sexual orientation.

Discussion topics ranged from "how can health care providers ask sensitive questions?" and "how can they understand the specific needs of LGBTQ patients?" Students were encouraged to ask questions throughout the session.

One panel's two transgender members related compelling stories and statistics about their specific health care issues. A female to male individual cited an insurance problem - recognized as male, a pap smear wasn't covered by his policy. The utter insensitivity vis-à-vis transgender patients common among health care providers was also cited. This

includes "misgendered" use of pronouns when speaking with or about the individual as well as blatant breaches of confidentiality. The students responded with genuine compassion, asking questions about ambiguous gender births and other related issues.

In another panel, the struggle for mutual understanding was reversed. Three members said they would not be treated by a white, male, heterosexual physician. This revelation implies the deep frustration with the state of LGBT health care—one that requires the obvious solution of better informed doctors.

The reality of Wisconsin's new anti-gay constitutional amendment was a topic of discussion. Panelists reiterated the amendment's impact on LGBTQ health has implications beyond hospital visitation and other health related rights. State enforced second-class citizenship and denial of equality certainly creates a negative environment for the gay population. It reinforces negative self-worth and self-perception of gay individuals and, has the potential of seriously compromising mental health in our community.

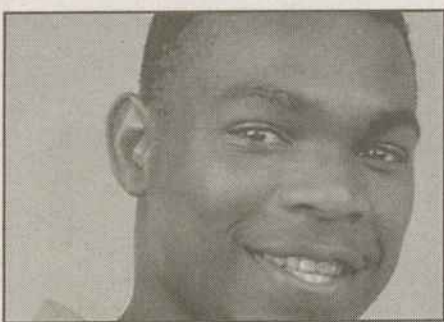
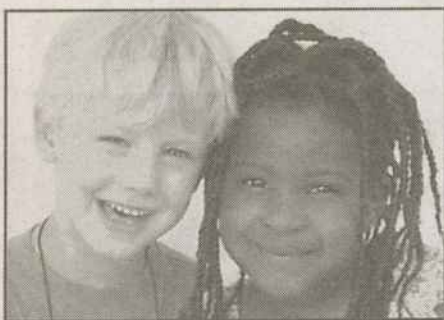
In order to give the best care, the panel's ultimate advice given to students was two-fold: ask questions and leave personal attitudes at the examination room door.

A better informed future?

Over the years, James noted, there has been an ever-increasing improvement in the students' response to the program. 15 years ago, when the class was asked 'who knows a gay person?' there was barely a positive response. Nowadays, the question is answered with a sea of raised hands. That implies that previously encountered isolation, ignorance and prejudices are receding.

Michael Lisowski reviewed this year's panel session. "This year's inclusion of four transgender panelists really expanded the horizon. It can be overwhelming for students to get so much complex information at once. But it helps them understand our diversity," he said.

In general, this non-mainstream input remains pertinent and definitely benefited the students. And, although the 90 minute session was much too brief to cover the myriad of LGBTQ health issues, it did show the obvious need for the subject's continued integration into the standard curriculum - perhaps, someday, as a course unto itself.



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To Make Life Easier?

Months after the Fair Wisconsin campaign, I still think of Mike Tate's words.

"If I have children, I pray they're not gay. Not because I (would) love them less but because I think it has to be so much harder to be born gay," said Tate, to high school students in Madison. (As quoted in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel on October 14, 2006)

Certainly, we all have hopes and dreams for our kids, sometimes long before they are born or created. Parenting involves an ongoing process of adjusting those dreams to the realities of what our children become: their personalities, appearance, interests and orientations. Sometimes it's a small shift: other times a large leap. Every day, this natural parenting process impacts my family, even now as my kids, ages 16-21, are studying abroad, partnering, partying, decorating apartments, doing mission work, excelling

in the arts and in life. I pray they make good choices and as I adjust my past dreams to the realities my children exemplify, I love them no matter what.

But did I ever pray that any of my kids would not be gay? Or that they would not be Asian, Black, Hispanic (raised in a mostly Caucasian family), male, female, adopted, twins? That they'd be ADHD-free, gender-stereotypical and never be bullied? That they'd have just the right amount of intelligence, creativity or beauty? Did it ever occur to me to pray, "please, life, be easier for my kids?" Absolutely not!

I hope that my three kids (who, among all three, really do exemplify all of the "under-represented minority" and other factions listed above) will grow from challenges, that they will reach outside of themselves to improve the world and that they will not just succeed in school and life but find their unique life purposes, whatever those may be.

Granted, I do not intentionally throw my kids into conflicts they are not prepared for or encourage them to seek dangerous situations. And I do pray for them, for their future mates, their successes, hopes and dreams.

When I am aware of specific challenges my kids encounter, I pray for their wisdom, grace, poise and sometimes for an advocate or ally to emerge to guide them when I am unable. But I never wish that the road is smooth, or challenges erased, that people conform to the patterns of the world and that all exist without strife. Rather, I hope that they learn and grow from every experience so that they are prepared for the next one.

Of course life is full of grueling challenges and tempest-tossed days. The Amendment campaign required hard work, and Mike Tate, you did well. Your leadership and words provoked controversy, curiosity, growth and open discussion. That's superb.



PARENTING

Cyndie Ody-Weis (MAMAQLN@yahoo.com) 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*.

Our LGBT kids may not necessarily have an easier glide through life because of your work and that's OK. The sweetest outcome for our kids is having more people aware of their struggles, more allies to step forward and a greater piece of the world to support them as they master life's challenges—really difficult ones.

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I want to see LGBT people on TV and in the movies, not as talk show hosts, campy urbanites or tragic AIDS patients, but in an unexceptional way. Thankfully, a number of movies and shows now feature gay-themed plots, but why are we so invisible in everybody else's world?

I do salute Orbitz for its recent TV commercial, which pits a savvy lesbian couple against clueless hets in a scramble for last-minute hotel reservations. The women 'win' and exchange a chaste kiss. A shadowy graphic flashes the Orbitz gay travel website, and although a bit hesitantly, the commercial at least addresses the fact that LGBT people are a huge segment of the traveling population. Apparently, companies are willing to stick their necks out in pursuit of a few bucks.

The big screen, however, is not faring as well. Take 'The Pursuit of Happyness.' The movie takes place in the Bay Area in the early 80's. So why are there no gay people walking down the streets, ever? I happened to live in San Francisco at the time and regularly took the 22 Fillmore bus that Will, Jaden and all the straight people were on. Honey, there was at least one drag queen or leather guy or diesel dyke on every bus. In those days, the public-transportation cruising was better than the women's bathroom at an Ellen concert. Where was everybody when 'Pursuit's' cameras started rolling?

The Rev. Cecil Williams, whose Glide Memorial Church hosts the homeless shelter



LESBIAN VIEW

Lesley Salas is a Cuban-American lesbian mother of two. She currently enjoys life in Riverwest with her blended family: her partner, their lovable dog and disgruntled cat

featured in the movie, has always publicly endorsed LGBT people as children of God. Enlightened religious leaders in San Francisco started the tradition of solidarity with the gay community back in the 50's. There are photos of raided drag balls where pastors are rounded up into police paddy wagons alongside the queens.

Glide's shelter - located in the heart of the Tenderloin, home to the misplaced and down-and-out - would have been very diverse in the early 80's. How about including a tranny teen runaway? It would be more representative of Rev. Williams' ministry. I saw a glimmer of queer hope in the all-too-brief shot of the choir. Holy show tunes! Gay and lesbian people have been hiding in plain sight in church choirs forever.

Director Alfonso Cuarón's film, 'Children of Men' contains another missed opportunity. In this futuristic film, the human race has become sterile. The movie is a fascinating glimpse at English-speaking culture through a Mexican director's eyes. Immigrants are treated like caged animals, transit papers are impossible to get and the powerful rule through violence and neglect. Sound familiar?

As much as I delighted in the 'undocumented as good guys,' the next morning I woke up with an unsettling feeling. Hey, if the old 'you're an abomination because homosexuals don't breed' argument is suddenly removed, what effect would there be on our status in society?

I found both movies very worthwhile but - geez - when is it going to be our turn to be part of the human landscape?

J. Grant Painting

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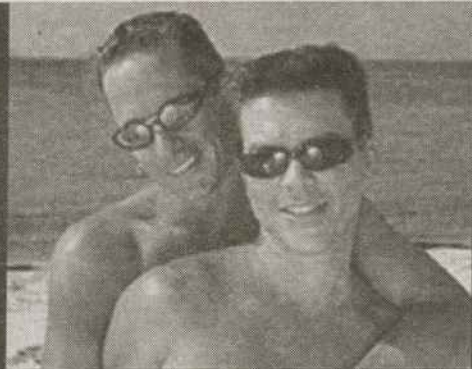


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Queer Life is the information voice of the LGBT community. As a monthly publication and the only state-wide gay newspaper headquartered in Milwaukee, each issue celebrates Wisconsin's diverse population with boldness and class. From what's happening locally and nationally to features on everyday life, Queer Life has got it all.

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QLife prints 10,000 copies a month. It is a free, monthly newspaper, distributed throughout Milwaukee, and the state. You can find it at coffee shops, bars, libraries, stores, and a variety of gay friendly locales.

CONTACT QLIFE:

Queer Life's offices are open to the public. Regular business hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday - Friday except for holidays.

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QLife welcomes letters to the editor and guest editorials. Letters must be signed and include author's name and phone number. Author's name will be withheld upon request. Send to editor@queerlifeneews.com.

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There's Something to be Said for Giving yourself Over

By Kate Sherry

It's been a long time since I've given myself over to whatever happens. I'm usually so caught up in deadlines, and sales levels, people to call, desks to clean, and kitty litter to scoop. It's a never-ending cycle of things that need to get DONE.

When I was in my twenties, I was seeing someone who was really into "just being". She had lots of crystals and books about healing yourself inside and out, and just living for the moment.

One day, she gave me a copy of the Celestine Prophecy by James Redfield. When I read that, I have to admit, it blew my mind. I started to look at things differently, and pay attention to what strangers had to say—why they chose me to stop for directions, or what message the crazy man on the train was trying to get across to his irritated and uncaptivated audience. Perhaps if I listened, there would be a "message" that only I would understand.

Finally, one day, after the "breakup" of the above relationship, I was wearing a small silver heart necklace she had given me. It had been dented somehow, and as I walked down a hall, hanging my head in misery, a man walked past and said, "there's a dent in your heart." I said, "you're right" in my overly dramatic fashion, totally aware of the subtext in my answer. He kept walking past me and said, "It's easy to fix, just takes a little work and a little time." I knew he was talking about the jewelry, but seriously, how does something a total stranger say to you become a message you are in need of hearing?

So, after lamenting as usual about what to write for my editorial, I decided instead to watch my newly arrived movie from Netflix. It turned out to be the movie version of "The Celestine Prophecy." I recalled the book, and who gave it to me, and poof! I had my

editorial.

See? A little time, a little faith and all dents can be worked out.

We'll have all of ours worked out soon enough. The new office space is great. My desk is a tad bit messy, but perhaps if I keep giving myself over, I will meet a professional organizer who will help me out. I just have to listen louder.

Letter to the Editor

RACIAL PROFILING IN MILWAUKEE GAY BARS

A friend of mine recently shared a disturbing story with me about an experience in one of Milwaukee's gay bars. It is not an uncommon experience for African Americans, but still disturbing to me. He was out for a routine Friday evening on the town when one of his friends suggested they go to a local leather bar. My friend is a well dressed well groomed, attractive, and African American in his late forties. Not your average looking hustler by any means. Upon entering the leather bar, he looked to see if he could spot his friends before he got himself a cocktail. He was in the bar for less than five minutes when the owner approached him and stated, "we don't allow loitering in this bar." My friend, a former manager of one Atlanta's upscale straight bars initially assumed this was a patron joking with him or using a bad pick up line. When the man stated he was the owner and reiterated that he was serious, my friend was in shock. He could not believe this man was approaching him like this when he had not even been in the bar five minutes.

My friend kept his composure and informed the owner that he was not loitering and would be purchasing a drink momentarily had the owner not been so rude. The bouncer immediately joined in the conversation and asked my African American friend to leave the bar. My friend agreed to leave, but stated this was no way to treat a paying customer and that he would not patronize this bar again.

The associates he was meeting at the bar, also African American, said this type of thing happens all the time there and he had to get used to it. My friend was appalled and stated he would never accept that type of treatment and how no one should accept it.

The bottom line is racial profiling still exists in Milwaukee Gay bars. When white gays want high numbers in voting, PrideFest patronage, or to boost failing bar business, all are welcomed. However, if the establishment has a good clientele and successful patronage, African Americans may be tolerated but not welcomed.

Can't we all just get along?

Gregory L. Bates, Milwaukee.

Letter to the Editor

LIGHTEN UP GARY

I keep re-reading the article by Gary Hollander titled "Last Call" in the January Queer Life, and every time I think—That man needs a Dirty Martini and a good Dirty Dance.

While I appreciate his concern for the safety and well being of the Gay Community, I can't



help think that he would like to monitor the Morality of the Community as much as the Straight Government leaders do, or more. Nothing is worse than a Preacher that can't handle something himself and is pissed off at those who can.

Why always look at the worst situation and say we all need protection from ourselves? As if all older gay men are drunk and molesting the youth of today. As if all the 18-20 year olds are drinking at these events. How pathetic.

I do not go to "Chicken Nights" when they are offered at the clubs. I am 46 and do not have the desire to feel the "sense of freshness, edginess, sexual tension, wistfulness and curiosity" that he suggests the bar owners use these nights to provide.

That smacks of near pedophilia and is insulting to the gay community. The reason for these events is, like it or not, gay bars and clubs are a few venues set up for fun that the straight community and government leave alone. Sure, there are those that will sneak their beer and try to take them home to bed, but last time I checked, 18 is of legal age for sex and it is the 18 year olds decision to put that bottle to their lips.

These businesses are not "creating a social venue that was so important for gay and bisexual men" they are creating a venue that is fun. When was the last time you worked up a good sweat dancing shirtless at a community center?

Steve Balistreri

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Gary Hollander's response:

It is truly a pleasure to see that a health column gets read and that it prompts passionate feelings in some readers. As I note in the QHealth this month, our sense of who we are as humans gets attached in strong ways to our health. No one likes to feel accused or minimized personally or generally. I believe a somewhat more dispassionate read of the January column will clarify that I am not talking about alcohol use or even alcohol abuse. If I were to do so, I would have likely included mortality rates (over 3% of deaths are related to alcohol use) to suggest moderation and rational use of alcohol. Instead, my article urges that we stop doing the work of alcohol companies by promoting use among those who are not of legal age to do so. More than with any other article I have written, I suspected that this would be a potentially unpopular one. When passing a draft by colleagues, they suggested I wasn't hard hitting enough on the issues. I stand by my point: alcohol promotion to minors is not rational given the potential dangers involved.

QLife Quickies

Aurora loves ARCW

MILWAUKEE—(January 5, 2007)—Aurora Health Care is making a \$140,000, multi-year investment in the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) to advance its mission of providing HIV medical, dental and mental health care services and to help assure access to comprehensive health care for all HIV patients regardless of their ability to pay.

Through this contribution, Aurora is committing \$90,000 in general operating support for the ARCW Medical Center and has made an additional lead donation of \$50,000 to support an ARCW capital campaign to expand and renovate the Medical Center.

"Our investment in the ARCW Medical Center continues a strong commitment to AIDS treatment," said Nick Turkal, MD, Aurora Health Care CEO.

The expansion and renovation of the ARCW Medical Center is scheduled to begin in January, 2007 with a completion date set for September.

Gays fancy the Net

ROCHESTER, N.Y.—January 2006—A recent online survey of 2,541 U.S. adults (ages 18 and over) conducted in November 2006 found that more online gay, lesbian and bisexual individuals use social networks Friendster and MySpace per week compared to online heterosexuals. Other well-known websites such as YouTube, Craigslist and personal web logs also were found to be more popular among GLB individuals. Harris Interactive®, a global market research and consulting firm found that nearly twice as many gays and lesbians (32%) say they are online for between 24 and 168 hours per week, compared to 18 percent of heterosexuals.

Don't bother Asking or Telling

Washington DC—In an op-ed published in the New York Times, John M. Shalikashvili, retired Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, says Congress should give "serious reconsideration" to "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the ban on openly lesbian, gay and bisexual military personnel. Shalikashvili, who supported the ban on open service in 1993, writes that "I now believe that if gay men and lesbians served openly in the United States military, they would not undermine the efficacy of the armed forces."

The Pentagon has dismissed more than 11,000 men and women under this law.

Save the date!

Judy Shepard will be coming to speak at Carroll College on Monday, February 12 at 7:00 pm in the Campus Center Ballroom. The event is FREE and open to all members of the Carroll community and the public. The event is sponsored by Student Senate, CAB (College Activities Board), and Student Life. In October 1998, Judy and Dennis Shepard lost their 21-year-old son Matthew to a murder motivated by anti-gay hate. Their ordeal moved thousands of people around the world to attend vigils and rallies in Matthew's honor. Determined to prevent their son's fate from befalling others, Judy and Dennis established the Matthew Shepard Foundation to carry on Matthew's legacy by embracing the just causes he had championed. This includes working for gay and lesbian equality, hate crime legislation, and raising awareness using programs developed by the foundation. Judy is now speaking to audiences nationwide about what they can do as individuals and communities to make this world a more accepting place for everyone regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, and expression. All proceeds from her speaking engagements go to support the Matthew Shepard Foundation.

Public Health is Messy

We are all precious, and not in that silly, sitcom soundtrack way. We are precious, worthwhile, and valuable.

Our health is precious, too. It is not a commodity, and we know it. It can't be bought or sold; it is ours. We bristle when our feelings about health, our health beliefs, behaviors, and aspirations are dissected or maligned. We regularly struggle, all in our own ways, to align what is true about us as humans to what is said about us and done to us related to our health.

We fight back or walk away when we aren't treated well by a health care provider or the public health system. This is true for us as transgender, bisexual, lesbian, and gay people. It is true of heterosexual people, too.

So discussing our health and determining a health issue to address in our community is challenging work. Community Health Improvement Projects (CHIPs) get messy whenever they are done, whether in Adams County or in Waukesha County. These decision-making processes get messy when LGBT people do them, too. No one wants to feel left out, disregarded, or used. Tough choices about priorities make us contentious as times.

Over the past four years, Diverse and Resilient – along with academic partners at the Medical College of Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health, and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee – has been working to build consensus on a

single health issue for LGBT leaders in Wisconsin to address. Using Healthiest Wisconsin 2010, our state health plan, as a starting point, over 150 public health partners have discussed priorities and the means to address them. In those four years we whittled the list from 11 to three: alcohol abuse, tobacco use, and mental health issues.

On January 21, 2007 42 leaders from 22 organizations in Milwaukee and Madison met at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee to attempt to identify a single priority to address between 2008 and 2010. (A snow storm kept 9 participants from elsewhere in the state from attending). About 37% of attendees are female; 53% are male, and 5% identified as transgender. Nearly 41% are people of color.

Teams of participants considered 16 variables that reflect our community readiness to address any one of the health issues. They also heard about the available evidence on health disparities, support for interventions that were promising, and mortality rates associated with alcohol abuse, tobacco use, and mental health problems.

A tally of the scores from the team discussions identified tobacco use as the priority health issue which communities were most ready to address. However, two votes taken by participants first produced a majority interest in mental health issues, then a majority interest in tobacco use. Our community issues with alcohol were a

distant third choice in both votes. Passions were apparent in discussions about the selections. It was clear we care deeply about our health. Things got a bit messy. They do when the public is put into public health.

It could be argued that our community cannot reach consensus on a single priority for initial planning and preparation for a statewide health intervention. We might be too disparate across gender, class, race, and orientation.

But, just like with other CHIPs across the country, the dust will settle. We will figure out what makes sense to do first. For example, it will likely make sense to prioritize LGBT communities of color as we move a prevention program forward. People of color are often disproportionately missed by prevention and outreach programs and we can set this



Q 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. He is also owner and principal consultant of Gary Hollander Enterprises, which assists organizations with their development, emphasizing change management, team development and cultural competency.

right.

We can also build trust among ourselves and with our public health partners along the way to identify what we will do second, third, and fourth. We have loads of health issues to work on and finite human and financial resources to do so.



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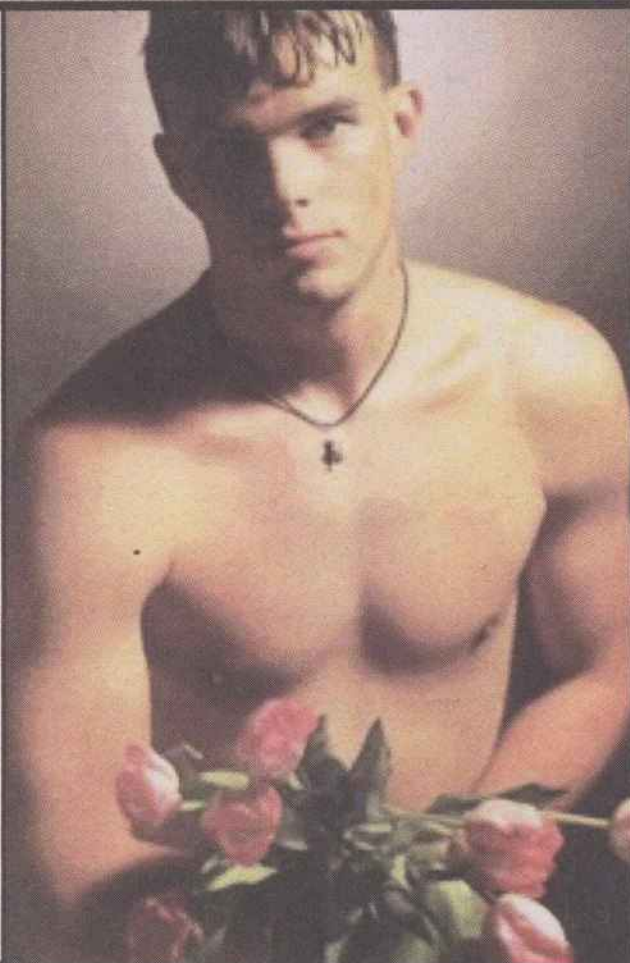
Diverse&Resilient is a statewide organization committed to the healthy development of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in Wisconsin. We accomplish our mission by helping grow the organizations and youth and adult leaders who aid us as a community.

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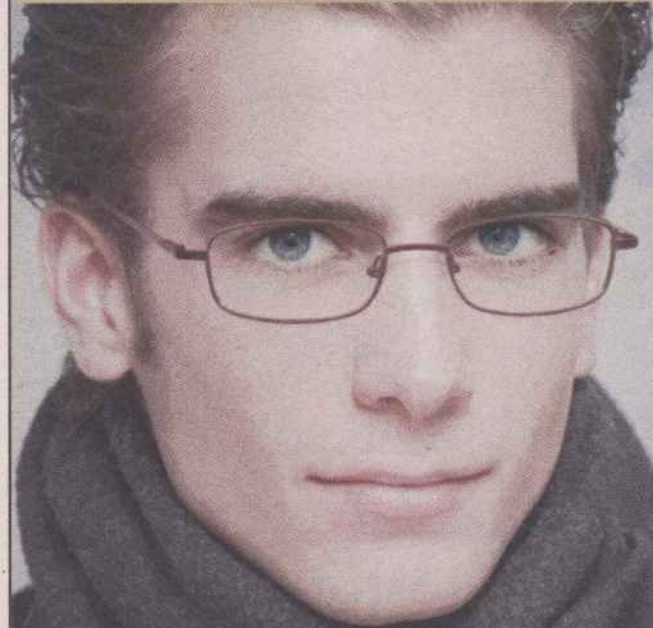
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A Blest Path to Fatherhood

Several years ago my partner and I were at dinner with friends. We started talking about what we hoped to accomplish in life and what regrets we might have when we're eighty. I immediately said, "I'll regret not being a Dad." I shared that I had long wanted to have children but, when I came out, it became impossibility.

"That's silly," one of our friends said, "you can adopt!" She and her husband were looking into adoption and they encouraged us to join them at an information session with the Special Needs Adoption Network.

As we learned more about adoption we realized that it was something that we could do. In 2000 we welcomed home our eldest son, Tomas, and in 2002 his younger brother, David. We adopted them from Guatemala as infants.

At first I thought adoption was simply a practical way to make a family. But once Tomas and David entered our family I began to see that it was its own blessed journey. Like all spiritual journeys, it involves both loss and unexpected gifts.

When we first started looking into adoption a friend said he wouldn't think

of adopting because he wanted a child that looked like him. This is a real and strong emotion, perhaps deeply rooted in our DNA and its' imperative to survive. It is reflected culturally in the many people who see "blood" children as more valuable than adopted ones.

My goal as father is not to have a Junior Me. Instead, I see fatherhood as continually discovering who my children are with wonder and amazement. Our eldest is quite coordinated; at two he surpassed my athletic ability. For the first time as an adult I have to learn the rules to baseball and, even worse, how to pitch. Adoptive parents know something that all parents should know:

our children are a gift, not a copy, whose identity is to be discovered and celebrated.

My children have also lost the connection to their birth parents and I know this loss is part of who they are in ways they can't even name. They wonder sometimes about life before they came to live with us. One of them cried one day, "I missed you before I came home." We share what photos we have of their birth parents and their foster home. We know that someday they may want to seek out their birth parents. In the quiet ways that happen in a loving home, we care for boys

I see fatherhood as continually discovering who my children are with wonder and amazement.

who have a bit of grief in their early lives. We adopted in part because we knew we could offer a home to two boys who for various reasons would have been orphans in Guatemala. A perfect home might be with two birth parents. But we have found grace not in perfection, but in life as it is. We've found joy and struggle in parenting, humor and sleepless nights. Through this journey we've come to know ourselves and each other and two great boys in ways that would have been impossible if we'd never begun this journey.

Editor's Note: Andrew's family is profiled in *Families of Value: Personal Profiles*



RELIGION

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

of *Pioneering Lesbian and Gay Parents* by Robert Bernstein

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Speak, March, and Sing to End Violence Against Women

New Year's Eve on Milwaukee's South Side. It's late at night, almost morning, and three women are walking to their cars near Walker's Pint. A car drives by, words are exchanged and the male driver shouts something derogatory about "Lesbians." He then turns around and proceeds to intentionally run the women down with his car. After he hits them, he drives off. He's still out there driving that car and meanwhile there's little public awareness about this hate crime. This tragedy provides another example of how violence against women in this society is seemingly commonplace and almost always ignored.

Violence against women, girls, and Lesbians is a local, national and global fact. It is, in many cases, condoned by cultural or religious values. At the risk of using two words that many people don't feel comfortable using or even hearing, it has to be said that violence against women is rooted in Patriarchy and misogyny, both of which are systematic structural oppressions and not personal traits held by all men. Patriarchy defined is a social system of power relations that values and rewards males and traits associated with masculinity above females and femininity. Misogyny defined means hatred or fear of women. As historical and structural oppressions Patriarchy and misogyny are embedded in all that we do as a society. They are internalized and carry deep consequences for both men and women at

structural and interpersonal levels. Violence is one of these consequences.

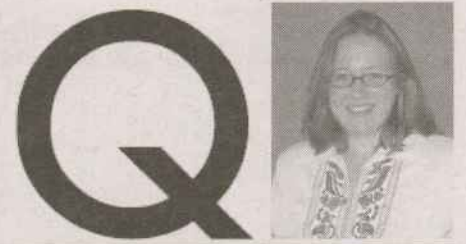
Violence against women is not just physical – it is also found in our language and in media, advertising and other images. When things in our wider culture or subculture objectify, devalue, misrepresent, and belittle females, we need to speak out about it. When we hear people use the phrase "wife beater" to describe a white tank top, remind them of the roots of that phrase and the reality of domestic abuse. We cannot simply work on the symptoms of violence against women; we have to attack the cause of this violence at its root— Patriarchal values, expectations and ideals about women and men.

How can we work to stop violence against women and break down the systems that support it? One way to do this is to share our stories as females living in a society that despite many Feminist gains and despite the understanding and support of so many wonderful men, is still a Patriarchy. We need to talk about how it felt to grow up female, our experiences of and in our bodies, and we need to talk about our experiences with violence. And we need people to listen. This is precisely what Feminist playwright Eve Ensler and thousands of women all over the world have been doing every Valentine's Day since 1998 with the organization of "V Day: Until The Violence Stops." V-Day aims to promote awareness of global violence against

women and girls. The V stands for Victory over violence against women, Valentine, and Vagina and is tied to the success of Ensler's play, *The Vagina Monologues*.

Symbolic, meaningful, and focused protests and marches are another way to raise awareness about this issue. During the early, radical days of the second wave Feminist movement's Take Back the Night, the focus was on the emotional and empowering fact of women – yes, just women— marching through the streets in large numbers in order to literally take back the night from violence and fear and to feel what it is like to actually walk outside at night, in the dark, and to not be afraid. At these marches Holly Near's song "Fight Back" provided a strong and feminist cry of outrage, hope and female unity especially when chanted by thousands of women in unison:

"Women all around the world, every color, religion and age, one thing we have in common, we can all be battered and



WOMEN

Jennifer Curtis has been an active member of the Milwaukee Lesbian community since 2002. She is also involved in the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Visioning Project, a local group that is working to create unified and respectful collaborations between all members of our diverse community. She lives with her wife, cat and dog and is currently pursuing her PhD in Urban Studies at UWM

raped ...So we've got to fight back! In large numbers, fight back! I can't make it alone, fight back! In large numbers, together we can make a safe home."

And she's still right. No matter the divisions or difference between us as females, we are still targeted victims of male violence simply because of our sex and the gender. It is still time to Fight Back!

For more information on violence against women and girls, check out www.vday.org and Amnesty International's Stop Violence Against Women campaign at <http://web.amnesty.org/act-forwomen/index-eng>. Also see the Family Violence Prevention Fund's End Abuse campaign at <http://www.endabuse.org/resources/facts/>. V-Day, Milwaukee will be held on March 3, at the Healing Center.

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4. "Best Gay Romance"

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2. "Best Lesbian Romance"

ed. by Angela Brown

In "Best Lesbian Romance," that supreme lesbian romantic Angela Brown has collected the juiciest, most seductive lesbian love stories, where these erotic stories put a fabulous new spin on lesbian love.

3. "Too Close to Touch"

by Georgia Beers

Life gets complicated for Gretchen Kaiser when she finds love where she least expected and it turns out to be nothing like she expected, especially when the woman she wants is almost too close to touch...

4. "Writing My Love"

by Nikki Rahan

Vonny Smith is the author of best-selling romance novels yet her editor Diana has remained unaware she is Vonny's inspiration. Can Vonny woo Diana through her writing, hoping Diana will slide into love with her before she is even aware what is happening?

5. "Best Lesbian Love Stories: New York"

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Sticks and stones can break my bones, but...

In recent weeks it has been all over the media that Isaiah Washington, of ABC's medical drama *Grey's Anatomy*, used a derogatory slur to describe a fellow cast member. That cast member, T.R. Knight, just happens to be a homosexual. And the word used just happens to be 'faggot.'

In an article by Lynn Elber, an AP Television writer, she reported that Washington had been both chastised by his network and that the Gay & Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation demanded that he apologize, though actual consequences are uncertain.

Clearly, we're dealing with a very sensitive word that can easily offend many people. But why? What's so offensive about it? Just because people use it with the intention of being offensive? That seems sort of silly, doesn't it?

Let's take a look at the history of the word: In England, around 1300, 'faggot' meant bundle of sticks, generally used for burning. Supposedly, presumed homosexuals were also lit aflame and used as fuel to burn witches at the stake. There's one possible connection to the common-day meaning. Another can be found in its other historical British use, to mean 'old woman.' The meaning later changed to something along the lines of just 'woman,' and then 'woman/child,' and then perhaps somehow made the leap to 'effeminate man' and then 'homosexual.' The actual connection is unknown (straightdope.com).

What we *do* know is that the term 'fag' was first used to describe homosexuals around 1915. Back then, it was obviously social taboo to be a homosexual, and that taboo continued for decades, so the negative connotation stuck with the word. But now that it's the 21st century and homosexuals have established themselves (to a point) as a perfectly acceptable group of people, that taboo is disappearing.

So what do we do with the leftover derogatory words? Well, I used to snap on people whenever I heard them using the word 'faggot,' telling them that it was really completely unacceptable to use that sort of vocabulary, and that all it did was promote negative stereotypes pertaining to homosexuals. Okay, maybe I was sort of right, but I probably irritated more people than I enlightened.

The rather unfortunate truth of the matter is that the words 'fag' and 'faggot' aren't going to disappear. Until the world reaches some sort of blissful equilibrium and nobody even recognizes the differences in sexuality, or race, sex and ethnicity for that matter, there are going to be words to distinguish between them, and chances are some will be 'derogatory.' But when it comes down to it, words are only derogatory and offensive if you perceive them to be that way.

For example, I have this friend who once said to me, "I think it's really stupid when people call me a faggot. I mean, it's like, 'Yeah... what's your point?'" To be honest, that's probably the best attitude I've heard



YOUTH

Harry James Hanson, a junior at Shorewood High School, is Co-President of the school's Gay-Straight Alliance, as well as an active member of both its drama department and school newspaper.

yet. Getting angry, aggressive, or depressed hardly seems like a positive response to me. It's much more socially and personally productive to ignore, or, in certain situations even *embrace* the term. By that I mean that I have several female friends who hold the proud, self-appointed title of 'fag hag.' One of them frequently refers to me as her 'favorite fag.' These uses don't bother me. In fact, I find them kind of humorous. Mocking the word and its negative connotation just makes it a little bit easier to deal with. Laugh in Fred Phelps' face.

So let's suppose for a moment that you are a gay man. Would you really be offended if someone told you that he/she would like to use your flaming carcass to fuel the burning of a supposed witch? Or if somebody called you an old woman? I'd probably just be confused and dismissive. 'Fag,' like any word in the English language, is only as insolent as you make it. This isn't to say that Washington, of *Grey's Anatomy*, was perfectly in line, though a much more positive response would have been to just brush it off. *Words can never hurt you.*



POLITICS

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

Now that there's been time to accept that the constitutional amendment passed and 59% of our WI neighbors voted to deny our families the same protections that they take for granted, it's time to examine other historical foibles where the majority vote was misused by manipulating politicians out for advantage. The irony is that it used to be the wealthy and conservative that feared or recognized the moral and practical limits of majority power. Winston Churchill noted that democracy is the worst form of government except for all the others; Federalist Paper 51, in the early days of our country, remarked "In a society under the forms of which the stronger faction can readily unite and oppress the weaker, anarchy may as truly be said to reign as in a state of nature..."

Throughout the ages there have been politicians willing to do the legislative equivalent of yelling fire in a crowded theater. Below is a sad roll call from history:

1901 — Alabama politicians stampede to protect the sanctity of marriage by placing a ban on interracial marriage in the state constitution. While this constitutional

Power to the People*

provision was made moot by a 1967 Supreme Court decision, Alabama's chamber of commerce types moved to formally excise the discriminatory amendment in 2000 to burnish Alabama's image. Nearly 40% voted to keep the ban, with many rural areas voting to retain it, but the amendment was repealed at last, 99 years after it first took effect.

1921 — New Mexico legislators, in a bout of anti-Asian pique, amend that state's constitution to ban non-citizen immigrants the right to own property; voters in New Mexico repeal the ban in 2006 with nearly 70% of the vote.

1933 — Nazi appeals to fears of Communists and Jews make the Nazi party the largest party in the German Reichstag. Hitler, leading a strange coalition of alienated working people and the superrich, promises his industrialist funders that it will be the last election for a long time.

1964 — Voters in California, a "progressive" state, vote to repeal the Legislature's recent passage of a fair housing act. (In a brutal campaign to block civil rights for African Americans, segregationists used tactics like voter suppression, murder, trumped up criminal charges, evictions, and wiretapping almost casually, but compared to our age, the referenda remained mostly holstered).

1994 — California voters pass Prop 187, a measure heavily promoted by Republican Governor Pete Wilson to deny undocumented immigrants health care, schooling and other basic services in a bid to boost his reelection numbers. The mainstream opposition, known as "Taxpayers United against Prop 187," tried

to keep Latinos invisible in order to win over white voters, whose solid support for the measure never cracked anyway. Some gave the unschooled grassroots opposition's campaign of mass rallies credit for turning bare majorities of Latino opposition into an overwhelming no vote, and turning support for the anti-immigration measure among Asians and African Americans into majority opposition. The Republican attack's galvanizing effect on Latinos is widely credited with demographic alignments that have made California a decidedly Democratic state and Latinos a serious political force.

2006 — Michigan voters pass a measure to limit affirmative action after a failed opposition campaign focuses on the ban's negative effect on women, not people of color.

All of these regrettable moments in history were not spontaneous, but rather pre-meditated acts by politicians who saw personal advantage in exploiting a minority and would in fact adamantly oppose giving people a vote where clear majorities exist on other issues like universal health care, higher minimum wages, or other communitarian goals. The temptation for a politician to raise his profile, to go higher in elective office, for an operative to gain a percent or two on the margins, is just too strong to leave unchecked. That's why our system relies so heavily on checks and balances, and why politicians who exploit prejudice should attract scandal worse than that for marital infidelity or embezzlement. When it comes to "power to the people," some restrictions apply.

Reshape Eating Behaviors

Hey, how's that New Year resolution doing? Did you hit your goal or are you still stuck in your every day couch potato ways, which as you know can be very fattening. Put down the remote and stop wining about the gym being over-crowded. The way I look at it, you have to choose. You can wine about it or do something about it!! **YOU PICK IT!!** Sweeney's Gym is clean and not over-crowded, if you were wondering. OK, eating is a behavior that is largely controlled by people with whom we live or socialize, places in which we carry out our lives, and commonly lead to extra food being eaten. We may also be unaware of bad eating habits that can lead to excess calorie intake, e.g. eating quickly, large mouthfuls, eating when tense or bored, finishing a large serving of food when not hungry.

Here we go big boy! Hints to help uncover and correct those bad eating habits include:

- Don't eat while engaged in other activities; watching TV, reading. Eat only at the table, not at the fridge or while standing.
- Don't eat quickly. Chewing slowly allows time to register a feeling of fullness. Don't use fingers, only utensils. Cut food into smaller pieces. Don't load your fork until the previous mouthful is finished.
- Don't purchase problem high calorie foods. Shop from a list to prevent impulse buying. Avoid shopping with children.
- Buy snack foods in the smallest package. The larger the serving size or package, the more you are likely to eat or drink.
- Plan meals and cook meals in advance. Stick to a set menu.
- Promise yourself that when you feel the urge to snack, you will engage in some activity that will distract you away from food (e.g. go for a walk, brush your teeth, phone a friend, what ever it takes so you



FITNESS

Sweeney's Gym is family owned and operated by Michael Sweeney, a personal trainer for the last 8 years. Sweeney's prides itself on caring for people and their health

don't put that Ho-Ho where you don't want it.

You must remember how important strength training is in all of this as a healthy way of shedding some pounds. Strength training further builds muscle and aids body reshaping. You can also eat more food! Note: It is muscle which burns fat. Each extra pound of muscle burns an extra 100 calories daily even while you sleep! Weight from exercised muscle is okay. It is surplus fat that is potentially harmful.

- Avoid injury by beginning with walking, low impact aerobics or weight supported exercise; e.g. swimming, cycling. Avoid competitive sports.
- How Much? Start with 10-20 minutes / day and progress to 30-45 minutes / day – even if broken into 5-10 minute lots. It all adds up! Aim to achieve 250-500 calories of exercise daily.
- How Often? While aerobic fitness requires only 3-4 sessions weekly, weight control is a daily event which requires daily exercise.

For more help, get a personal trainer. It is a great investment. Sweeney's Gym has customized workout programs for everyone. We can help you make sense of this complex, thing called weight control.

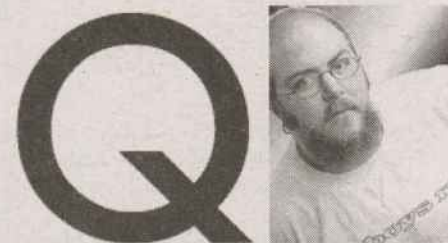
An Event not to be Missed

Queer life in Milwaukee is strange. Talk one-on-one to many local LGBT people and they'll say they feel lonely and unconnected and wish there was more "queer community" here. Yet many of these same people don't show up when there ARE community meetings and events. Many say they don't come because "there's no one else like me there," or "those people don't get my issues." Others point to more concrete barriers: they don't have transportation, or they have dependent children or work conflicts. Maybe they have disabilities that make it hard for them to get around, or that make them, they feel, too visible in public. In blue-collar Milwaukee, many don't have enough money to pay entry fees, and some worry if their clothes will "fit in."

Not one of those barriers is a valid reason for skipping the FORGE Forward 2007 Conference and Intensives. Conference programming runs from Thursday morning, March 29 through Sunday evening, April 1; no one works during all those hours! It's taking place at the Milwaukee Four Points Sheraton, which is on the 11 and 55 bus lines and offers free parking. There's free childcare for those who pre-register by March 1, and scholarship assistance for those who apply by February 15. Or volunteer your way in: for each two-hour volunteer shift you fill (or houseguest you sign up to host overnight) you can earn a free pass to any of six plenaries.

Don't like big crowds? Some of the workshops will be small and personal. Prefer to blend into the background? Hundreds will be seated at the plenaries. Have disabilities? Maybe you'd like to spend a whole day at the "Breaking Isolation, Building Community: A Gathering for Disabled and Deaf People and Our Allies." Or maybe you'd be interested in our workshops on people with autism or multiple chemical sensitivities. Got "body issues?" You'll find people who can relate in the workshops on the intersection between trans liberation and fat politics, or the one on body image and eating disorders.

Tired of being the only disabled black gay transman you know? We guarantee you will meet at least one other at the Conference. Are you a lesbian partnered



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.

with a genderqueer who is having problems with your parents? Come to the workshop on family friction. Have you been quietly "passing" for years? Maybe you'd like to hear what the experts are saying about living stealth in a post-9/11 world. Are you parenting a child who won't follow the gender rules? There will be other parents struggling with the same issues at the Gender Variant Youth Intensive. Do you wish you were parenting a child? "And Baby Makes Three" will address the ways queer people add children to their families. Been around the block a few times? SAGE-Milwaukee is hosting a reception. Not sure whether you are trans or "something else"? You'll see and learn about more gender identities than you ever thought possible by simply observing from any public area of the hotel!

Maybe you're an activist who could brush up your skills at the all-day training on building multi-racial coalitions, or at the workshops on running speakers bureaus and confronting anti-rural bias. Are you single and adventurous? Maybe you'd like to show up for speed dating. Does the word "discourse" turn you on? There are nearly 20 workshops in the academic/theoretical track. Are you a film nut or a book lover? There'll be a film festival and author readings running throughout the weekend.

No matter what your interests and issues, this Conference is an unprecedented chance to meet others of like mind. What excuse will you have for not showing up?

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(Homo) Core Values



ZINES

Christopher Wilde (cwilde@queerlifeneews.com) is a co-founder of QZAP, artist, DJ and Mac tech support specialist building community in Milwaukee's Riverwest.

Most cultural and political movements experience growing pains and often reinvent themselves along the way. "Homocore" has really only rebranded itself as "queercore" to be more inclusive, but definitely started out with values that embraced all flavors of marginalized queer folks. These weren't token efforts, and they weren't as a result of some attempt to be PC. From dyke punks on motorcycles to African American punk drag queen divas, homocore was blessed with an amazing set of genes that has fueled it along for a generation and still to this day points the way forward in how to build community and defeat fascism in all forms.

The eponymous **Homocore** [Issue 7, 1991, 64 pages] is perhaps the most fondly remembered of all queer zines, but was not the first yet managed to broadcast information to radical queers in a transcendent way that cemented its

reputation as a leader in the evolution of the scene. From the cover photo of Donna of Team Dresch showing off her yo-yo champion skills, through the self-admitted haphazard methodology behind the writing, Homocore still reads as if it were fresh and hot off the press (it helps that the President at the time was also named Bush and the line between terrorists and freedom fighters was just as thin as it is today). Editor Tom Jennings is forthright about lacking the polish and attention to detail that some people expect from zines (for example, the space where a missing graphic should have been has a handwritten "oops" in its place) and his honesty is validation of why so many people are fans of the zine. The contributors to this issue are also some of the key people who propelled the homocore/queercore movement from the slam pits to the streets, folks like Deke Nihilson, G. B. Jones, Bruce LaBruce, and Larry Livermore. Homocore is archived on-line at <http://wps.com/archives/HOMOCORE/> along with a brief history of the zine written by Tom.

In Your Face and Up North

Homocore has a portability that allowed it to flourish wherever queers and punk rock scenes existed and at times many North American cities had their own brand of Homocore, including Toronto, Ontario. Editor Alan O'Connor harnessed (pun intended) his energy, enthusiasm, and political beliefs to create **Homocore Toronto** [Issue 2, 1993, 16 pages] as a

way to express how the scene evolved there. Unlike Tom Jennings' freewheeling editing and layout styles, Alan's expertise in graphic design and layout really shine. The photo quality is superb, the writing top-notch. His preference for hardcore and industrial music sets him slightly apart from the original **Homocore** zine and allows him room to throw lovely acerbic commentary along the way, as in this commentary about a club night called SHOK, "The crowd is mostly straight but people have worn fag t-shirts. When will those queer skinheads smile a bit and stop being so fucking shy?" A contributor to this issue, Lily Braindrop, wrote the centerpiece article for this issue entitled "Coming out of hiding" that was lifted from the

"Absolutely Queer" issue of a 1992 edition of the venerable punk rag **Maximum Rock'n'Roll** that deftly offered advice to young queer folks who were newly out. These bits of wisdom are timeless and still have relevance even now because they are humanistic in their approach and aren't preachy or idealistic. Alan went on after this issue to organize what was ultimately the final part of the trilogy of the SPEW queer zine event series, held in May 1993.

Special thanks to *The Lesbian and Bisexual Women 25/25 Venture* as funded by the *Cream City Foundation's Joseph R Pabst LGBT Infrastructure Fund* which awarded QZAP, along with other area organizations, a cash award in recognition of our work in the queer community.

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All That Glitters

Glitter Gleam and Glow. We can all use some of these enhancements at this limbo time on the calendar. Holidays are over; days are still short; there's not a whole lot of sun, but lots of gloom and gray. Cheer up your space and yourself by adding accessories that glitter, glimmer gleam and glow.

First, look around your place and see what you already have that you might brighten – mirrors that can be polished to a shine, metal objects such as candle sticks or lamps that can be cleaned and buffed until they glow. If you haven't anything around that can lend some brightness, try adding one of these accents:

Mirrors

The first mirrors were from the Greeks and Romans. They were disks shaped of metal with highly polished surfaces. Sometimes they had designs on back of the disks and they usually had handles. They were the predecessor of our hand mirrors and were used for personal reflection rather than decorative purposes.

Glass mirrors date from the Middle Ages. Large quantities were made in Venice starting in the sixteenth century. The backs of those mirrors were covered with a thin

A crystal hung in the center of a window will bring life to a room.

coat of tin mixed with mercury. In the early seventeenth century a thin coat of silver was applied to the back of the glass. With this process mirrors became part of household furniture and accessories.

Feng shui, the Chinese theory of design and placement instructs us that mirrors can help us to encourage the positive flow of energy. Flat, convex and concave mirrors and their placement help us to achieve this and brighten our lives at the same time.

- A convex mirror will discourage negative energy.
- A concave mirror will attract and absorb positive energy.
- A flat mirror has the benefit of providing a perfect image so that negative energy becomes positive.
- Mirrors should be hung to reflect a pleasant scene from outside.
- Mirrors should be hung in a potentially dangerous spot to deflect negative energy back on itself.
- Mirrors should be hung in a



DECORATING

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

windowless on enclosed area to promote the circulation of positive energy.

Crystals

Also according to Feng shui principles any object that brings light into an area will activate positive energy. Clear, faceted glass crystals are good sources to achieve this.

- Symmetrically shaped crystals are best to use as they don't cause imbalance.
- A crystal hung in the center of a window will bring life to a room.
- Even where there is no window, a crystal will draw in positive energy.
- Crystals don't need to be large unless your space is large.

Light

Light is essential in providing the sparkle from mirrors and crystals. During the daylight hours there is not much of a problem, but after dark light placement becomes key.

- Place a lighted lamp in a front window, in the hallway or near your entrance so that you are welcomed home.
- Place candles or a lamp or two in front of a mirror so that the light is magnified.
- Light a group of hefty candles of different height in your fireplace; it's faster, easier and cleaner than a fire.
- Arrange an assortment of scented candles on your coffee table, your bathtub or your bedroom dresser.
- Put a hurricane glass around a candle for your front porch, or sink a candle in a large glass container with sand on the bottom.
- Use a torchere or a pair to wash your walls with light.
- Put a canister upright on the floor beneath a plant to project the plants, leaves and branches on the wall and ceiling. Sparkle plenty!

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Community **Q** Calendar

FRIDAY, FEB. 2

Walk in Solidarity Against Violence. Join Supervisor Peggy West and the Walker's Point Neighborhood Walking Group to raise awareness about violence. The group will be meeting at M's (1101 S. 2nd Street, Milwaukee, 53204) 6:00 pm

SATURDAY, FEB. 3

FORGE. (For Ourselves: Reworking Gender Expression) A social support group open to all people interested in Female to Male (FTM+) and Significant Others, Family, Friends, and Allies (SOFFAs) issues. Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St. 6-10 p.m. 414-278-6031. www.forge-forward.org.

SUNDAY, FEB. 4

Brunch Club. Lesbian potluck brunch. Meet new friends the relaxed way - over food! 11 a.m. Susan.Kohler@med.ge.com.

TUESDAY, FEB. 6

Generation Q. This group aims to be fun while being open and informative, without being intimidating. So, if you're queer, or questioning, or both, and you want to talk, bring yourself down. This is a social group for 18-24 year olds. OutReach, 600 Williamson St., Madison. 7 p.m. 608-255-8582. www.outreachinc.com. Repeats February 20.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 7

Children's Service Society. CSS of WI is actively recruiting for appropriate foster providers within the LGBT/ALLY community. We need stable and secure homes for our community's children, including LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care. Informational meeting. Broad Vocabulary, 2241 S. Kinnickinnic Ave., Milwaukee. 414-453-1400.

SATURDAY, FEB. 10

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. gemini_gender_group@hotmail.com.

Lesbian Alliance Valentine's Dance. Feel the love in the air! Celebrate Valentine's Day at this woman-only event. Cash bar. Advance tickets on sale at A Woman's Touch, Broad Vocabulary, Outwords Bookstore, Outpost (all locations) and Tool Shed. 414-272-9442 or visit www.lesbianalliance.org for more information. . South Shore

Pavilion, 2900 S Shore Dr., Milwaukee 8 pm.

SUNDAY, FEB. 11

Thinking Outside the Paint Box. An informal coffee and conversation over your thoughts and ideas on how the Plymouth Arts Center can serve you. A short presentation on the Do's and Dont's of framing your artwork, from 14 years of professional framers' experience will follow. Plymouth Arts Center, 520 E. Mills St., Plymouth. 1-3 p.m. 920-892-8409.

MONDAY, FEB. 12

Outwords Book Club. Come and join the Outwords Book Club for a discussion of J.G. Hayes' highly acclaimed debut novel, Map of the Harbor Islands. Outwords Books, 2710 N. Murray Ave., Milwaukee. 7:30 p.m. 414-963-9089. www.outwordsbooks.com.

TUESDAY, FEB. 13

The Lesbian Reading Group. The book to be discussed in is Wasted Heart by Lynn Galli. Come and join in on the discussion! Outwords Books, 2710 N. Murray Ave., Milwaukee. 7 p.m. 414-963-9089. www.outwordsbooks.com.

THURSDAY, FEB. 15

Writing to Heal. Transformation through words. An ongoing writing group for allies and survivors of sexual violence and other traumatic events. Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St. 7-8:30 p.m. 414-559-2123. www.forge-forward.org.

FRIDAY, FEB. 16

Shoreline. Red, white, and black Valentine's day dance. Shoreline is an LGBT country-western dance club that teaches line dancing. Hot Water, 818 S. Water St., Milwaukee. 8:30 p.m. www.shoreline-milw.org. Repeats every Friday except February 9.

Winter-Get-Away. Celebrating 25 years of LGBT funding from the Cream City Foundation. Benefit for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender causes featuring The Bach Babes, Rhythm and Torch, and both Men's and Women's Voices Milwaukee. Mitchell Park Domes, 524 S. Layton Blvd., Milwaukee. 414-225-0244.

SATURDAY, FEB. 17

BWMT. (Black and White Men Together) Open to all

members, guests, and visitors. 7-9 p.m. Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St. 414-540-9437 ext. 3. www.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, FEB. 18

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

TUESDAY, FEB. 20

Children's Service Society. CSS of WI is actively recruiting for appropriate foster providers within the LGBT/ALLY community. We need stable and secure homes for our community's children, including LGBTQ youth in out-of-home care. Informational meeting. Anodyne Coffee Roasters, 2920 S. Kinnickinnic Ave., Milwaukee. 414-453-1400.

THURSDAY, FEB. 22

Cream City Foundation will celebrate the start of its 25 Year Anniversary Celebration with a Winter-Get-Away at the Mitchell Park Domes. For more information or tickets to the Winter-Get-Away call 414.221.0244 or visit www.creamcityfoundation.org

MONDAY FEB. 26

Bay Players Auditions. Production is RED HERRING by Michael Hollinger. This 1950's tribute to our old TV. Shows will cast 3 men and 3 women ages 20's - 60's. Audition consists of reading from the script. Whitefish Bay High School, 1200 E. Fairmount Ave., Whitefish Bay. 7 p.m. 414-727-5694. Repeats February 27.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 28

Annual Meeting. The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center's annual membership meeting is an opportunity for members, donors and staff to meet, socialize and hear about what's in store for this year at the Center. Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. 6 p.m. 414-271-2656. www.mkelgbt.org.

THURSDAY, MARCH 1

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

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Arts



Calendar



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- Consultation
- Classes
- Creativity Coaching

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TUESDAY, FEB. 6

Falsettos. The play is a study in contradictions: a laugh-a-minute musical -- about families dealing with AIDS; a tragedy filled with hope. Bartell Theatre, 113 E Mifflin St., Madison. 608-661-9696. www.stageq.com. Through February 3, various times.

Golden Apollo. Insurgent Theatre. Can a five thousand year old woman create the "perfect man"? Astor Theatre, 1696 N Astor St., Milwaukee. 8 p.m. 414-405-3576. www.insurgenttheatre.org. Through February 3.

Proof. A revolutionary mathematical theory is found in the papers of a famous and unstable mathematician. His reclusive daughter claims to have written it. Is she lying? Is she a genius? Is she mad? Racine Theatre Guild, 2519 Northwestern Ave., Racine. 262-633-4218. www.racine-theatre.org. Through February 4, various times.

Translations. In 19th century rural Ireland, a young British officer struggles to convert the Irish Names age-old landmarks to the King's English that only reveals a culture far richer than he ever could have expected. Milwaukee Rep's Quadracci Powerhouse, 108 E. Wells St., Milwaukee. 7:30 p.m. 414-224-1761. Through February 10, various times.

Tartuffe. Skylight Opera Theatre. A comic opera about religious hypocrisy, seduction and greed. Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway, Milwaukee. 414-291-7800. www.skylightopera.com. Through February 11, various times.

They Came from Way Out There. The candidates for president of the Paranormal Society are set to present a musical comedy show reenacting actual paranormal events that have happened to them. Milwaukee Rep's Stackraci Cabaret, 108 E. Wells St., Milwaukee. 8 p.m. 414-224-1761. Through February 11, various times.

Frozen. The disappearance of a ten-year-old girl brings three people together for a journey into the mysteries of human behavior and the limits of forgiveness. Milwaukee Rep's Stiemke Theater, 108 E. Wells St., Milwaukee. 8 p.m. 414-224-1761. Through February 18, various times.

Meditations and Revelations. Lauren Grossman and Prophet William Blackmon create works that reflect their interpretations and reflections of the Christian faith and Bible. UWM Union Art Gallery, 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee. Through February 23.

Sive. Opening exhibit with recent works from Lauren Garber, Carol Golembowski, Josie Osborne, Amy Newell, Kristen Rothrock. Desire, flight, loss, memory, longing are present in the works of this exhibition. Walker's Point Center for the Arts, 911 W. National Ave., Milwaukee. 6-9 p.m. 414-672-2787. www.wpc-a-milwaukee.com. Through February 24.

Sacred Texts/Contemporary Forms: Spiritual Traditions in the Digital Age. MIAD, 273 E. Erie St., Milwaukee. 414-847-3200. www.miad.edu. Through February 24.

Scribble. Photography by Jeremy Novy, Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. 2nd St., Milwaukee. 414-383-3727. Through March 2.

Anomalies. Through kinetic installation, David Bowen engineers devices and systems that are set in motion to create unprecedented outcomes. Hotcakes Gallery, 3379 N Pierce St., Milwaukee. 414-961-7714. www.hotcakesgallery.com. Through March 4.

THURSDAY, FEB. 1

Winterdances. Three members of the dance faculty offer new works that explore awareness and the different shades of reality. Mainstage Theatre, 2400 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee. 7:30 p.m. 414-229-4308. Through February 4, various times.

SATURDAY, FEB. 3

The Art of African-N-American Artists. Opening reception. Guest curator Mutópe Johnson assembles works of seventeen artists and exhibits them alongside traditional African pieces from the Mark Wentzel. 3-5 p.m. Inova/Zelazo, 2419 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee. 414-229-5070. arts.uwm.edu/inova. Through March 4.

Love (In a time of Global Warming). Group art show where local artists were asked to share their loves, on paper. Neighbors Gallery, 800 E. Clarke St., Milwaukee. www.neighborsgallery.info. Through February 18.

TUESDAY, FEB. 6

Argument. Influenced by both the American and European avant-gardes, notably Hollis Frampton and Jean Luc Godard, Argument offers an inquiry, both beautiful and relentless, into the prejudices and latent content of news and advertisements. Union Theatre, 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee. 7 p.m. 414-229-4070.

FRIDAY FEB, 9

Q Pick

C.R.A.Z.Y. Zac, one of five brothers, comes out causing friction between him and his father in strictly Catholic Quebec in the 1960's and 1970's. C.R.A.Z.Y. won the audience award for best film at Washington D.C.'s LGBT film/video Festival. UWM Union Theatre, 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee. 7 p.m. Through February 11, various times.

Linda Eder. Audiences will fall in love with Eder's power to pierce the deepest meaning of a song and electrify the air with her voice. Sharon Wilson Center for the Arts, 19805 W. Capitol Dr., Brookfield. 8 p.m. 262-781-9470. www.wilson-center.com. Repeats February 10.

MONDAY, FEB. 12

Q Pick

Unclothed-The Naked Truth. Survivors' stories of sexual abuse and healing will be read. A discussion follows the reading and light refreshments will be provided. YWCA, 1915 N. MLK Dr., Milwaukee. 7 p.m. Free. 414-347-1685. www.milwaukeepublictheatre.org.

THURSDAY, FEB. 15

Q Pick

A Lesson From Aloes. Milwaukee Chamber Theatre commemorates Black History Month with Athol Fugard's South African drama. Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway, Milwaukee. 7:30 p.m. 414-291-7800. www.chamber-theatre.com. Through March 11, various times.

Premieres of Passionate Dance. Milwaukee Ballet offers new viewers a chance to sample ballet in a unique way. Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, 929 N Water St., Milwaukee. 7:30 p.m. www.milwaukeeballet.org. Through February 18, various times.

FRIDAY, FEB. 16

Living Breathless. Danceworks Performance Company blows the roof off of the Cabot Theatre in a concert of six passionate dances that leave audiences gasping for breath! Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway, Milwaukee. 7:30 p.m. Through February 18, various times.

SATURDAY, FEB. 17

All over the Map. A concert drawn from ethnically diverse music with influences from around the globe. Pre-concert performance by Mrs. fun at 6:45 p.m. Milwaukee Art Museum, 700 Art Museum Dr., Milwaukee. 7:30-11 p.m. 414-271-0711. www.presentmusic.org.

Michigan Toe Tappin' Urban Folk. Artist, Liz Snavelly performs at the Art Bar. 722 E. Burleigh St in Riverwest. 9pm. Details at www.sonicids.com/lizsnavelly.

SUNDAY, FEB. 18

From Brazil to Bohemia. Over 150 musicians will perform works by Dvorak, Rachmaninov, Tchaikovsky, Bloch and Guerra-Peixe in a program shared by the UWM Symphony and participants in the 21st Annual High School Honors Orchestra Festival. Helene Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts, 2419 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee. 3 p.m. 414-229-4308.

WEDNESDAY, FEB. 21

Q Pick

The Underpants. A comedy that's sure to warm up an audience on a cold winter night. Astor Theatre, 1696 N. Astor St., Milwaukee. 8 p.m. 414-272-5694. www.rsvptheatre.com. Through March 3.

FRIDAY, FEB. 23

On and Rammel Schoenecker Duo. Hotcakes Gallery, 3379 N. Pierce St., Milwaukee. 7 p.m. 414-961-7714.

The Me Nobody Knows. Modjeska Youth Theatre Company. Modjeska Theatre, 1128 W. Mitchell St., Milwaukee.

Carousel. A Slide Show Invitational that solicited artists from around the neighborhood and some from across the country to create their own program of projected 35mm slides. Woodland Pattern, 720 E. Locust St., Milwaukee. 414-263-5001.

SATURDAY, FEB. 24

Everyday Transactions. Addresses the continuous violence that has marked the 20th and 21st centuries. Neighbors Gallery, 800 E. Clarke St., Milwaukee. www.neighborsgallery.info. Through March 23.

Send submissions one month in advance to qlifelistings@yahoo.com.

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Dear Tom Brady's boyfriend,

I'm a handsome guy, 26, and I'm madly in love with my boyfriend "N". He's kind, sweet, handsome, works hard, and is down to earth. It's perfection. One problem, though, there's another guy. The other guy "A", is simply hot. I see him out at the bars and I can't stop thinking about him. I wouldn't mind my simple crush, except "A" knows I like him, and after one drink I cave in to his advances and end up going home with him. Everything about "N" is functional and logical, and everything about "A" is emotional and romantic. I truly believe that I could live forever after with "N" 'til the day I die, but at the same time, I fear that I could never get "A" out of my head. Please, Tom Brady's boyfriend, what should I do?

-Anonymous

Anonymous!?

Are you joking? There is no such thing as "anonymous" in Milwaukee's "2 degrees of separation" gay community. And, by the way, in our community, the 2 degrees are not bridged by people we've "known", rather people we've f***ed.

That aside, I question the queerdom of the hand behind this letter.

Two hotties?...you want this to end?...tolerance is only one drink? Doesn't sound like an authentic gay man to me.

For the sake of this new article, I shall humor your letter and advise you on which boy to pick. But to do so, I must put both "N" and "A" through the Test.

Having contacted "anonymous" (of course I know who he is), I've convinced him to bring "N" and "A" to the East Side public library on the corner of North and Farwell to be judged by me in front of my 12 discerning jurors I picked off the street that afternoon.

"Thank you for joining us today;

jurors, participants, Anonymous. To recap, Anonymous here must decide between contestant "N", the sweet, understanding boyfriend, and contestant "A", the hottie. Welcome everyone."

"Thanks for having us Tom Brady's boyfriend," they all respond.

"Wisely," I continue "Anonymous has granted me permission to choose his future love. He wanted Cupid, but we all know that this is a gay man's mess, best fixed by an expert. For 25 minutes after yesterday afternoon's joie d'amour, I poured over the greatest in World literature, preparing for this honorable task. For inspiration on true love: the writings of the great French philosophers. For wisdom and discernment: the Bible (just the chapters between the part with the Pharaoh and the whistling on the cross... fascinating read). For the cure for crabs: Hustler; and to test my patience and endurance: a full half hour episode of Full House...he might be Greek, but John Stamos is not hot.

"As helpful as the literature was, I still needed more. What Test could I administer upon "N" and "A" so as to properly choose the right man for Anonymous? Well, after coming down off a particularly bad bottle of Robitussin, inspiration finally hit! The answer, my friends, is always in a Disney movie. I slept through hours of beauties and bad guys until I had settled on the answer."

Anonymous chimes in: "What Tom Brady's boyfriend? What did you find? How, in your wisdom, experience and beauty, are you going to choose the boy for whom I shall stay loyal forever?"

"Anonymous," I shouted "loyal forever? Quit lying to yourself! Let us begin the test. "N", come stand to my right, "A", to my left.

"The Test is called the Seven Dwarves," I announce to the jurors as "N" and "A" get up on stage. "Whichever of you two best embody the attributes of Snow Whites' Seven Dwarves, shall win the heart (for at least one month) of Anonymous!"

"Seven Dwarves?" N and A ask?

I begin: "We shall find out if you are Happy (fun to go out with), Sleepy (good in bed), Dopey (passed the high school equivalency test), Grumpy (moody enough to qualify as a bona fide homo), Sneezey (don't mind sticking your nose down there), Bashful (work out but aren't too conceited), and last but not least Doc (for which I will administer the "turn your head and cough" doctor's exam).

"I shall administer these tests, and when we come out of the examination room, I shall have an answer for you, Anonymous. This might take a while, so enjoy the complimentary chips, guacamole and condoms; they're quite tasty.

4 and a half minutes later...I come out of the deliberation room with "N" and "A" limping behind, their clothes tattered...

"I have conferred with our esteemed jury," I announce as I light up a smoke.

"We are officially split. I had hoped that the "Doc" test would end up breaking the tie, but it seems that neither "N" nor "A" have, in fact, tiny penises.

"I would have called my boyfriend Tom Brady to be the deciding vote, but he's busy mourning his loss to the Colts... Indianapolis Colts... NFL?... professional football, you know, tackle football?... it's on Sunday's, sometimes Monday nights... whatever."

"Consequently, I must ask my readers to write in their choice to lapagefolle@queerlife.com or vote online at www.queerlife.com. Will it be:

- "N", the handsome, functional boyfriend, or
- "A", the hot "other man".

I will personally give \$100.00 to anyone who can give me the real name of "anonymous", "N", and "A".

If you have any problems or questions that I, Tom Brady's boyfriend should answer, feel free to write in to me at QLife c/o Tom Brady's boyfriend.

A Weak Year for the Oscars

By, Richard Smoker

With failure after failure to defeat actors turned directors, Martin Scorsese will finally win the coveted Oscar. First it was Costner with Dances with Wolves; then Gibson with Braveheart; and Finally Eastwood with Million Dollar Baby, but this year with no actor/director newcomers it's a done deal.

Unfortunately this Oscar may be a little tainted. None of the movies of 2006 were outstanding. Scorsese's competition for best director being United 93; The Queen; Babel; and Eastwood's Letters from Iwo Jima, are all good movies (minus United 93) but lack that defining characteristic that is excellence.

The Departed also holds a nomination for best Picture. Though in this category it might find a little competition in Letters from Iwo Jima. Clint Eastwood's follow-up to the disappointing Flags of our Fathers proved to be a welcomed surprise. Like the best director Oscar the best picture award is a little soiled. With The Queen and Babel placing at three and four, the lineup is topped off with the abysmal Little Miss Sunshine.

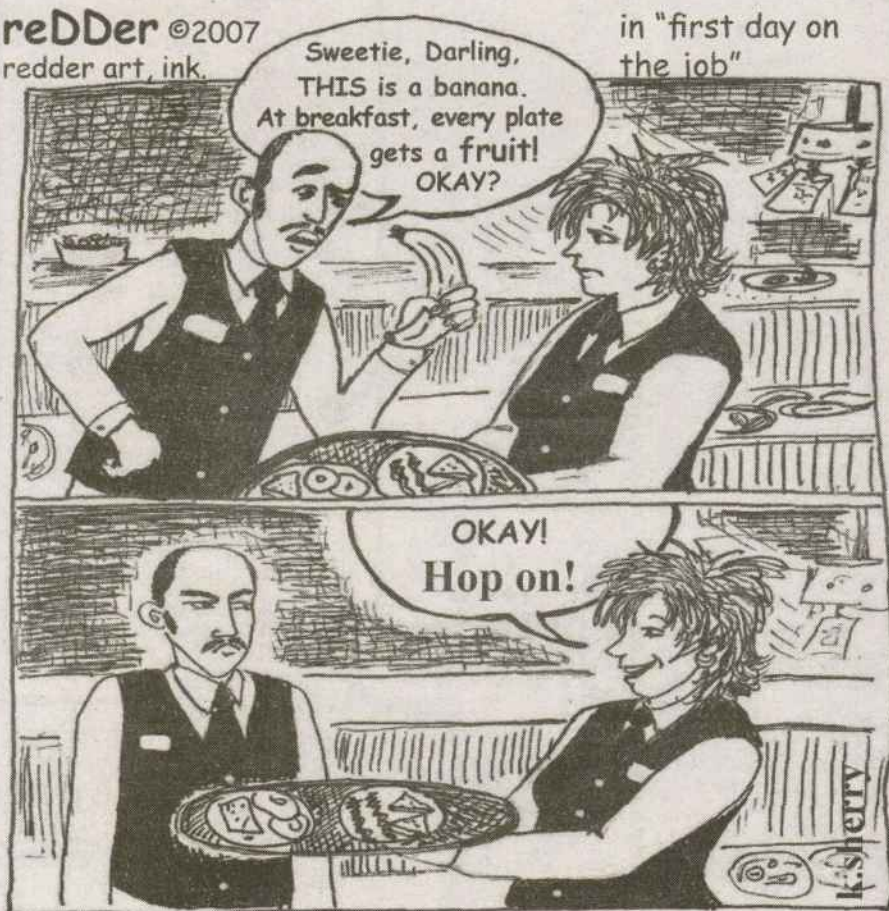
The only two strong categories for this year's Academy Awards seems to be the Best Actor and Best Supporting actor performances. Leading the Pack for the Best actor Oscar is Leonardo DiCaprio for his portrayal of a Rhodesian (Zimbabwe) born mercenary in Blood Diamond. DiCaprio Shows us again why he is coveted so by our leading Directors. It will be a close fight for Leo, however, with Forrest Whitaker's Idi Amin in The Last King of Scotland and Ryan Gosling's Drug Addicted DARE teacher in Half Nelson. The other nominations are very strong as well, Peter O'Toole in Venus and Will Smith in The Pursuit of Happiness. While I don't think Will Smith's character was quite strong enough to win an Oscar his performance was still Outstanding. Then there's Peter O'Toole, always a nominee, never a winner. O'Toole has been nominated seven other times for movies such as Laurence of Arabia, The Lion in Winter, and My Favorite Year. From his first nomination in 1962 to today all he has to show for his efforts is an honorary Oscar for lifetime Achievement. If anyone deserves an Oscar more than Scorsese it's Peter Shamus O'Toole.

We're hoping for Mark Wahlberg to win best supporting actor. His hysterical (in all senses of the word) Massachusetts State Police Sergeant in The Departed, was the only character you could really fall in love with. Giving him a run for his money is Digimon Hounsou in Blood Diamond and Eddie Murphy in Dream Girls. Hounsou Gave a Wonderful and moving depiction of an enslaved father trying to get his family back. I don't think he will win this year, but look for Hounsou to win one within the next five years. Eddie Murphy gave a great performance and has already won the Golden Globe for Dream Girls, making him another strong possibility.

The Best Actress Category is loaded with strong, proven Actresses. Dame Judi Dench, Helen Mirren, Meryl Streep, and Kate Winslet all are actresses that time and time again give riveting performances and all may someday win a Lifetime achievement Award. However, it looks to me like the Oscar goes to Penelope Cruz in Volver. Meryl Streep was delightful in The Devil Wears Prada, but they seemed to force a bit of drama into it that hopefully the academy will see through. Dame Dench once again shows her acting prowess in Notes on a Scandal, creating a frightening (which is why it won't win) old stalker that falls in love, understandably, with Cate Blanchett. Too many awards go out to women playing a British queen, which is why, although superbly performed; I'm rooting against Helen Mirren. Kate Winslet may show Cruz "what for" with her beautiful performance in Little Children, but on the 230th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence I think we need to deny the brits any Oscars.

The choices for best supporting actress are dismal. This award will go to Cate Blanchett in Notes on a Scandal, hands down. This award should be going to Lucy Liu for her adorable character in the best movie of the year, Lucky Number Slevin. How could this brilliant, loving portrayal be overlooked? Put simply, the Academy doesn't like Asian Americans.

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His Boulevard of Dreams

This February column is a Valentine to producer/director Mark Bucher of the Boulevard Ensemble Theatre (2252 South Kinnickinnic.) Mark is a talkative, charming, and most talented man. To look at him one might think boatman, country-western singer, or construction worker. His broad chest and full salt and peppered beard might suggest an occupation other than theater. To Shakespeare he would look "classic." His life is the Arts; and his spotlight shines on K.K.!

I also want this to be a Valentine to his late Mother. In talking with Mark, I could feel his sense of loss. Now, along with those



Mark Bucher

looks comes a personality! His late Mom must have loved to laugh; as her son Mark is really a character one can never forget. If Mark Bucher did not do theater, then he most certainly should have his own daily talk show or be a stand-up comic. Patrons of the Boulevard often remember his long amusing curtain speeches. So, with drama, comedy, and musicals the Boulevard has been around some 21 successful seasons.

Mark is the founder of the company, and like many artists, he hardly gets paid his full worth. But; he has gone from renting the space, to owning the space in the last 6 years. The space was a former Adult Bookstore. So, I guess the space always had exciting nightly entertainment! His theater, like most professional venues, is open to all lifestyles.

Over the years his show favorites have been **THE LEARNED LADIES**, **TARTUFFE**, and his highly praised musical **LOUISIANA PURCHASE**.

You might see Mark walking down the street - as he walks nearly everywhere. One can see him walking to theaters and events all over our city. Within the past few years he became interested in working out at a local gym; so he is currently not only a Theater Nut-he is also a Health nut!! Honestly, one of his most popular shows is called **FOUND A PEANUT**.

In closing this little tribute I want to tell you that if you haven't been to a performance at the Boulevard Ensemble; you must take in a future production. It is a heart-warming intimate experience.

Boulevard of Interesting New Shows:

The above mentioned Boulevard will next stage a Milwaukee area premiere. This month **ALMOST MAINE** by playwright John Cariani performs. This hilarious show about rural relationships is sure to be a crowd pleaser. Watch for a young man named Siddhartha in the production. He looks and acts like a superstar from **BOLLYWOOD**. The Milwaukee Repertory Theater opens **THE VOYSEY INHERITANCE**. Our own Milwaukee Chamber theatre will bring us **A LESSON FROM ALOES**.

The Acacia Theatre will open a charming production of **ENCHANTED APRIL**. Also watch for the Windfall production of the play **BURIED CHILD**. The Sunset Playhouse presents the drama **A FEW GOOD MEN**; and the Waukesha Civic brings the old classic **ARSENIC AND OLD LACE** back to life.

Whose Underpants Are Those??

You have to come down to the intimate Astor Theatre on Brady Street. If you see **UNDERPANTS** hanging up in the space; it is not owner James Searles doing his laundry. It is advertising for the next comedy **THE UNDERPANTS** by Steve Martin. Come down and also see Martins signed autographed photo. This hilarious show was a hit in our town a few years ago; and now RSVP Productions brings you a new intimate **UNDERPANTS** right in your face, staging!!

Our own Milwaukee area stars to watch for in our theater scene this month include Anne Miller, Jason Will, Kelly Simon, Cynthia Paplaczyk, Earl Scharnick,



THEATER

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

Harvey Altshull, Ken T. Williams, Mark Ninnman and Missy Delrueste. Jason Will and Missy Delrueste are new area stars to watch for in the future!!

PLEASE come and see the friendly and good-looking new bartenders at THE HARBOR ROOM !!

My Aunt Blanche likes her men with a Valentine Heart On..... (Hard-On...get it!!!!)

Last MONTH's Trivia Answer

Robert Redford starred in **BAREFOOT IN THE PARK**.

This Month's Trivia Question

This new Father was in the movie version of **A FEW GOOD MEN**.

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SOME CCF HISTORY:

9to5, National Association of Working Women: **Not In My Workplace!**

In 1996, Cream City Foundation funded 9to5, National Association of Working Women to create and implement a "Not In My Work Place" campaign, which educated women on addressing homophobia and heterosexism in the workplace and their effect on workers. Today, Cream City Foundation continues to support the advancement of women by assisting organizations such as Lesbian Alliance and the League of Women Voters.



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Long-running Gay Bars

In March, one of Milwaukee's longest running gay bars celebrates their 33rd anniversary: 33 years of business with the same name, in the same location, with the same owner. That would be the BallGame, at 196 S. 2nd Street. The BallGame opened in March 1974, and since then has celebrated its anniversary and St. Patrick's Day together each year with a huge party.

This bar is a study in 30 years of gay culture. Since its early years, it has held many traditions which continue today. The rear of the bar has always had a stage, where in the 1970s and 1980s ECOM (Entertainers Club of Milwaukee) hosted any number of performances: themed shows such as "Hello Dolly", and shows for Valentines Day, Easter, etc. "Miss BallGame" shows were popular in years past, and drag shows continue to be held. And of course, as its name implies, the BallGame has always been a sponsor of various sport teams, most typically softball teams, but also darts, volleyball, and more. (In its advertising in the 1980s and 1990s, the bar's logo changed depending on the season: during football season it would feature a gridiron, during baseball season a ballpark. For some years its motto was: "where you'll never strike out".)

And the BallGame bar has the most noticeable tradition of decorating for every holiday: it's almost impossible to walk into this bar anytime of year without seeing: Easter eggs and baskets; flags and Uncle Sam's; pumpkins, corn stalks, and gourds; or garland, Santa's, holly and mistletoe. The culmination of each year however is the huge combination St. Patrick's Day celebration and Anniversary party, a tradition started by one of the two founders and original owners, Gene O'Brien. This annual extravaganza never fails to pack the bar to capacity- with drink specials, prizes, great food and a show. (Gene passed away in 1985, but his partner Rick still owns the bar and can be seen here almost daily.)

But the history in this location goes back even farther. The same building previously housed three other gay bars. The first known gay bar in this location was the Nite Beat, which existed for about a year, in 1965. Then from 1965 to 1972, the bar was open as Castaways South. And finally from 1972 to 1974 it was "The New Jamie's Bar". Thus, this year marks about 42 years of continuously open gay bars in the same building space! Even Milwaukee's longest running gay bar, The Mint Bar, was open for just 37 years in the same location (it relocated in 1985 to make way for construction of the Bradley Center, and ran for about 7 more years in the location now known as Fluid.)

Thus the BallGame isn't the only instance of the same building transforming itself from one bar to another over the years. Fluid, at 819 S. 2nd Street, first opened as a lesbian bar called Decision in 1976; then from 1976-1977 it was The Hideaway. It "went gay" again in 1986 when it opened as Mint Bar II, then in 1991 was renamed Mint III and later BJ's, which it operated as until 1993. From 1993 to 1998 it was Zippers, and then in 1999 it was bought by two bartenders from Triangle who opened the very successful Fluid; it is still owned and operated by Bill.

Another case: the Triangle, which has been there since 1988 (with at least 2 different owners), was previously the Sugar Shack (1976-1981) and DK's Tavern (1984-1988).

So next time you're out "on the town", here's an idea for a trip down memory lane. First pay a visit to This Is It, at 418 E. Wells Street, which has been in continuous operation as a gay bar since 1968: here you'll walk in the same entrance door, and see the identical bar and lounge setup, as you would have some 39 years ago! Next head south to the BallGame; when you sit at the bar and sip a cocktail here, you can think that this same bar space has been almost continuously occupied by previous generations of gay men for at least 42 years. Your third stop, just a block away from the BallGame, is Cest la Vie, open now for 33 years. At both the Triangle and Fluid, you are mingling with lesbians and gays going back some 31 years, spanning a mix of different bar names and owners.

And for those of you south of Milwaukee, JoDee's (in Racine) has been in continuous operation in the same location for the past 35 years.

So make a habit of stopping in one of these older clubs at least a few times a year to soak in some of your cultural heritage: each of these bars played a big part in getting us as far as we are today in our right

The history in this location goes back even farther



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, mkelgthist.org, is Don's passion today, consuming much of his spare time.

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What's happening Gallery:

Scribble, Photographer Jeremy Novy's solo exhibition through March 2nd. Novy's photography has been exhibited in Milwaukee and in venues throughout Wisconsin, including the John Michael Kohler Art Center and the Lakefront Festival of Arts.

On the stage:

Monday, February 12, 7pm "An Evening Of Scenes" A special collaboration with The Boulevard Ensemble Theatre. The Boulevard Ensemble Studio Theatre, currently celebrating its 21st season of production will present an "Evening Of Scenes" to benefit the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center.

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Coming in March:

Hafla Alhambra - a special 2 day event of belly dance and flamenco featuring internationally acclaimed Mark Balahadia, professional Egyptian - Lebanese cabaret style belly dance from Washington, DC and a host of professional and amateur dancers from Chicago, Madison and Milwaukee. Master classes and workshops will be offered!

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TransART

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The Milwaukee Gay Arts Center is located at 703 S. 2nd Street in Milwaukee. Gallery Hours: Monday-Friday 10am-4pm. And by appointment. For more information on events please call 414-383-3727 or email milwgac@yahoo.com

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