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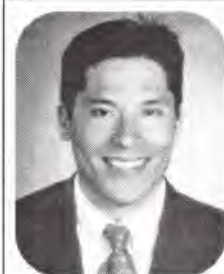
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Below: A festish Night at Club Night Out, Stevens Point



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# CHRISTIANS CONVERGE ON CAPITOL TO OPPOSE ANTI-GAY AMENDMENT

Faith-Based Lobbying Occurs As Legislature Misses April Ballot Deadline

Madison - It was a photo-op that must have sunk the hearts of so-called "family values Christian" bigots statewide: 55 mainstream Christian pastors in full clerical garb standing behind a seven-foot banner that read "Christians For Equality in Wisconsin: We Oppose The Marriage Amendment." And that was just the kick-off of the day-long lobbying effort by the faith-based civil marriage activist group here February 22. The photo opportunity was part of the morning press conference that began the event.

Later, more than 200 members and supporters of the recently-organized Christians For Equality in Wisconsin (CEW) group filled the Capitol rotunda for a rally following a day that included the 10:30 AM press conference, lobby training at the nearby Grace Episcopal Church Guild Hall and individual meetings with the staffs of State Senators, most of whom were unavailable due to floor activity. The Senate was in session that day. CEW had selected February 22 for its event, as it was the deadline date for any passage of proposed the civil union ban if it were to appear on the April, 2005 ballot.

The clergy who spoke at the rally repeated the messages offered at the morning press conference. Rev. Todd Smith-Lippert, pastor of United Church of Christ in Dodgeville reminded the crowd of other historical figures' opposition to injustice. "St. Augustine and Martin Luther King Jr. have both said 'an unjust law is no law at all,'" Lippert said. "The people of Wisconsin need to be able to trust that the words of the Constitution serve their best interest and that of their friends and neighbors."

Rev. Jennifer Thomas of Lake Park Lutheran Church in Milwaukee address the fear and hatred the amendments supporters are attempting to stir up with their legislation. "People fear what is different from them, and fear leads people to hate. Did you hear me? Fear leads people to hate. Not the Bible, religion not faith, but fear alone motivates people to hate," Thomas said. "We stand here because we are tired of hearing fear, hate and intolerance preached in our name. We are here to say 'not in our name' we are Christians too and we stand opposed to this amendment. God does not hate homosexuals and God does not hate anyone. God desires a better world for all people God so loved the world that he gave his only son, God came into the world not to condemn the world but to save the world.

God loves everyone and anyone!

Thomas also expressed hope. "I believe that people can change their minds when they have all the information," she said.

Pastor Bob Voss, one of three clergy from Lake Edge Lutheran Church in Milwaukee participating in the rally, examined the Biblical misinterpretation about homosexuality in his remarks. "Not every scripture or verse in the bible has equal weight," Voss said.



Compiled and written by Mike Fitzpatrick

Voss also offered a glaring example of "Christian love" practiced by so-called "family values" Christians. "I know what it is like to conduct a funeral for a gay man who had died, and his family denied his 20

year partner any participation in the funeral whatsoever," Voss said. "This is not right, it should be illegal."

Pastor Jan Doleschal of Brown Deer United Church of Christ addressed the discrimination inherent in the proposed amendment. "It is discriminatory to deny these (civil marriage) rights that are already available to a majority of the population and are not available simply because they are gay or lesbian."

In the balconies above the rally about a half dozen amendment supporters attempted to disrupt the rally with minimal success. One Madison rally attendee, who also participated in the Action Wisconsin lobby day January 27 noted a familiar pattern. "It's the same five guys, the same dog-eared signs, the same angry screeching every time we stand up for our equality," she said. "I cannot believe that anyone in the legislature who saw (the protesters) in action could seriously vote for the amendment with a clear conscience."

Quest's Madison reporter and photographer Steven Vargas provided significant information for this story. It should be noted that Vargas confirmed the 55 clergy figure by a direct head count at the press conference. At least one mainstream Madison newspaper, who did not have a reporter present, reported a significantly smaller number of clergy present.

## STATE SENATOR CARPENTER CHALLENGES ALDERMAN FOR "FAGGOT" REMARK

Milwaukee - Northside Milwaukee Alderman Frank McGee had come to City Hall February 23 for yet another staged event to - in his own words - declare "war" on the forces that supposedly were delaying justice for a Fox Valley man beaten last October in the city's south side Bay View neighborhood, allegedly by up to a dozen police officers also at the same party the victim attended. Instead McGee was confronted by openly-gay State Senator Tim Carpenter for his thuggish racist and anti-gay remarks made at a similar event two weeks earlier. At his February 10 rally McGee equated the assailants of Frank Jude Jr. as "hate mongers and KKK killers" and then singled out one of the dozen attackers as "a straight-up sick faggot."

Carpenter demanded an apology from McGee over his use of the slur. "Why are you disrespectful? Why don't you return phone calls?" Carpenter shouted. "When will you apologize for using the term 'faggot' when referring to police officers?

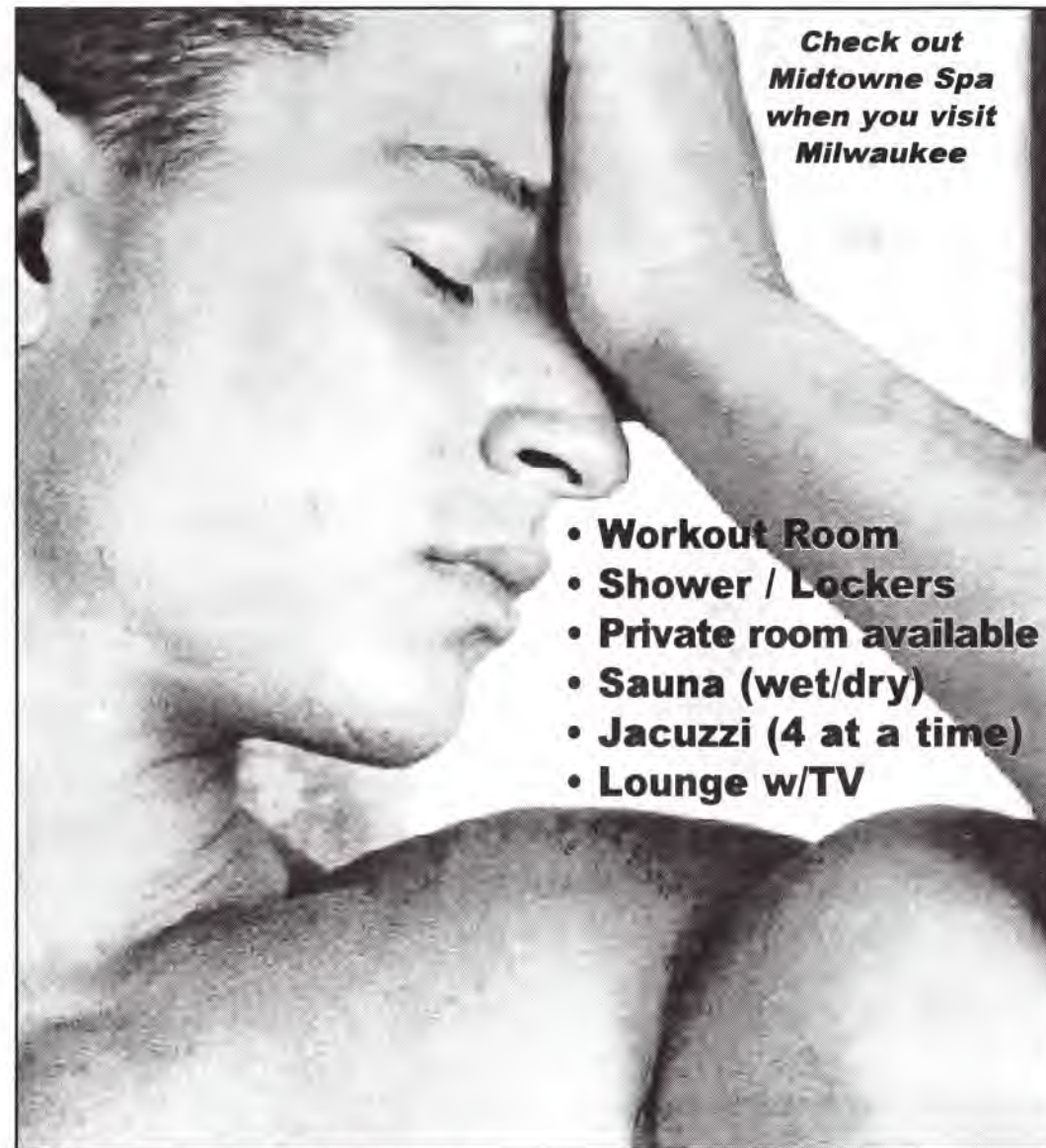
You're an embarrassment."

McGee refused to acknowledge Carpenter, and instead ran off down the hall and into his office, trailed by Carpenter, TV cameras and reporters eager to capture the confrontation. Carpenter continued shouting to McGee after he went into his office "Why are you hiding?"

Carpenter then told the media present that he had tried to call McGee three times as "an elected official to an elected official" to ask him to apologize for his remarks.

Carpenter's confrontation and McGee's subsequent cowardice was just the latest in the growing effort to make the alderman take responsibility for his hate speech. Prior to McGee's news conference six aldermen sent a letter to McGee calling on him to apologize.

Milwaukee Mayor Barrett also said McGee should apologize for making "racially derogatory remarks" about African-American women he has hired or appointed to positions. Barrett said McGee



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## CHRISTIANS CONVERGE ON CAPITOL

Top Left: Rev. Lippert Smith

Top Right: Some of the 55 mainstream clergy attending the February 22 Wisconsin Christians for Equality lobby day press conference.

Above Left: Attendees learn how to lobby at CEW training held at Madison's Grace Episcopal Church February 22

Above Right: Some of the 200 Christians for Equality rally goes in the Capitol rotunda February 22. (Photo Credits: Steven Vargas)



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used a derogatory racial slur for African-American women who work in the mayor's office on a local black radio station that morning. "He owes an apology to the gay community; he owes an apology to African-Americans in my office and African-American women in general," Barrett said, adding that McGee's remarks "go beyond what is acceptable for any mature adult or elected official."

Common Council President Willie Hines challenged McGee "to remain focused on the Jude case" at Hines own news conference held later that afternoon. Hines noted that aldermen have different approaches to getting the Jude matter resolved. "None of us are granted a license to inflame others with inappropriate labeling. Individual approaches must not sidetrack us," Hines said.

Most of the credit for the pressure on McGee has to be placed on one gay activist: Wisconsin Gay News website owner William Attewell. Attewell fired off the initial response to McGee's comments within hours in his Bill's Blog weblog and appeared on local news broadcasts the next day. *Quest* has learned that it was Attewell who initially informed Carpenter of the comments, and advocated with Mayor Barrett for gay-supportive response. Additionally Attewell crafted an opinion piece that was published on WisOpinion.com and the city's alternative newspaper *Shepherd Express*. Attewell also was instrumental in encouraging Queer Life editor Don Hoffman

to publish a special web edition covering the story, "Gay Hate At City Hall." The piece was also authored by the former *Wisconsin IN Step* publisher.

Attewell also advocated for the Milwaukee LGBT Center, which is located in McGee's district, to make a stronger response to the alderman's comments and refusal to respond to his critics. In a February 16 statement Center Executive Director James Pennington wrote "the Center's first strategic response has been to secure a meeting with the Alderman and a small group of LGBT leaders to discuss the very demeaning and hurtful statement he made about our community. In addition, it is our intention to discuss with Alderman McGee how we can work together in the future to meet our common goals to end discrimination, hatefulness and violence against minority cultures in Milwaukee." McGee had left a voice mail with the Center apologizing for the "fag-got" comment the same day he uttered it in front of nearly 100 protesters but had failed to respond to requests for direct follow-up in any form with the center. The center held a press conference on February 21 to add pressure on McGee to respond.

As for the actual victim in the incident that began McGee's misadventures in advocacy, Frank Jude Jr. is scheduled to have reparative surgery to fix his broken nose in the first week of March. The married father of two daughters had been beaten by reportedly up to 12 men after he had been accused of stealing

a police officer's badge at the party he had attended with a local friend and two casual female acquaintances. During the assault, one of his attackers pulled Jude's pants off. Four Milwaukee Police officers involved in the October 24 beating have been suspended. Milwaukee County District

Attorney E. Michael McCann announced at *Quest's* deadline that he would file formal charges against Jude's assailants on February 28, although he admitted that he could not say how many would be charged or announce the specific charges.

## CONNECTICUT POISED TO GRANT GAY CIVIL UNIONS

Hartford - The Connecticut Legislature is set to establish civil unions for gay and lesbian couples, which would make the state the third in the nation to offer legal recognition to same-sex couples.

On February 23, the Legislature's Joint Judiciary Committee overwhelmingly endorsed legislation establishing civil unions. Supporters and opponents of the legislation each said following the vote that the bill will probably pass the House and Senate by early June, when the legislative session ends.

The civil unions bill was approved by the Judiciary

Committee by a 25-13 vote, a near 2-to-1 ratio that surprised even some of its supporters. Two years ago, when a similar bill came before the committee, it was defeated by an equally wide margin. That turnaround has led even those who oppose the bill to concede its chances of passage are formidable.

"It appears we are well on the way to being the first state, of our own volition and without a court order, to pass civil unions," Senator John A. Kissel (R-Enfield) said. "The vote clearly signals a sea change. Connecticut is a live-and-let-live state. We have always been

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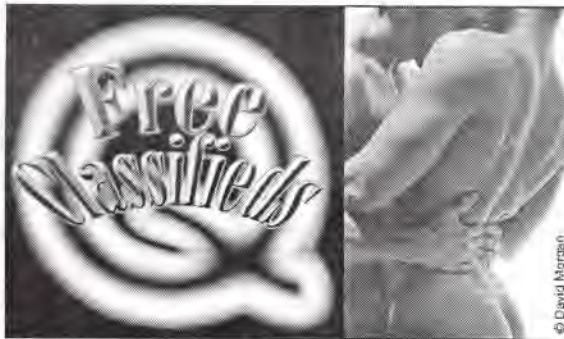
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extremely tolerant and very progressive." In 2000, Vermont became the first in the nation to allow civil unions, after a ruling by the Vermont Supreme Court. In Massachusetts, a Supreme Judicial Court ruling legalized gay marriage last year.

"Based on the vote it has an extremely good chance of passing," Representative Mike Lawlor, an East Haven Democrat and House chairman of the Judiciary Committee said. "This was a bipartisan vote. It seems like antigay sentiment in the Legislature has abated quite a bit. Republicans are realizing that politically there is no downside to doing this."

But some Connecticut legislators want to go further than civil unions. Another bill, proposing that same-sex marriages performed in other states and countries be recognized in Connecticut, is likely to be added to the civil unions legislation, they said. That would mean that Connecticut would recognize the marriages of gay couples who were wed in Massachusetts, much of Canada, or other jurisdictions where such marriages are legal.

A spokesman for Governor M. Jodi Rell, a Republican, would not say yesterday whether Rell would sign a civil union bill if it came to her desk, nor whether she would stand in the way of a measure to recognize out-of-state gay marriages. The spokesman said Rell

"does believe in the sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman," but left the door open to supporting the bill. "Governor Rell has made it clear she believes in equal rights and opposes discrimination in any form, against any couple, no matter what their gender," Rell spokesman Dennis Schain said. "She will study the specific language of any civil union legislation approved by the General Assembly to see how it proposes to address these issues."

Opponents have vowed to fight the civil unions measure. "The language in the bill is the same as same-sex marriage," Deacon David Reynolds, legislative liaison for the Connecticut Catholic Conference said. "The benefits given to same sex couples are exactly the same as the benefits from marriage. It looks like the Legislature was afraid to use the term marriage in our state right now, so they opted for civil unions instead. We're going to talk to elected officials and the governor's office and just educate people about what this really means. It's not going to stop at civil unions."

However advocates for full marriage rights for gay and lesbian couples were disappointed that the General Assembly in Connecticut went only as far as advancing civil unions. Marriage provides same-sex couples with

many more rights and benefits than civil unions, they said.

"We just think civil unions don't go far enough," said Anne Stanback, president of Love Makes a Family, the Connecticut coalition pushing for full marriage equality. "We don't need to get to marriage by way of civil unions. If we could vote for full equality and fairness now, why should we wait? I think Connecticut is ready for marriage."

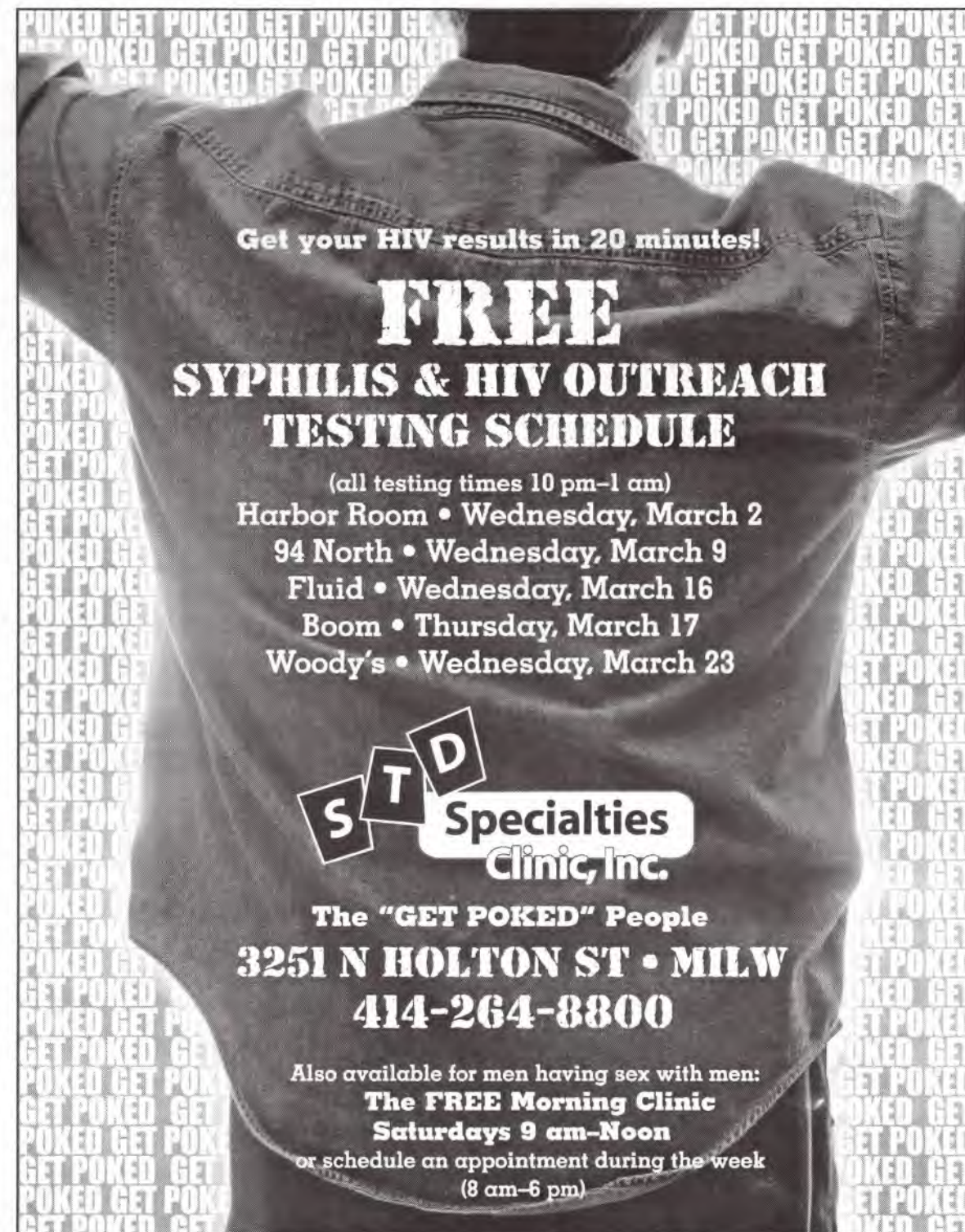
A Quinnipiac University poll taken last summer showed that Connecticut voters favored civil unions, 59% to 35%, and that they opposed gay marriage, 50-45%. Fully 65% opposed a federal constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage. And 50% said that if a same-sex couple is legally married in Massachusetts, that marriage should be recognized in Connecticut, while 45% said the marriages should not be recognized.

"Look at how quickly things are moving," said Mary Bonauto, civil rights director of Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, who argued the case that led to same-sex marriage in Massachusetts. "To me, 2005 looks a lot different to 2004. This is a very fluid and dynamic situation in our favor overall. The world has shifted dramatically after couples started marrying in Massachusetts."



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## KEYES' DAUGHTER REVEALS SELF AS "SELFISH HEDONIST"



**Maryland:** The daughter of conservative Republican Alan Keyes referred to herself February 14 as a "liberal queer," rather than as her father's recent characterization of lesbians as "selfish hedonists." Maya Marcel-Keyes, 19, addressed a rally sponsored by the gay-rights group Equality Maryland, saying she was motivated to speak out because of her rocky relationship with her parents

and the recent death of a friend who had fallen ill after being thrown out of the house by his family. She urged support for gay and lesbian young people who have been deserted by their families.

Marcel-Keyes told several hundred supporters that her sexuality had created a rift in her relationship with her parents. "Things just came to a head. Liberal queer plus conservative Republican just doesn't mesh well," she said. "That was making my life a little bit turbulent."

Later, Marcel-Keyes told reporters her parents "were not too pleased" when they learned she was a lesbian, but she said she loves them "very much, and they love me. They can't support my activities."

Her father, the Republican candidate for the U.S. Senate in Illinois last year, created a stir in August when he said during an interview that homosexuality was "selfish hedonism" and that Vice President Dick Cheney's lesbian daughter was a sinner.

In a statement issued following the rally, Keyes distanced himself from his daughter's coming out. "My daughter is an adult, and she is responsible for her own actions. What she chooses to do has nothing to do with my work or political activities."

Marcel-Keyes said she received an outpouring of support when disclosing her sexual orientation, but her friend did not. "Like me, he grew up queer in a conservative household," she said. But where she got hundreds of e-mails, offers of a place to stay and a college scholarship, "he'd been out there two years and had gotten nothing. And the worst part is, he isn't the only one."

## NEW DETAILS RELEASED ON HIV "SUPER STRAIN"

**Massachusetts:** Research on a recently discovered HIV strain shows it holds an array of disturbing traits that help it quickly progress to full-blown AIDS while resisting drug treatments, doctors have told the leading meeting on AIDS science. The variant, discovered in a New York City patient, may have raced from infection to full-blown AIDS in as little as four months, doctors said at the 12th Annual Retrovirus Conference here February 25. Typical strains can take 10 years to progress to full-blown AIDS. Many new infections are resistant to treatment with common HIV drugs, and a small number of HIV variants have quickly progressed to the disease. But the New York patient's doctors said the case combines both characteristics in a worrisome way.

"The unique feature of this case is the convergence of the transmission of a remarkably drug-resistant HIV-1 variant and the extremely rapid clinical course to AIDS," the patient's doctors said

in a review of his case. The team is led by Dr. David Ho at Rockefeller University in New York.

Aspects of the HIV variant suggest it is especially deadly. It is capable of using both main entry points to infect cells, and it grows well in the lab, unlike most drug-resistant strains. It also causes cells that it infects to clump together, allowing them to kill other uninfected cells. The patient, in his late 40s, was diagnosed in December and has lost 10 pounds in the past three weeks alone. It took him between four and 20 months to develop AIDS, Ho said.

Lab tests showed the patient was resistant to three of the four classes of AIDS drugs. He is taking other AIDS drugs now in the hope of vanquishing the infection. Scientists are still trying to find the source of the man's disease. New York City health authorities have alerted doctors and begun to trace the patient's sexual contacts. The patient, whose name has been withheld, had unprotected anal sex with many other men, often in conjunction with methamphetamine use. Some researchers have suggested that the patient may simply be unusually susceptible to AIDS, but his doctors said they have found no sign that his immune system is particularly vulnerable.

The revelations about the super strain came just two days after New York City's health department acknowledged that an estimated 45,000 residents are HIV-positive but do not know it. The figure raises the official count of PWAs by 50%. New York already has 88,000 people known to be living with HIV/AIDS.

San Diego health officials have said they also are studying a similar strain found there in a patient. "We don't know whether this is a single isolated event or whether in fact there are other cases out there," said Ho, who is a paid consultant to ViroLogic Inc., which makes resistance tests. Nearly one million people are currently known to be infected with HIV in the United States.

## CONGRESS ANNOUNCES LEGISLATION TO REPEAL "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL"

**Washington, DC:** Congressional lawmakers announced February 24 legislation to repeal "Don't Ask, Don't Tell," the military's ban on lesbian, gay and bisexual personnel. The Military Readiness Enhancement Act is scheduled to be introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Marty Meehan (D-MA) on March 2. The proposal is already supported by a bipartisan coalition of Congressional representatives, including Reps. John Conyers (D-MI.) and Jerrold Nadler (D-NY.) among others.

Announcement of the bill follows release of a new Government Accounting Office (GAO) report analyzing "Don't Ask, Don't Tell." The GAO report conservatively estimates the gay ban has cost at least \$191 million since its inception in 1993. The report's financial estimate, however, includes only costs associated with recruiting and training enlistees to replace those discharged under the ban. The GAO analysis does not include costs associated with discharging officers or the nearly 800 specialists with critical skills who have been fired because of their sexual orientation. Administrative costs associated with discharges are also not included in the GAO analysis.

"Our homeland is more secure when every qualified, capable American who wants to serve is allowed to do so," C. Dixon



## Thank You SIR:

by Jeff Hicks

### This week, some fetish thoughts. "[BONDAGE]"

An American Dictionary of the ENGLISH LANGUAGE; by NOAH WEBSTER, LL.D. (1863)

**BOND'AGE**, n. Slavery or involuntary servitude; captivity; imprisonment; restraint of a persons liberty by compulsion. In ancient english law, villenage.

2. Obligation ; tie of duty.

[Slavery or involuntary servitude]

Very few of the leather boys that I have met are truly into [SLAVERY]. Those who are, have made a commitment far exceeding the typical Leather 'boy/boi, servant, submissive, or bottom. Within that commitment, they have given away to their chosen Master, all decision making rights, all rights to ownership of material goods, all liberty and self empowerment. Their focus; 24/7/365/all yrs. IS, solely their Master ! This is total mental & psysical Bondage. ---- In regard to the Modern Leather movement, [INVOLUNTARY]; is not a consideration. We all operate with at least a knowledge of, and or, a commitment to: "consensual" activity, to what ever degree has been decided upon by our SIR/Ma'am, and/or, our selves. However, when it comes to, [Servitude], I don't know of any boy 'worth his salt' who does not understand and constantly apply, his/her whole effort to 'Servitude'. This can be a very rewarding aspect to a SIR/servant, Daddy/boy, Dominant/submissive, even a Master/slave relationship! Even if you only do the simple things: Open a door, light his smoke, set his chair, walk behind, defer to his decisions ,etc.; you are exercising 'servitude'. This can be, to a true boy/submissive, a pleasant activity. Then, on to [CAPTIVITY]. We all, (boys etc.) dream/fantasize about being captured. In reality, it seldom happens, and if it did, it would probably not be a very pleasant scene. So we find someone to act it out with us whenever we can. [IMPRISONMENT]; Why do you think some serious Leather bars have cages, cells, or other incarcerating devices or equipment. Again, we often have this fantasy. [RESTRAINT] Now, we are getting somewhere. In modern BDSM, the use of restraints is often considered commonplace. For some, the use of cuffs, (wrist-ankle-neck) are the common items of choice. For others, Chains, irons, shackles, and padlocks are the norm. Perhaps one of the most intriguing, and decorative, is rope bondage. This has the possibility of being practical, decorative, erotic, body manipulative, and downright enjoyable as a wonderful "foreplay" in the otherwise straightforward SM scene. It always, takes time. Rope bondage just cannot be slapped on. When done too quickly it can be problematic; Not confining enough. (the sub gets out and relaxes). It is too constricting and circulation problems arise. The sub is put into a position that does not allow full, comfortable, complete breathing; (This creates a problem slowly, but must be watched for). The rope style allows for many many variations. Some are strictly for keeping the sub in an immobile configuration. Many versions allow free access to the sub's "vitals" both anterior and posterior. Some versions allow only one or the other. It is usually the Top/Dom's choice. While in such confinement, the principle focus, is usually



to allow the Dom to do with the sub, what ever He/She wishes, while the sub cannot protect themselves. They WILL be totally defenseless. That can enhance the pleasure for both parties involved. There is a distinct version of rope bondage which allows a sub to manipulate their own genitals with finger movements alone, while their hands are still away from their sides. Also, the time involved in applying the rope restraints, gives the Dom the opportunity to 'handle' the physical nature of the sub, and for the sub to relish in the 'being handled/caressed/used, by the Dom.

All bondage, cuffs, irons, or rope, must be used cautiously, because of the damage that can be caused to your sub. After all even if, 'it', is a 'slave', we can respect that gift being given freely by maintaining a respect for it.

When it comes to the [Restraint of a persons liberty by compulsion]; that is, in a way, a description of Slavery. [VILLILAN-AGE], a The state of a villian; ( Some subs aspire to be treated as a villian and within that to be bound and punished appropriately). b. base servitude. (see slave).

2. [OBLIGATION] That which is given to a Dom by a sub. [TIE OF DUTY] That which a Dom and sub negotiate as regards their relationship / partnership / arranged agreement. Negotiate these scenes carefully so you can both enjoy them with long time pleasure.

## RESULTS OF LAST WEEKEND IN CHICAGO

As reported in the Ill. fetish community lifestyle:

**Cell Block/Caliber Leatherman 2005 Chosen (From ILFCL)**

CHICAGO - George Brown, Jr. will represent Cell Block Chicago and Caliber Leathers as Cell Block/Caliber Leatherman 2005 at IML in May. He won the title before a capacity crowd at Cell Block Chicago on Saturday, February 19. Brown was joined in the winner's circle by his ONYX brother Erick Ocasio as 1st Runner Up, and Russ Hilgert as 2nd Runner Up. (2/21/05)

**Burning down the house: LA&M Mortgage Burning caps full weekend in Chicago (from ILFCL)**

CHICAGO - With a ball of flame and a roar from a packed auditorium, the leather community ensured that there would always be a permanent home for the history of the community. Leather Archives & Museum founder Chuck Renslow burned the mortgage to the LA&M's building in front of an ecstatic crowd. ( 2/23/05)

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

Watch here for new announcements about the Argonauts, Grandpa, Daddy, Daddy's boy contest in April. And: The Joint Argonauts/Castaways, Leather weekend at the 'Farm', in Hilbert WI. the 3 rd. weekend in Aug.



# Sofonda Says All Hey all,

Back for another installation of goings on. I unfortunately missed the deadline for the last issue so I will have to start with the Valentine's show at the ever exciting Napalese Lounge. Elsie Bovine, former Miss Wisconsin Classic and Show director at Naps but on one hell of a show. Of course she always comes up with the who's who of Green Bay to perform. Miss Katrina K. Former Miss Wisconsin at Large and myself had the pleasure of emceeing with dueling microphones on each end of the bar reporting on all the goings on during the show. The show started on time and a good crowd was there to see all the performers spread there love and talents for V day. The line up of the stars was: Miss Katrina K., Miss Elsie Bovine, Lusinda Andrews, and CC Domino just to name a few. First to Miss Venus Love, it has turned in to the 21st century, all music should be handed to the DJ in CD form not an old tape that has been rumbling around in your drag bag for the past 5 years. It sounded like loud music coming from the apartment downstairs. She did however put her best foot forward and a big smile and did her number anyway. Steven Lloyd tried putting a small pair of wings on his back to be cupid to go along with the theme of the night. My question of the night was, "how fast do those little wings have to flap to get a performer of that size off the ground?" hmmm. Miss Lusinda Andrews doing the only dance number of the night came out tearing up the crowd to a little Debra Cox. Half way through here number she thought her hair was coming off due to the head whipping and all over energy she was putting forth. So, like most queens of her caliber, realizing what was to come, she tore the wig off. Unfortunately, she had that wig in so tight it did not want to let go. Finally in a last hard yank, pins and steeple jacks went a flying into the crowd releasing her of her big dance hair. Funny thing to me, her real hair is so long that I think she could have just used her natural hair as she looked just as good. There was a few more performers doing the show enticing the crowd in to a love feast frenzy and showing their appreciation in dollars. Second, did we not hold a Mr. Miss Napalese Pageant this year? If my memory has not failed me I am not seeing them at all the bar theme shows that they have had.

Have they given their titles back? Please let me know.

Next it was the grand opening week at The Shelter. To kick off the week they started with a leather ball. What a great crowd, boys and men with a few women all dressed in their best rawhides. The music was pumping and the bodies were on display. At one point to my recollection, some hot built hairy daddy with a great ass was



hitting on me. I was flattered but as I was in the middle of a intense game of video tic tac toe, I was unable to respond to such goings on to the dismay of CC Domino, who thought I should have taken the hot leather daddy up on his offer. The next night saw the disco tea dance. Not a very big crowd but the music was hot and the disco drink specials kept all of us well lubricated and shaking our groove thing. On Valentine's day they had free pool and darts for all who came in. On Tuesday was the Karaoke finals with Miss Sasha. The bar was packed to the walls with singing hopefuls. On Wednesday was the pajama party and not to mention CC Domino's B-day. Hot boys in pj's getting tipsy is definitely my type of crowd. Nothing like sitting at the bar watching all the boys hopping around with their junk flopping in your face. Next thing you know it is time for show and tell. I think I saw more cock that night than the last time I visited a chicken ranch. There was two in particular that kept flopping the meat on my leg. I do not know if I am allowed to say anything more. Ok I will, nothing like a tall cold one sitting in front of you on the bar and two hot pieces of meat resting on the bar to each side for you to fondle and stare at. On

Thursday Ronnie Niles performed. Friday was the big grand opening Bomb Show. Hosted by Coco Channel. Miss Tera Matthews all the from Texas was there as a special guest. The bar had a pretty good crowd for the first show. As I got myself comfortable at my table with my entourage, shots coming from a table behind me started to appear out of no where. Some of the people involved in the show have pissed and moaned in the past about shows not starting on time. For some reason this one was 45 minutes late. It just goes to show that no matter how hard you try some thing will always be out of your control. Coco started the show off with a big Afro doing herself a little nasty girl. Out of breath she introduced Tera, all I can say, for a first impression was great tits! Natasha was up next with a wonderfully little ditty for the crowd. Steven Lloyd did a very funny comedy number. Alexis St. James did some head banging rock number. Neely did a great Brittany dance mix but forgot to dance. Next up was Brandon doing a great mix of Elvis songs. Up again was Tera doing Baby Boy and dancing the fuck around that stage. Coco's turn was next to show how the big boned girls can cut a rug and damn if she worked that floor like a pro. Next was the number done especially for me. A kind of dedication of sort. Steven Lloyd in all his glory except for a very small thong. You have not lived til you see this man in a thong, the crowd went absolutely crazy for the big boy giving and showing it all. To end the night was Tera with a last number to make you go crazy. She wore nothing but what looked like painted on body stripes with jewels glued right to the skin. She gets my Diva award. The following day was the Shelter Feast of free food to end out the week. All in all it proved to be a good week. After all was said and done, the owners were looking a little haggard and said they were glad it was over.

I was unable to attend the Miss Triangle pageant but I heard it was quite the turn out and Miss Chantal took the crown.

Be sure to watch the Quest for more goings on as some really good shows that are coming up. Suicide drag is coming back to Naps soon on a Sunday afternoon. For those of you who attended the last one it was one of the best off the beat shows put on in a long time. Also, Miss N.E.W. is coming up in April. Be sure to not miss a moment!

See ya at the shows! - Safonda  
safondaboy@aol.com

Osburn, executive director of Servicemembers Legal Defense Network (SLDN) said. "The choice we now face is clear: Spend \$191 million on firing patriotic Americans or spend the same amount on a dozen Blackhawk helicopters or 800 sidewinder missiles. Our priority should always be defense and security. The Military Readiness Enhancement Act is the best proposal to do just that."

According to GAO, the Pentagon has fired 322 language specialists who "had...skills in a foreign language that DoD had considered to be especially important." SLDN reported in 2004 that at least three dozen of those linguists spoke Arabic, Farsi or Korean, language the Pentagon acknowledges are understaffed. Nearly 800 specialists, including intelligence analysts, divers and combat controllers, were fired despite having "some training in an occupation identified...as 'critical.'" Since 1993, more than 10,000 service members have been fired under the gay ban. During that same time period, many of the United States' closest military allies, including Great Britain and Canada, repealed their prohibitions on gay service personnel.

## LAMBDA LEGAL ARGUES FOR HIV+ FOREIGN SERVICE WORKERS

Washington, DC: - The United States Department of State illegally prohibits anyone with HIV from being hired as a Foreign Service Officer, regardless of the applicant's qualifications or health status, Lambda Legal argued in federal court February 25. In Lambda Legal's federal lawsuit seeking to remove the ban on Foreign Service applicants with HIV, leading health experts have filed papers supporting a medically justified approach for assessing Foreign Service applicants.

Lambda Legal represents Lorenzo Taylor, who speaks three languages, holds a Foreign Service degree from Georgetown University and easily passed the tough entrance exams required to

be a Foreign Service Officer but was rejected by the State Department because he has HIV. Taylor, a 48-year-old federal government employee who lives in the Washington, DC, area, appealed that decision, saying his HIV is a completely manageable condition, but he was again rejected. Lambda Legal filed an administrative complaint on his behalf with the State Department two years ago, but that was denied as well. In September 2003, Lambda Legal filed a federal lawsuit on behalf of Taylor.

Lambda Legal charged that the State Department is violating the federal Rehabilitation Act, which prohibits the federal government from discriminating against people with disabilities. Since 1986, when the State Department initially adopted this policy, the agency has been clear and consistent that people with HIV will not be allowed to work in the Foreign Service. Most recently, in April 2003, another memo signed by the Director General of the Foreign Service was titled, "Why HIV Positive Individuals Are Not Eligible to Join the Foreign Service."

Lambda Legal said the policy clearly violates federal law. "Lorenzo Taylor is extraordinarily qualified to do this work, and he wants to serve his country. But simply because he has HIV, the federal government won't even

evaluate his qualifications or health status," Jonathan Givner, Lambda Legal's HIV Project Director said. "The State Department's ban on people with HIV in the Foreign Service isn't just bad policy -- it's also illegal."

Extensive evidence submitted to the court shows that because of the rapid rise in availability of HIV care in developing nations in recent years, physicians qualified to monitor and treat HIV-positive patients are now available at more than 95% of the State Department's 263 overseas posts. Taylor, who has been living with HIV for 19 years, has never had long-term illnesses or opportunistic infections. His medical needs are limited to two or

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three routine check-ups a year and a regular regimen of prescription medication taken twice daily. The doctor he has been seeing for 15 years reported that he is in "excellent" health.

Foreign Service Officers who test positive for HIV while they're already employed

are allowed to keep their jobs, which Lambda Legal said clearly demonstrates that the State Department is equipped to address employees' medical needs on a case-by-case basis. "There are people with HIV who are serving their country honorably and without any added hardship

because of their medical status. The State Department already assesses some people with HIV based on their individual health status and treats them fairly -- that's all we're asking for Lorenzo Taylor and other qualified applicants," Givner said.

## WHITE HOUSE GAY HUSTLER SCANDAL SHUTS DOWN RIGHT-WING NEWS ORGANIZATION



**Washington, DC:** - Talon News, the right-wing online line publication whose White House correspondent Jeff Gannon somehow got official accreditation despite having no journalistic credentials and being a gay hustler, has shut down.

A message posted on the Talon News website claimed that it is closing shop temporarily. Beltway insiders believe Talon News owner, Texan GOP sup-

porter Bobby Eberle will begin a new conservative news site in a bid to shed itself of the scandal now being referred to as "Gannongate."

Gannon was exposed earlier this month as a fake. His real name is J.D. Guckert. Questions began to circulate within the White House press corps almost as soon as he arrived on the scene. At

press briefings and presidential news conferences he routinely asked partisan or "soft" questions and was called on when mainstream reporters' questions were getting too heated.

Gay activist John Aravosis, who operates the AMERICAblog Web site, initiated a probe that revealed Gannon's seedy background. Aravosis and others discovered that Guckert owned a number of extreme conservative websites. But, they also found that Guckert owned gay sex sites - all with a military theme and all encouraging gays in the military to join. The sites included hotmilitarystud.com, militaryescorts.com, and militaryescorts4m.com.

Then it was discovered that Guckert was hustling himself on line at \$200 an hour. On one ad he listed

himself as a "top" with "8+ inches". In a CNN interview, Anderson Cooper pressed Guckert for answers but got few. He would neither confirm nor deny he was a prostitute despite screen captures of the sites on AMERICAblog.org. He also could not answer how he managed to get a White House press pass before Talon even opened.

Gannon's right-wing writing often has been homophobic. During last year's election campaign Gannon wrote that Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry "might someday be known as 'the first gay president.'" He then noted that Kerry has enjoyed "a 100% rating from the homosexual advocacy group Human Rights Campaign since 1995 in recognition of his support for the pro-gay agenda."

## Diversion of the Day Community Calendar

**Thursday, Feb. 24**

**Office (Rockford, IL) DJ Cody (Adrenaline)**

SAGE/Milw. Drop-in Center, 1-5 pm - visit, board games, play cards, etc.

**Friday, Feb. 25**

**Club 5 (Madison) National comedian Shirley Q. Liquor, 11 pm show, \$7 cover**

**Club Night Out (Stevens Point) Dan's Drunkin Chicken Night (18 & up); special drink prices**

**Oh Zone (Rockford, IL) Male strippers, 11 pm (\$3 cover)**

**Positive Voice 11th Annual Day of Self-Discovery Conference, (Fri.-Sat., 2/25-26) at Liberty Hall, Kimberly. Keynote speaker is Scott Fearing, a Senior Director with OutFront Minnesota.**

**SAGE/Milw. Movie Night - Trick, a charming story about 2 men looking for a place to make love and inadvertently falling in love**

**Saturday, Feb. 26**

**OZ (Wausau) Tammy Fay Drag Show, featuring Tammy & guests UWM's Annual Drag Show, 8-10 pm, Union Ballroom, 2200 E. Kenwood Blv'd.**

**Sunday, Feb. 27**

**Club 5 (Madison) Miss Club 5 Pageant**

**Thursday, March 3**

**BESTD free anonymous HIV testing at ETC 10pm-1am**

**Saturday, March 5**

**Club Night Out (Stevens Point) Ladies Nite**

**Tuesday, March 8**

**BESTD free anonymous HIV testing at Midtowne Spa, 5-8 pm Outwards Books (Milw.) Lesbian Reading Group will discuss Marijane Meaker's memoir: Highsmith: A Romance of the 1950s at its 7 pm meeting. New members always welcome!**

**Wednesday, March 9**

**STD Specialties HIV & syphilis testing, 10pm-1am, at 94 North (Kenosha); also Wed., 4/13**

**Friday, March 11**

**Club Night Out (Stevens Point) 18 & up night**

**Saturday, March 12**

**Angels of Hope MCC (Green Bay) 7 pm, Bowling Office (Rockford) Mr. Borderline pageant Club Night Out (Stevens Point) Fetish Night**

**Monday, March 14**

**Outwards Books (Milw.) Outwards Book Club will discuss Ethan Mordden's Buddies, one of his classic "tales of Gay Manhattan" series at its 7:30 meeting. New members always welcomed!**

**Wednesday, March 16**

**STD Specialties HIV & syphilis testing, 10pm-1am, at Fluid (also Wed., 4/20)**

**Thursday, March 17**

**STD Specialties HIV & syphilis testing, 10pm-1am, at Boom (also Wed., 4/20)**

**Saturday, March 19**

**BESTD free anonymous HIV testing at Harbor Room, 10pm-1am Club Night Out (Stevens Point) Red Night (Dress in red from head to toe)**

**Napalese (Green Bay) Mr. R.O.W. & Mr. Bay City Pageant Shelter (Green Bay) Underwear Party - Wet Boxer Contest, w/ a \$9 rail & beer bust 9-1**

**Sunday, March 20**

**Movie Collectible Show - Burnham Bowl Hall, 6016 W. Burnham, Milwaukee, 10-4:00, \$2 per. FMO (414) 466-1877**

**Wednesday, March 23**

**BESTD free anonymous HIV testing at Midtowne Spa, 7-10 pm STD Specialties HIV & syphilis testing, 10pm-1am, at Woodys (also Wed., 4/27)**

**Thursday, March 24**

**BESTD free anonymous HIV testing at Art Bar (Milw.), 9pm-midnite**

**Friday, March 25**

**Club Night Out (Stevens Point) 18 & up night**

**Friday, April 1**

**Club Night Out (Stevens Point) 18 & up night / and Amature Drag Nite with Cash Prizes**

**Players (La Crosse) Mr. Mississippi Valley Pageant**

**Saturday, April 2**

**Scooters (Eau Claire) Mr. Chippewa Valley Pageant**

**Sunday, April 3**

**Club 5 (Madison) Mr. Capital City & Mr. Southern Pageant**

**Saturday, April 30**

**Office (Rockford, IL) Miss Illinois Continental pageant, 10 pm (prize package up to \$3,150). Info: JcFordIII@aol.com or 9815) 378-7808**



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## New on DVD by Glenn Bishop *Touch of Pink and Cowboys & Angels*

Writing up just one new Gay DVD release is simply not going to work if Glenn is ever going to make any headway on his swelling stack of movies to be reviewed. Comedy is on the menu with Ian Iqbal Rashid's Cary Grant/Doris Day-inspired "Touch of Pink" and the charming Irish film, "Cowboys & Angels."



Writer/director Ian Iqbal Rashid is clearly enchanted with classic Hollywood cinema, drawing heavily from the sort of frothy romantic comedies in which Cary Grant and Rock Hudson, along with their favorite blonde, Doris Day, excelled in. Sure, their plots were predictable – that indeed was much of the fun, making these films the cinematic equivalent to comfort food for a generation of dating twenty-somethings back in the 1950s.

Alim (Jimi Mistry) seems to be living happily-ever-after as "Touch of Pink" begins. He's successful with a terrific job, owns a fabulous flat in London and has an attractive boyfriend, Giles (Kristen Holden-Reid) who is devoted to him. Who could ask for anything more?

Glenn, for one, would be happy to

exchange lives with Alim.

So, what's the problem? While Rashid suggests that there is much nagging at Alim beneath the surface of his seemingly comfortable life – having the ghost of Cary Grant (Kyle MacLachlan) as your best albeit imaginary friend isn't quite normal, right? – it is sudden arrival of his



mother for a visit which turns Alim's world topsy-turvy.

From Irish director David Gleason comes an utterly charming coming-of-age film, "Cowboys & Angels." Shane (Michael Legge) is something of a misfit – a nice enough bloke – yes, bloke, this is Ireland after all – and not unattractive. Mired in the sort of tedious civil service job that's guaranteed to rob him of his soul long before he reaches the age of 25, Shane has come to the realization that life has been somehow been passing him by.

All that changes when Shane moves in with Vincent (Allen Leech), a flamboyant (read: gay) fashion student. Vincent immediately decides that the poor straight lad is in desperate need of a makeover and he's just the gay boy to do

## Buy them, rent them or forget them...

A quirky mix of "That Touch of Mink" meets "Wedding Banquet," "Touch of Pink" is a winner, a charming romantic gay comedy with the added bonus of offering the important message that keeping one's imaginary friends – even one as fabulous as the ghost of Cary Grant – is dangerous after reaching puberty. Glenn thinks that most Quest readers will find the two leads in "Cowboys & Angels" too irresistible to not want to add the film to their personal DVD collections.

## Just the facts...

"Touch of Pink" is in English and is clocked at 91 minutes

Available Now SRP: \$25.95

Check out

<http://www.sonyclassics.com/touch-of-pink/> for photos, director's commentary and plenty of yummy recipes!

"Cowboys & Angels" is in English and has a running time of 92 minutes

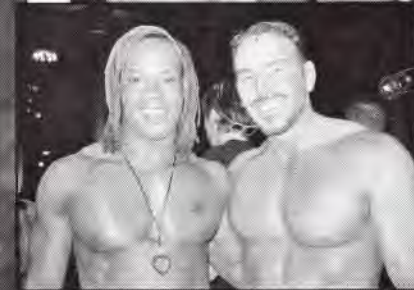
Filmed on location in Limerick, Ireland

Available: Now SRP: \$24.95

it. While Shane is initially reluctant, he knows he must do something if he is ever going to win the heart of Gemma (Amy Shiels), Vincent's beautiful best friend.

While director Gleason focuses on Shane's foibles on the bumpy road to fabulous, the film's emotional center is the marvelously warm relationship between he and Vincent.

And how refreshing, muses Glenn, to come across a film in which the gay boy isn't pining away for his straight roommate – as so often seems the case in typical gay flicks from the classic "Kiss Me Guido" to the more recent "Eating Out."



The Fireball event at Union Station, Chicago featuring dj Rosario and Abel (not pictured) and including a performance by Kristine W.

Pics by Tony Ritschard

## The Galano Club

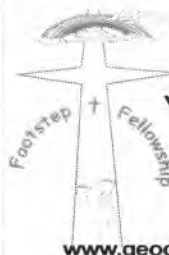
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## DIVERSITY WORKSHOP SET

**Almond:-** A UW-MOSAIC Weekend Workshop has been set to run March 11-13 here. The mission of the UW-MOSAIC is to focus on power, privilege and oppression through creating and building trust between white students and students of color, providing a space for authentic cross-cultural dialogue, examining how we individually are impacted by or contribute to oppression, developing a definition of a just community and creating a shared commitment for change on UW campuses.

The workshop will be held at Camp Helen Brachman here. Transportation, room and board will be provide free to UW-Madison students. Registration forms are now available at the Multicultural Student Center (2nd Floor, Red Gym) and the Diversity Education Program Offices, 124 N. Henry St. on the UW-Madison campus. Applications due by March 4 at 5 P.M. For more information about the MOSAIC workshop, contact Eric Trekell at: ewtrekell@wisc.edu.

## FEARING EXAMINES COMMUNITY BUILDING, SEXUAL IDENTITY AT GAY ISSUES CONFERENCE

**Appleton:-** Scott Fearing, a Senior Director with OutFront Minnesota, examined the dynamics of LGBT community building, the components of sexual identity and a variety of other issues during Positive Voice's 11th annual Day of Self-Discovery LGBT issues conference held at the Liberty Hall Convention Center here February 25-26. The Friday night session, attended by about 40 LGBT and allied community leaders, focused on the process of community building through outreach, networking and coalition-building.

About 70, including almost all of Friday night's participants, attended the general issues session on February 26. Fearing

explored coming-out issues, the components of sexual identity and strategies for sharing sexual orientation with friends, co-workers and family members.

Funding for the two-day conference was made possible by a grant from the Community Foundation For The Fox Valley Region, Inc. The Community Foundation gave Positive Voice \$2,000 from their Opportunity Fund.



## SAME-SEX COUPLES SEEK MARRIAGE LICENSES AT COURTHOUSE

**Ashland:-** Eleven local same-sex couples went to the Ashland Courthouse on February 14 attempting to obtain marriage licenses. County Clerk Patricia Somppi denied licenses to eleven couples and gave them copies of state law stating a marriage is a legal relationship between a husband and wife. Somppi said it was the first time any same-sex couple asked for a marriage license in her 36 years of working inside the office.

Jackie Moore, who was one of the license seekers, said the point was to show the public and officials that same-sex couples want to be married in Ashland. "This isn't just happening in

San Francisco. It's a national thing," she said.

Additionally, about a dozen people of all sexual orientations also stood alongside a curb in front of the courthouse with signs, asking drivers to honk for equal rights. According to the activists, a surprising number of drivers did during the early afternoon demonstration.

"I'm married, and I have a daughter. For her sake, I want everyone to have equal rights," Heather Tucker said. "I don't know what her sexual orientation is. But, I want that to be available to her should she choose. And I think a lot of people feel that way. Well, we do." Tucker noted that marriage provides many legal protections that shouldn't be exclusive to heterosexual couples.

The Ashland Daily Press reported that eyewitness Joni Moore (not related to license seeker Moore) said the clerk looked surprised when the first couple, two men, asked for a license. "Obviously, they're male, and she had to ask specifically, 'Are you both men?' It just was like this very uneasy thing," Moore said. "It was just very awkward."

Somppi also acknowledged being surprised. "It was two boys first," she said. "And I just said, 'No, it has to be a man and a woman.' And they said they wanted some proof. So I have this from the state statutes. I guess they thought they'd see what would happen."

The statutes were listed inside a two year-old memo notifying the State Registrar that same-sex marriages are not legal in this state. "The Wisconsin legislature does have the power to change the statutes to allow marriages to occur between two individuals of the same sex," the February 13, 2003, memo said. "Until the legislature acts to achieve that result, however, your office lacks authority to accept filing marriage records of two men or two women."



Outfront Minnesota's Scott Fearing examines at the gender identity "iceberg" during the annual Day of Self-Discovery LGBT issues conference in Appleton



## "PRECIOUS STONES" CAST MARCH 5

**Milwaukee:-** The UWM Center for Women's Studies will present "Precious Stones" Saturday, March 5, at 7PM in the UW-Milwaukee Union Ballroom, UWM Union- 2nd Level, 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd. "Precious Stones" is an award-winning play examining the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the perspective of two women, one Jewish, the other Palestinian, who join forces to organize an Arab-Jewish dialogue group, only to find themselves falling in love. Complimentary tickets available on- and off- campus. For off-campus ticket locations, contact the Center for Women's Studies at 414-229-5918.

## CENTER ADVOCATES EQUALITY KNOCKS SEEKS VOLUNTEERS, DONATIONS

**Milwaukee:-** Center Advocates Equality Knocks phone banks to identify fair-minded voters who oppose the constitutional ban on civil unions and gay marriage will be held on Wednesdays, March 9 and 24, from 5:30-8:30 PM at the SEIU Call Center, 633

S Hawley Rd. To volunteer, call Pabitra Benjamin at 414-271-2566, Ext.119 or by email at: pbenjamin@mkelgblt.org

Center Advocates also needs volunteers to for its Data Entry Night to be held on Wednesday, March 9, from 5:30-8:30PM. Helps us record the hundreds of new allies of equality we get every month in our database so that we can build a powerful force for fairness. To volunteer, call Deon Young at 414-271-2656 Ext.125, or email him at: dyoung@mkelgblt.org.

Equality Knocks also needs greater financial support. As many know Center Advocates, the equal rights arm of the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, is working hard every day to defeat Wisconsin's anti-gay constitutional amendment. The organization needs to raise more than \$20,000 in the next few weeks to continue this massive effort. A gift offered today is the seed money Center Advocates needs to take the organizing to a new level and will be a key to the statewide LGBT community's success in defeating this amendment. To donate go to the Center Advocates website at: www.centeradvocates.org

ates.org/donate/donate.asp and click on the Donate Now button.

## COLLEGE STUDENTS IN LONG-DISTANCE LGBT RELATIONSHIPS SOUGHT

**Stevens Point:-** College students who are currently in long-distance, same sex relationships are being sought to participate in a relationship survey. Sonya Fisher, a graduate student at UW-SP has begun working on a thesis entitled "How college students' maintain their same-sex romantic long-distance relationships."

Students in such relationship may assist the research by participating in the survey online at the secure website fisher has set up at:

[https://www.uwsp.edu/comm/rsprague/sonya\\_thesis\\_survey.htm](https://www.uwsp.edu/comm/rsprague/sonya_thesis_survey.htm). Those who would prefer to answer the survey directly or have questions about the project may contact Fisher directly by phone at 715-346-2060 or by email at: Sonja.Fisher@uwsp.edu.

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lively community of other fathers who have traveled a similar road themselves. Members have found that participation in the groups upbeat and enjoyable fellowship has sustained and supported them as they've roller-coastered through the colossal changes and challenges of separation and divorce, moving out of the family household, and coming-out to wives and children, parents, family and friends.

Unlike numerous east and west coast-based fathers or parents groups, which are frequently comprised of gay men and couples who are adopting or co-parenting children, the Milwaukee Gay Fathers Group has for a decade found itself helping and serving a population of men coming almost exclusively out of traditional heterosexual marriages and relationships. The group is free of cost to attendees and is relaxed, welcoming, informal and non-judgmental. For further information, call 414-372-8008.

### PRIDEFEST SEEKS AWARD NOMINATIONS, VOLUNTEERS, MARKETPLACE VENDORS

**Milwaukee:** - PrideFest 2005 is shifting into high gear with a call for PrideFest Award nominations, marketplace vendors

and volunteers. The festival also confirmed new and returning activities for 2005, including a new Sheephead tournament to help satisfy Wisconsin's thirst for the popular card game. The festival will run June 11th and 12th at the Henry Maier Festival Park (AKA Summerfest Grounds) on Milwaukee's lakefront.

PrideFest is accepting nominations for the annual PrideFest Awards presented at the festival's opening ceremonies. Awards will be given in three categories: the Community Service Award for community involvement; the Stonewall Award for demonstrating the spirit of the Stonewall Riots by fighting to bring about change for the benefit of others; and the Lifetime Achievement Award for an individual who has been instrumental in changing the course of our community's history. Nominations are due by April 15, 2005. Call 414-272-3378 for more information.

PrideFest is also seeking volunteers to work in many different capacities. Immediate needs are Female Co-Producer, Public Relations & Marketing Director, Marketplace Director and assistants in multiple areas. The festival offers a rewarding, team-focused way of contributing to the

LGBT community and celebrating LGBT culture and pride.

The PrideFest Marketplace provides an opportunity for businesses and community organizations to interact with over 15,000 people who attend the two-day festival. Individuals, businesses and organizations who are interested in reserving a space are encouraged to respond by March 31 to meet the early reservation deadline and save money in booth fees.

In addition to the Sheephead tournament, PrideFest will be bringing back many favorite activities, including the popular leather show, the Gay Idol talent contest and a boat cruise along the festival shoreline. As plans for these and other activities are developed, information will be announced on the festival web site, [www.pridefest.com](http://www.pridefest.com). An announcement of national main stage acts is planned for April.

For more festival information, including award nominations, volunteering and reserving a space in the Marketplace, call 414-272-3378 (FEST). The festival web site, [www.pridefest.com](http://www.pridefest.com), will also be updated in the coming weeks to allow users to download information and forms.

### UW BOARD OF REGENTS APPROVES TRANSGENDER PROTECTIONS

**Eau Claire:** - The UW System Board of Regents added transgendered individuals to the list of those protected by the UW System's nondiscrimination policy at its meeting here February 11. The change will add the phrase "gender identity or expression" to documents addressing the system's nondiscrimination policy. The existing policy protects individuals from harassment or employment discrimination based on race, sex, religion, color, creed, disability, sexual orientation, national origin, ancestry or age.

Senior Jessica Janiuk, a transgender student and chair of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender affairs for Student Senate's Student Life and Diversity commission, said she spoke to the Board of Regents about her experiences last December. Both Janiuk and Barrett said the addition met with little resistance from the Regents.

"(Some) did have a look of surprise when I said there were no legal protections," Janiuk said. "They started immediately taking up the cause of adding gender identity & expression to the nondiscrimination cause."

"Gender identity" refers to a person's sense of identity as a man, woman or a

combination of both or neither, according to a press release from the United Council of UW Students. "Gender expression" refers to the external presentation or appearance of a person's gender. As a result of the change, UW schools will begin considering a range of issues for transgendered students including housing, gender-neutral bathrooms, health services and recreation.

Janiuk said these issues can have the most impact for transgendered individuals during the transition phase. "Early in your transition, you don't know where to go to be safe," Janiuk said. "There was one point where I was actually standing outside the male and female restrooms, looking back and forth, not knowing which one to go into. I feared for my physical safety to go into the men's restroom, but legally in the state of Wisconsin, if I had gone into the women's bathroom I could have been arrested."

The University of California and the University of Minnesota also explicitly include transgender individuals in their nondiscrimination policies. "Transgender is a concept that's coming into its own, and I think it's going to become more prominent in the next couple of decades," Janiuk said. "It's going to be an issue eventually, and it's better that we handle it before we run into these problems later."

### ACTION WISCONSIN FUNDRAISER SNAGS TOP DEMOCRATS

**Fond Du Lac:** - A February 10 Fond du Lac house party netted Action Wisconsin not only big bucks in its ongoing battle against the constitutional civil unions ban, but some of the area's top Democrats, including Attorney General Peg Lautenschlager. About 50 people attended the fundraiser hosted by AW supporters Dave and Madonna Bowman.

Besides Lautenschlager, other top names at the party included Todd Schmitz, leader of the local Democratic Party; and County Board Supervisor Judy Goldsmith. Several area clergy also attended. Lautenschlager told the *Fond Du Lac Reporter* she was attending the house party as a private citizen. "Needless to say, this is an important issue facing Wisconsin," she said.

Party goers were told that most likely, the referendum would be used as a Republican political ploy to influence the November 2006 ballot, that will also include the race for governor, all seats in the Assembly and a third of the Wisconsin Senate races.

However the bill's overreaching language and its impact on everyday families concerned attendees the most. "I feel very

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strongly about defeating this amendment. Even the authors of the bill expect it to go to court because of the legal ramifications," Madonna Bowman said. She and others believe "vague language" in the amendment will invite lawsuits against employers that recognize gay and heterosexual, unmarried couples for the purpose of health insurance or other benefits.

Barb Kotsonis, regional director of Action Wisconsin and president of Fond du Lac Moving Forward, a support group for the Gay Straight Alliance at Fond du Lac High School, called the bill dangerous. "The amendment would make it illegal for corporations to offer domestic partner benefits. It also bans any legal status unions, even civil, that may be substantially similar to marriage, for gay couples," Kotsonis said.

Rev. Ted Drewsen of Pilgrim United Church of Christ in Fond du Lac doesn't believe the state needs a new definition of marriage. "I don't think the law will strengthen marriage or help people in any way. I think it could weaken civil liberties and rights for everyone," he said.

Goldsmith said the move reflects "total intolerance of a minority." She is a former president of the National Organization for Women. "I'm here because this is a key part of my commitment to social justice. It just makes sense,"

Goldsmith said. She quoted Martin Luther King Jr. for the group: "Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

## COMMUNITY CENTER PLAYS GAMES

**LaCrosse:** Bored on Saturday night? Want something to do? We've got a suggestion! Every Saturday evening in March will be Board Game Night at the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, 115 5th Street South, Suite 408 beginning at 6:30 PM. Soup and bread will be provided by the community center. Attendees are asked to bring other food contributions and their favorite board game if they wish.

Also, the Book Group will meet at the Resource Center on Sunday, March 13, to discuss Leslie Feinberg's "Stone Butch Blues." Discussion will begin at 4 PM. Everyone who is interested is encouraged to attend. For more information about the game night, book club or any other service offered by the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center, call 608-784-0452 or email the center at: [info@7riverslgbt.org](mailto:info@7riverslgbt.org).

## CITY ATTORNEY CLAIMS AMENDMENT COULD KILL PARTNER BENEFITS

**Madison:** - City Attorney Michael May

has announced that he believes Madison's domestic partnership benefits would likely be eliminated if a proposed state constitutional ban on same-sex marriage is approved.

"A number of benefits that flow to unmarried domestic partners under Madison's ordinances, contracts and city policies likely would be found to create a 'legal status ... substantially similar to that of marriage' and would, therefore, be declared void," May wrote in an opinion issued February 22.

"These include protections under Madison's Equal Opportunities Ordinance and health insurance reimbursement." May said that the ban's effect on Madison's domestic partnership benefits would depend in large part on whether the courts interpret these benefits as "individual" rights or as a package that provides "substantially similar" rights as marriage does. May said it is likely a court will look at domestic partnership benefits individually and determine that they are, in fact, "substantially similar" to benefits provided through marriage. "If they do, then we're in big trouble," he said.

May also noted that the courts will take into account the "punitive intent" of the proposed amendment, which is to exclude gay and lesbian partners from receiving

benefits accorded by legal marriage. "Obviously the intent is to stop people who are not in traditional marriages from obtaining certain rights," May said. "Why should the court interpret it in any other way other than limiting those rights?"

May said the amendment's threat to domestic partnership benefits would affect city employees as well as private employers that offer similar benefits. "If our ordinances and policies are struck down, a private employer providing the same benefits could find themselves in the same situation," he said.

Kevin Usealman, communications director for state Rep. Mark Gundrum, the main author of the proposed constitutional amendment, offered a prepared statement in response to May's legal opinion. "This amendment would not affect individual domestic partner benefits provided by state or local government or private companies," he said this morning. "This issue is nothing more than a red herring that opponents of the amendment are using to try to drain public support."

Whether or not Gundrum, R-New Berlin, is correct in his legal arguments, the fact is there will be challenges to domestic partnership benefits if the constitutional ban passes. Action Wisconsin Vice President Tamara Packard said. "We know from experience in other states already, like Utah, Ohio and Michigan, where they just passed similar language to the language proposed in Wisconsin, that those challenges will be coming if this language is adopted," she said. "And no municipality has the spare money to defend against that kind of lawsuit."

## FREE GRIEF SUPPORT GROUP OFFERED

**Madison:** - HospiceCare Inc. and OutReach, Inc. are collaborating to offer a free, seven-week grief support group specifically for those who identify with LGBT community. The group will meet on Wednesday evenings from 6 - 8 PM March 2 through April 13, at OutReach Inc., 600 Williamson Street. Although there is no charge to attend, pre-registration is required. Chris Rode, a HospiceCare bereavement counselor, will facilitate the group.

"Grief lasts longer than most people expect," explains Rode, "and we need support, often support which is different from what family or friends can provide. This group offers a safe and supportive environment to talk about grief-related issues with individuals who have similar lifestyles and experiences," Rode said.

For more information or to register, please call Rode at 608-327-7149 or contact her by e-mail at: [chris.rode@hospicecareinc.com](mailto:chris.rode@hospicecareinc.com).

HospiceCare Inc. is a non-profit, community-based hospice dedicated to providing physical, emotional and spiritual support to patients and families dealing with life-limiting illnesses. With offices in Madison and Janesville, HospiceCare serves residents in Dane, Rock, and parts of Walworth, Green and Jefferson counties.

## GAY FATHERS GROUP CELEBRATES TENTH ANNIVERSARY

**Milwaukee:** - On Monday, January 10, members of the Milwaukee Gay Fathers Group celebrated the groups tenth year of service to Milwaukee and beyond, with a special anniversary dinner-gathering. Over two dozen current and alumni members and their partners convened from as far away as Arizona to attend the celebration, held at the groups usual quarters, the BESTD Clinic, 1240 E. Brady Street.

The support-discussion group meets the second and fourth Monday night of each month from 7:30 - 9:30 pm. at the Clinic and is open to all gay, bisexual and questioning fathers. Since its founding, the Fathers Group has provided a lifeline to many dozens of often-isolated men, welcoming them into a caring and

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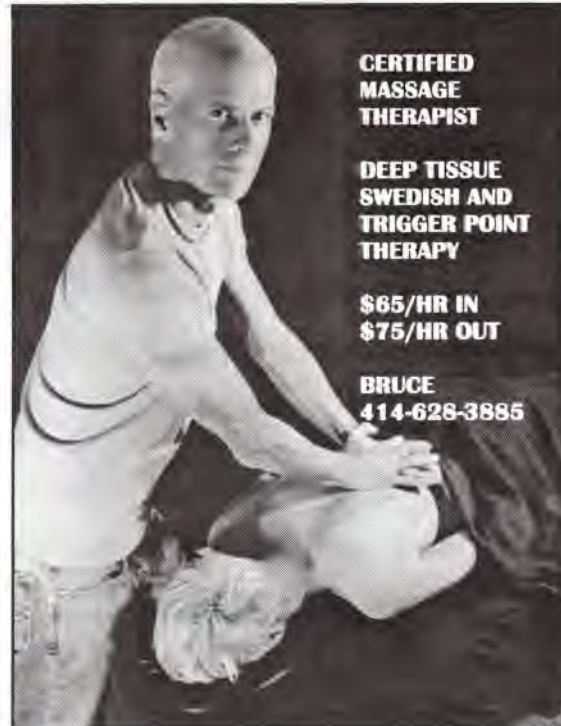
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