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## BAD NEWS: KANSAS VOTERS APPROVE BAN ON GAY UNIONS 70 - 29% EIGHTEENTH STATE TO APPROVE CONSTITUTIONAL BAN

**Topeka** - Kansans overwhelmingly voted to add a ban on gay marriage and civil unions to their state constitution, but supporters and opponents predicted court battles over the amendment. The ban reaffirms the state's long-standing policy of recognizing only marriages between one man and one woman. It also declares that only such unions are entitled to the "rights and incidents" of marriage, prohibiting the state from authorizing civil unions for gay couples.

With final, unofficial results from 104 of the state's 105 counties on April 5, 414,235, or 70%, voted "yes," and 178,167, or 29% voted "no." Critics argued the amendment could have unexpected consequences, such as potentially preventing companies from offering health benefits to employees' partners - gay or heterosexual.

Matt Foreman, executive director of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, predicted the amendment will spawn lawsuits in Kansas courts as gays, lesbians and unmarried heterosexuals encounter problems. "Does this impact living wills?" he asked. "Powers of attorney? Custody agreements? The enforcement of custody agreements?"

Voters in 13 states, including Missouri and Oklahoma, approved

constitutional gay marriage bans last year, joining four others. Similar proposals will be on the ballot next year in Alabama, South Dakota and Tennessee.

Some Kansas voters, like 24-year-old Eric Hetzel, saw the amendment as a way to protect the traditional definition of marriage, enshrined in Kansas law since 1867, from legal challenges.



"I am a Christian," Hetzel said. "I believe in the Bible and what it says that marriage is between a man and a woman."

But Byron Defreese, a 65-year-old retiree, called the amendment "total foolishness." "I don't know how this is going to defend my marriage of 43 years," he said. "I think it's a diversion from the real issues."

ports the concept of civil unions.

A poll released April 7 found that Connecticut voters back civil unions but not gay marriage. Civil unions were supported by 56% of registered voters, while 53% opposed marriage for same-sex couples, according to the Quinnipiac University survey. The telephone poll of 1,541 registered voters was taken from March 28 to April 4 and had an error margin of 3 percentage points.

Brian Brown, executive director of the Family Institute of Connecticut, had maintained that most voters do not support civil unions or same-sex marriage, and he called the vote "a slap in the face of democracy." But Anne Stanback, president of Love Makes a Family and an advocate for same-sex marriage, said she was "very proud to live in Connecticut today."

Gay rights proponents originally hoped to pass a bill similar to the Massachusetts law that allows same-sex couples to marry. But legislative leaders decided there was more political support for Vermont-style civil unions, which extend state-mandated rights and privileges of marriage, but without the marriage license.

Six of the Senate's 12 Republicans and 21 of the 24 Democrats voted for the bill. Six Republicans and three Democrats voted against it. An effort failed to amend the bill to define marriage as being between one man and one woman. Rell said she would prefer the marriage definition was in the legislation, but would not say she would veto the bill if it weren't.

The 2000 Census found 7,400 same-sex couples in Connecticut.

About 70 people watched the debate from the Senate galleries. The crowd ranged from same-sex couples to monks who opposed the legislation.

State Senator. John Kissel, ranking Republican on the Judiciary Committee, who voted against the legislation, said experience shows that civil unions will just be a temporary answer and advocates will continue to press for gay marriage. "It's hard to believe that the train, as it rolls down the tracks, is going to stop at this station," Kissel said. "Going down this road has a price to it."

## GOOD NEWS: CONNECTICUT SENATE APPROVES CIVIL UNIONS BILL CIVIL UNIONS BILL MAY BE ON GOVERNOR'S DESK BY APRIL 13

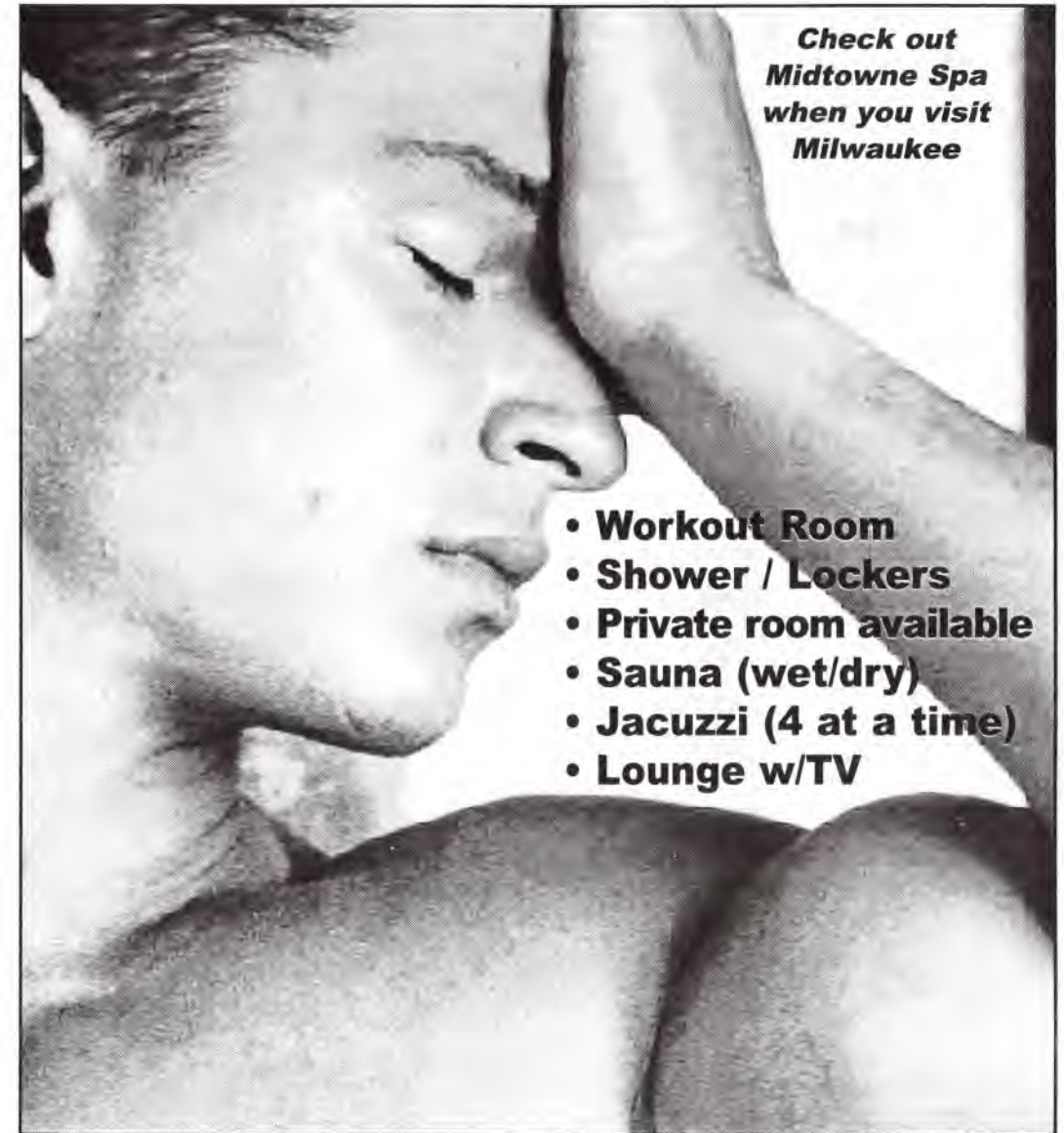
**Hartford** - The state Senate here easily approved a bill that would make Connecticut the first state to recognize civil unions between same-sex couples without being pressured by the courts.

Senators debated for nearly four hours April 6 before voting 27-9 for the landmark bill, which would give gay and lesbian couples many of the same rights as married couples. Vermont has approved civil unions and Massachusetts has gay marriage,

but the changes came only after lawsuits were brought by same-sex couples.

"We stand today before a portal to history," said Democratic Senator. Andrew McDonald, one of a handful of openly gay lawmakers. "I ask you to pass through it."

Proponents say the legislation will likely clear the state House, possibly as early as next week. Republican Governor M. Jodi Rell has not taken a stand on the bill but has said she sup-



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45 y.o. GWM, 195, looking for friendship/relationship to share my life. I'm a smoker, social drinker, have speech impediment, but mobile & willing to relocate. (262) 335-4214. Mark Schicker, 2235 Sylvan Way, **West Bend**, WI 53095. No games, please [1]

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BWC attractive young 40s, fun loving, WCO, young, attractive preop transexual for partying, sex, bootycall, friendship, discount roommate, travel partner, possible employee; no single men, your pics get ours. est suburbs **New Berlin**. E-mail [horndoggy469@hotmail.com](mailto:horndoggy469@hotmail.com)

Bi WM, 52, 6', 210, **Milwaukee** area, seeking bi females & couples (M&F) for fun times & intimacy (no single males). Adventurous, open-minded, uninhibited, affectionate, seeking other like-minded people of my age. E-mail [cooldaddy4u@aol.com](mailto:cooldaddy4u@aol.com) [2]

Middle-aged GM looking for 18-21 y.o. to share good times. I like to fish, camp, nude sunbathing & wear fetish wear. You must be slender & cute. **Waukesha** area, but willing to travel. (262) 352-8424 [2]

30 y.o. GWM, 200, seeks penpals and friends only. No games on my end. Send photo, please (no polaroids). James Hinkle, PO Box 351, **Waupun**, WI 53963. [2]

## DOOR COUNTY HATE CRIME TRIAL SET FOR APRIL 26 ALLEGED BASHERS TO PLEAD "SELF DEFENSE"

**Sturgeon Bay** — Two of the five men involved in the June, 2004 bar brawl that was allegedly prompted by sexual orientation of openly gay guest house owners Darrin Day and Bryon Groeschl will go to trial April 26 following proceedings here April 4. Father and son Mark Sawyer and Joshua Sawyer, both of Egg Harbor, are charged with substantial battery and disorderly conduct. The younger Sawyer, the alleged instigator of the fight, is also charged with the hate crime penalty enhancer.

According to the criminal complaint, the younger Sawyer triggered the June 6 brawl at Bley's Tavern in West Jacksonport after he unplugged the tavern's juke box because he didn't like a song Day and Groeschl had selected. Sawyer then reportedly kicked one of the victim's pool cues. After the victims asked what the problem was, the assault began. Throughout the brawl, the five alleged assailants made repeated anti-gay taunts to the victims, which triggered the hate crime enhancer. Groeschl later told investigators that he briefly lost consciousness, which also triggered the substantial battery charge.

Sawyer's attorney tried to have Judge

Peter Diltz drop the substantial battery felony because the statute's "temporary loss of consciousness" language was unconstitutionally vague. Diltz denied the motion based on a legal opinion he had solicited from the state attorney general's office.

Diltz then set the April 26 trial date, with jury selection to occur a day earlier. Diltz ordered a jury pool of 60 potential jurors, in part due to the notoriety the case has received in the county. Internet discussion groups operated by Door County newspapers have bristled with commentary on the incident since the brawl, and one county writer even a discussion thread on Madison alternative paper *Isthmus's* discussion boards after a local radio station's discussion board was shut down.

Diltz also ruled that the younger Sawyer's medical records might be allowed as evidence with limitations. In previous hearings Sawyer's attorneys have attempted to have the charges dropped because Sawyer's injuries document that was acting in self defense in the 5-2 fight that he is charged with starting. A Door County Advocate report indicated the defense would again use the self-defense strategy in

the formal jury trial.

The younger Sawyer faces up to eleven and a half years in prison and \$35,000 in fines if he is convicted of all charges. His father faces four and a half years in prison and fines of up to \$21,000.

Attorneys for Robert Wagner of Egg Harbor reportedly are negotiating a plea deal that will drop the hate crime charges in exchange for a guilty plea. In another recent plea deal, Adam Bley, 24, of Sturgeon Bay pleaded guilty to lesser charges in the bar brawl. Bley pleaded guilty to a charge of disorderly conduct March 24 and was fined \$367.

Andrew Ostrand also had pleaded guilty last December 20 to disorderly conduct and battery charges in exchange for the dropping of the hate crime charge. Judge Peter Diltz, who replaced Judge D. Todd Ehlers in the case, deferred acceptance of the guilty plea agreement and until the trials of the other alleged assailants were completed. Since his involvement in the June 6 incident at Bley's Tavern in rural Jacksonport, Ostrand has been charged with several other crimes including disorderly conduct, criminal damage to property and reckless driving. Earlier this month the Wisconsin Dept. of Revenue issued several warrants against Ostrand for unpaid back taxes.

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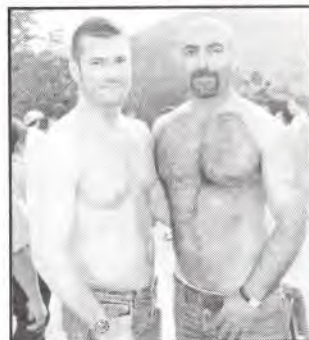
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## COURT UPHOLDS CALIFORNIA'S GAY PARTNERSHIP LAW

**California:** - An appeals court rejected on April 4 a challenge to a California law that gives same-sex domestic partners many of the same rights as married couples. The Alliance Defense Fund and other conservative groups brought the suit, arguing that a state measure on domestic partnership that became law in January was unconstitutional.

Their argument centered on a proposition approved by California voters in 2000 that defined marriage as a union between a man and a woman. The Court of Appeal for the Third District in Sacramento backed a superior court judge's finding that the new law did not violate the 2000 Defense of Marriage Initiative.

"We conclude the trial judge was correct in ruling that the legislature's enactment of the domestic partners act did not constitute an amendment of the Defense

of Marriage Initiative and, thus, that the legislature's action without separate voter approval did not violate ... the California Constitution," the court wrote. "Contrary to petitioners' suggestion, the legislature has not created a 'marriage' by another name or granted domestic partners a status equivalent to married spouses."

Although gay rights groups welcomed the California domestic partnership law, they say it falls short of providing the same rights as married couples, and are separately fighting for the right to same-sex matrimony. San Francisco allowed more than 4,000 gay couples to marry during a month-long period a year ago until the courts brought them to a halt. The California Supreme Court ultimately ruled that those marriages were invalid.

Yet last month a San Francisco judge issued a preliminary ruling saying California's ban on same sex marriage is unconstitutional. Experts say years of legal battles over gay marriage and related issues are likely.



## PINK BRICK TOSSED AT FEINSTEIN'S "GAY BLAME GAME" POST-ELECTION JIBES

**California:** - In Dianne Feinstein's hometown of San Francisco, hard feelings linger about the senator's remark that the push to make marriage legal for same-sex couples hurt Democrats in the November election.

Organizers of the gay pride parade held in the city every June announced Thursday that Feinstein was the winner of this year's "Pink Brick" award, a dubious honor bestowed on the public figure the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Pride Committee decides has done the most to damage the gay rights cause. President Bush and talk show host Laura Schlessinger were the previous winners.

Joey Cain, president of the committee said Feinstein was nominated for the prize for telling reporters the morning after Bush's re-election that progress on the gay marriage front "has been too much, too fast, too soon."

"There are a lot of people in the community who feel very betrayed by her because they have supported her," Cain said.

Howard Gantman, a Feinstein spokesman, called the senator's nomination for the Pink Brick "very unfortunate," saying it neglects Feinstein's long record of support for gay and lesbian issues not only as a senator, but as a former San Francisco supervisor and mayor during the early days of the AIDS crisis. "It's really too bad they haven't chosen, in terms of this effort, to really focus on people who have been longtime opponents of the gay community," Gantman said on April 7.

Feinstein's competition for the prize, which is the gay community's answer to Hollywood's "Golden Raspberry" awards honoring the worst in film, was the Rev. Lou Sheldon, a vocal opponent of gay rights, and the Traditional Values Coalition, the Orange County-based organization Sheldon leads.

Geoffrey Kors, executive director of Equality California, California's largest gay rights lobbying group, noted that while there were probably public figures more deserving of a Pink Brick than Feinstein, her nomination and selection did not come out of nowhere. Rather, Feinstein always has had a lukewarm and occasionally rocky relationship with her gay and lesbian constituents, Kors said.

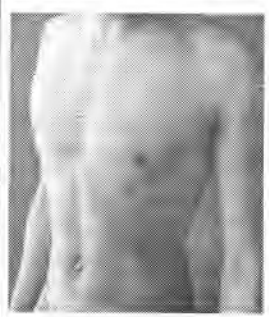
"She has a mixed reputation," he said. "She has generally supported basic nondiscrimination laws, but she vetoed the San Francisco domestic partner legislation at the request of the archbishop. ... I think people are frustrated by her lack of movement over the last decade on these issues, for never making them a part of her agenda."

But James Hormel, a gay San Francisco philanthropist who served as U.S. ambassador to Luxembourg in the Clinton administration, said he doesn't think the small number of people who cast votes in the Pink Brick election "in any way represents the LGBT constituency in San Francisco." Feinstein has long been a

champion of gay issues, as evidenced by her appointment of gay and lesbian aides while she was mayor and her vote as a senator against the federal Defense of Marriage Act.

"I don't really think this is in the realm of things a big deal," Hormel said. "On the other hand, I find it curious that this constituency, which is struggling so hard to end its second-class citizenship in this country, would turn on somebody who has in many ways been a major supporter."

The committee hasn't decided what kind of project would best suit Feinstein's brick, but Cain suggested that a place to start would be for the senator to attend the parade on June 26. "We are going to send an invitation to the senator to ride in the parade or speak from the stage, something she has never done," he said. "I'm hoping (the brick) sends a message to the senator, and I want to see it create more of a dialogue with her."



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## BISHOP DENIES SAYING JESUS POSSIBLY GAY

**New Hampshire:** - The first openly gay Episcopal bishop says he is being falsely accused of suggesting that Jesus might have been gay. "I can assure you with absolute certainty that was not my implication, and certainly not anything I ever said," Bishop V. Gene Robinson told the *New Hampshire Union Leader*.

Robinson said he is "being flooded with angry messages" because of Web log comments about his comments at a February 13 forum on sexual issues at Christ Church in Hamilton, Mass.

Robinson said he was making the point that the nuclear family is a relatively new idea and that, even for his time, Jesus apparently led a nontraditional life. "Interestingly enough, in this day of traditional family values and so on," Robinson says in a recording from the forum on the church's Web site, "this man that we follow ... was single as far as we know; who traveled with a bunch of men, although there were lots of women around; who had a disciple who was known as 'the one whom Jesus loved'; who said 'my family is not my mother and father, my family are those who do the will



of God' - none of us like those harsh words. That's who Jesus is, that's who he was, at least in his earthly life."

Pointing out that Jesus was not married with children "is a long way from saying Jesus is gay, or saying that he had sex with anyone, male or female," Robinson said April 4. "I happen to think the traditional family is a wonderful thing. I'm a product

of it," said at the Hamilton forum. "I dearly love my family, and I love my own family, with my own two kids. It just looks a little nontraditional. But this Jesus, when you ask who is Jesus, he was not terribly mainstream, was he?"

The Episcopal Church, with 2.4 million members, is the U.S. branch of the 77 million-member Anglican Communion, which traces its roots to the Church of England. The church has been roiled by controversy since Robinson's ordination in 2003.

## MORE SUSPECTED "HIV SUPERBUG" CASES UNCOVERED

**New York:** - Health officials have identified several patients potentially infected with a rare strain of highly drug-resistant HIV, but are not sure if the cases are related. The first case of the strain was reported last month in a man who had unprotected sex with dozens of other men while under the influence of crystal methamphetamine.

Officials then contacted sex partners identified by the infected man, and began surveying city HIV laboratories

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## Diversion of the Day Community Calendar

Friday, April 15

**Harmony Cafe (Appleton) David Drake, Milwaukee-based folk artist,** performs original folk tunes, 7 pm  
**SAGE (Milw.) Theatre Outing...**SAGE members and friends will gather at Whitefish Bay High School to see their production of *Drop Dead*.  
**TAZZbah** (1712 W. Pierce St., Milw.) **Leather Nite** - party starts 10 pm; wear your leathers for drink specials

Saturday, April 16

**Napalese Lounge (Green Bay) Miss N.E.W. USofA Pageant** 10:30 pm  
**Shelter (Green Bay) Our 1st Hawaiian Luau Party:** \$2 malibu rum drinks & 151 punch shots

Sunday, April 17

**Cage (Milw.) The Disco Ball,** 8 pm w/ "disco duds" contest at 11 pm

Wednesday, April 20

**Harmony Cafe (Appleton) PRO/CON vaccinations:** a conversation about the safety and efficacy of immunizations. Presented by Jill Coulter, certified professional midwife & Karl Heyerman, M.D. w/ Affinity Health System, 7 pm  
**STD Specialties HIV & syphilis testing,** 10pm-1am, at **Fluid** (also May 18 & June 15)

Thursday, April 21

**Harmony Cafe (Appleton) Open Mic,** hosted by the Goddess of Song, Galyne Goodwill, 7 pm  
**SAGE/Milw. Drop-In Center** at SAGE offices 1-5 pm. Visit, play cards, board games, etc. Welcome!  
**STD Specialties HIV & syphilis testing,** 10pm-1am, at **Boom**

Friday, April 22

**Club Night Out (Stevens Point) 18 & up nite**  
**Harmony Cafe (Appleton) Live Music,** 3 punk bands rock the house: Next 2 Nothing, Loss of One & Livid. 7 pm (\$3 cover)  
**SAGE/Milw. - S(t)AGE Struck,** 3:30 at SAGE offices to read plays, discuss theatre in Milw. & plan theatre outings.

Saturday, April 23

**Boom (Milw.) National Model Search** ([www.MensUnderwearStore.com](http://www.MensUnderwearStore.com))

Sunday, April 24

**Angels of Hope MCC (Green Bay) Luncheon ceremony** following morning worship to dedicate the naming of the Ken Hull Centre, recognizing former pastor Rev. Ken Hull and his partner, Harry Hinckle, for "their tireless work for the betterment of the gay community, and, in particular, Angels of Hope Church." A potluck event!  
**SAGE/Milw. Annual Meeting & Pot Luck,** 1 p.m., at the Milw. LGBT Center. (414) 224-0517 to discuss your dish to pass.

Monday, April 25

**Harmony Cafe (Appleton) Harmony Cafe Book Club:** Lemony Snicket, *The Bad Beginning*, *Book the First* (a series of unfortunate events). Discussion starts 7 pm

Wednesday, April 27

**Harmony Cafe (Appleton) Blue Tones:** original & covers of blues & light jazz, 7 pm  
**STD Specialties HIV & syphilis testing,** 10pm-1am, at **Woody's** (also May 25 & June 22)

Thursday, April 28

**Harmony Cafe (Appleton) Open Mic,** hosted by local musician Kevin Byrne, 7 pm

Friday, April 29

**Cricket's Fox River Lounge (Green Bay) Glamarama** 9 pm; no cover  
**Harmony Cafe (Appleton) Opening reception** presenting the latest work of Lawrence University art major, Sandra Schwert, 7 pm. The work will be shown through the month of May.  
**SAGE (Milw.) Girls 'r' Out Movie & Tea.** A women's only event to see *Calendar Girls*. Tea & nibbles served, 5 pm

Saturday, April 30

**Office (Rockford, IL) Miss Illinois Continental pageant,** 10 pm  
Info: [JcFord111@aol.com](mailto:JcFord111@aol.com) or (815) 378-7808  
**SAGE/Milw. Poker Night,** 5:30 pm. at SAGE offices. Bring a snack; soft drinks will be served.

Friday, May 6

**Club Night Out (Stevens Point) 18 & up Nite** (also May 20)

Saturday, May 7

**Great Lakes Bikers beer/soda bust,** 10pm-1am, at Tazzbach Bar & Grill, 1712 W. Pierce, Milw. \$5

Wednesday, May 11

**STD Specialties HIV & syphilis testing,** 10pm-1am, at 94 North, Kenosha

Friday, May 13

**Shelter (Green Bay) Whitney Paige** headlines with Anita Shelter, Kelli Jo Klein, Jennifer Alyce, Tammy Faye, Desiree Mathews & Lee Bradford

Saturday, May 14

**Men's Voices Milwaukee Spring Concert** *A Journey Through a Man's Life*, 8 pm, Helene Zelazo Center-Peck School for the Performing Arts, UW-M, 2419 E. Kenwood Blv'd. Tickets: \$15 advance, \$20 at door or \$15 w/ 4 non-perishables donated to the Hunger Task Force. Tickets: Avail. from MVM members & at the Zelazo Box Office (414) 229-4308

**Oh Zone (Rockford) Miss Borderline WI USofA Pageant**

Saturday, May 21

**Shelter (Green Bay) Come Ride a Cowboy!** It's Shelter's Hoedown. Free cowboy hats and bandannas. Starts at 10 pm

for patients with possibly related strains, *The New York Times* reported in its April 6 editions. City officials would not say how many patients had been identified as possibly being infected with the strain, and said it could take months to determine for sure whether their infections are related to the first case.

"The extent to which this strain has spread remains under investigation," the city Department of Health and Mental Hygiene said in a statement.

## STUDY SUGGESTS HIV OVERWHELMS IMMUNE SYSTEM "WITHIN DAYS"

**Washington DC:** - Within days of infection, the AIDS virus destroys more than half of the immune cells that might recognize and help fight it -- a finding that may force a re-evaluation of how to tackle the deadly infection, two teams of U.S. researchers reported March 28. Two separate studies in monkeys showed that SIV, the monkey version of the human immunodeficiency virus or HIV, attacks CD4 memory T-cells right away and wipes out more than half of them.

"The findings may require a rethink of strategies to design HIV drugs and vac-

cines," Dr. Mario Roederer of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and colleagues said in one of two reports published in the journal *Nature*.

The findings will be difficult to replicate in people, because most people do not know the moment they are infected with the AIDS virus, which gradually destroys the immune system, leaving patients vulnerable to numerous infections. But SIV is a good model and works in a similar way.

Both teams worked with monkeys that they infected with SIV. They watched what happened to their immune cells. Right away the virus attacked the CD4 T-cells that had the correct configuration for the virus. Normally during an infection such cells would recognize and latch onto an invader, helping other components of the immune system destroy it.

But HIV is different because it targets the immune system, and the two studies show how quickly it makes it impossible for its victims to launch a defense. Roederer's team used new, sensitive tests to show just how the virus moves so quickly.

"Specifically, 30% to 60% of CD4 memory T-cells throughout the body are

infected by SIV at the peak of infection, and most of these infected cells disappear within four days," they wrote. "Furthermore, our data demonstrate that the depletion of memory CD4 T-cells occurs to a similar extent in all tissues. As a consequence, over one-half of all memory CD4 T-cells in SIV-infected macaques are destroyed directly by viral infection during the acute phase -- an insult that certainly heralds subsequent immunodeficiency."

This means any attempt to vaccinate against HIV or to provide efficient treatment must stop this process right away. Dr. Ashley Haase of the University of Minnesota Medical School and colleagues made similar findings. Not only does the virus directly kill the CD4 cells, they found, but it also causes them to commit cell suicide.

There is no cure for HIV infection, which killed more than 3 million people globally last year and which infects 39 million people, according to the United Nations. Drug cocktails can control the infection but it comes back quickly if they are stopped. More than two dozen vaccines are being tested, but experts do not expect any of them to prevent HIV infection in substantial numbers of people.

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## GAY SOLDIER WANTS TO SERVE OPENLY

**Washington DC:** An Army sergeant who was wounded in Iraq wants a chance to remain in the military as an openly gay soldier, a desire that's bringing him into conflict with the Pentagon's "don't ask, don't tell" policy. Sgt. Robert Stout, 23, says he has not encountered trouble from fellow soldiers and would like to stay if not for the policy that permits gay men and women to serve only if they keep their sexual orientation a secret.

"I know a ton of gay men that would be more than willing to stay in the Army if they could just be open," Stout said in an interview with The Associated Press reporter Malia Rulon. "But if we have to stay here and hide our lives all the time, it's just not worth it."

Stout, of Utica, Ohio, was awarded the Purple Heart after a grenade sent pieces of shrapnel into his arm, face and legs while he was operating a machine gun on an armored Humvee last May. He is believed to be the first gay soldier wounded in Iraq to publicly discuss his sexuality, said Aaron Belkin, director of the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military at the University of California-Santa Barbara.



"We can't keep hiding the fact that there's gay people in the military and they aren't causing any harm," said Stout said.

Stout also said he is openly gay among most of his 26-member platoon, which is part of the 9th Engineer Battalion based

in Schweinfurt, Germany. Stout, who served in Iraq for more than a year as a combat engineer, said by acknowledging he is gay, he could be jailed and probably will be discharged before his scheduled release date of May 31.

"The old armchair thought that gay people destroy unit camaraderie and cohesion is just wrong," Stout said. "They said the same things when they tried to integrate African-Americans and women into the military."

In an e-mail following the AP interview, Stout told *Quest* he had been ordered not to speak to the media. "I guess they found out somehow that I was talking to the press and now they are having a fit. I will try to get everything straightened out," Stout wrote.

Martha Rudd, a spokeswoman for the Army at the Pentagon, said soldiers who are discharged under "don't ask, don't tell" typically receive honorable discharges, although the timing would be up to the individual's commanding officer. She declined to comment to the Associated Press about Stout, saying the Army doesn't comment on specific cases.

The issue of whether gays should be allowed to openly serve in the military

legislative Republicans might amend the bill to include tax breaks to employers to help alleviate the potential problems with his plan. That is, he noted, if indeed anyone in big business still pays taxes in

Wisconsin, given the business tax breaks the legislature approved in the last twenty years.

"April 1 st is the perfect day to introduce such a comprehensive measure as this. Then again, it would be the perfect day to introduce the first Conscience Protection Act as well,"

said Pocan. (Thanks Mark for keeping up the pressure on those pandering hypocrites on the other side of the aisle!)

**Just One Last Reminder...** The page that dares to share all the gossip that is out there... All that's been overheard, observed and shared with with our spies around the Badger state will end up right here... Got a little tidbit you'd like to share? Share it with us at: [quest-news@athenet.net](mailto:quest-news@athenet.net) - you know you really want to! We'll be discreet within the limits of

the libel laws... Verification is the mother of indigestion amongst the rich and the powerful, darlings...

*Wisconsin Whispers is assembled by the Every Other Thursday Gay Gossip And Gourmet Sewing Circle and depends on the generous submissions from viewers like you. If you don't have anything nice to say, come on over and share it with us.*

## New on DVD by Glenn Bishop "Bright Young Things" & "Stage Beauty"

Grown weary of the sort of gay films that might offer plenty of eye candy but little else of substance, Glenn happened upon two British films just out on DVD: "Bright Young Things" which is based on an Evelyn "Brideshead Revisited" Waugh novel, and "Stage Beauty."

Directed by openly gay actor/director Stephen Fry, "Bright Young Things" follows a fabulous group of the young, rich and idle in 1930s London. Youth of every generation surely sees itself as possessing the ultimate of hedonistic behavior and the bright young things of 1930s London were certainly no exception.

For Waugh's collection of bright young things, life was a whirlwind of one fabulous party after another, their nocturnal antics suitable fodder the next day's society column. One of this glittering set, Simon Balcaim (adorable James McAvoy), a titled "Lord," yet penniless, finds himself having to earn a living writing about his friends in a newspaper scandal column titled "Mr. Chatterbox." Simon writes most often of Agatha Runcible (Fenella Woolgar), a consummate "flapper" whose clueless frivolity might bring down the reigning Prime Minister (and does) yet doesn't prove invincible in the end. Equally newsworthy is the flamboyant Miles Malpractice (Michael Sheen), whose role as the set's social arbitrator ends abruptly when his affair with race car driver Tiger La Bouchère (Alec Newman) becomes known to the police and the poor boy must flee to France.

Across the panorama of a seemingly un-ending progression of parties, Fry places would-be writer Adam Fenwick-Symes (Stephen Campbell Moore) as his nominal protagonist. An impoverished young aristocrat truly, madly, deeply in

love with Nina (raspy-voiced Emily Mortimer), Adam's quest is to find the necessary funds to wed his beloved.

But how is one to earn a living when there's always another party to attend, each one more marvelous than the last?

"Stage Beauty" initially seems a rightful heir to the Oscar-winning "Shakespeare in Love." The time is a bit later, Elizabeth, God bless her soul, has shuffled off this mortal coil as has that usurper Cromwell and Charles II is on the throne. Still, women are not yet on the stage, despite Gwyneth Paltrow's best efforts.. Indeed, the most beautiful woman in London, at least according to that journalistic gadfly Samuel Pepys, is Ned Kynaston (Billy Crudup), celebrated as the finest actor of women's parts, particularly his beautifully tragic Desdemona.

Ned is a curious figure, best described as transgendered in the current vernacular. Taken off the streets as a wee lad, Ned learned to eliminate all masculine traits as he trained for a career as a player of women's roles. So complete is his transformation, Ned truly sees himself as a woman tripped in a man's body, his sexual partners always being men where he, quite naturally, again takes the "woman's role."

The times, they are a-changing and his dresser Maria (Claire Danes) soon becomes his rival as she becomes the first female on the English stage. No passing phase, this. Spurred on by his mistress, Nell Gwynn (Zoe Tapper), Charles (Rupert Everett) outlaws men playing women on stage. Immediately Ned goes from the toast of the town to being reduced to performing in cheap music-halls where his manhood is unveiled to the merriment of the drunken horde.

## Buy it, rent it or forget it...

Blessed with a marvelous cast and a wonderfully witty screenplay, "Bright Young Things" is like one of the marvelous parties it portrays without the inevitable hangover the next morning. "Stage Beauty," despite its curiously archaic sexual politics is an entertaining historical costume drama and a must-see for theatre aficionados and fans of PBS's Masterpiece Theatre.

## Just the facts...

"Bright Young Things" runs 105 minutes

Check out [www.brightyoungthings.themovie.com](http://www.brightyoungthings.themovie.com) DVD offers usual extras and has a suggested of SRP: \$27.95

"Stage Beauty is in English and has a running time of 109 minutes DVD extras include "Backstage Beauty" - the making of the film and has a suggested of SRP: \$27.95

Visit the film's official site: [www.stagebeautymovie.com](http://www.stagebeautymovie.com)

Fenella Woolgar, so memorable in "Bright Young Things" also plays a small role in "Stage Beauty"

Meanwhile, Maria might be a star but not, in fact, an actress. After initial novelty wears off and she too is surrounded with rivals, Maria realizes that she must learn to act. Well, who better to be her teacher than Ned. Still, if it is only Ned who can teach Maria to act on stage, it seems that it is only she who can teach Ned how to be a man in the bedroom as a conventional, if contrived, happily-ever-after ending follows.

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# Wisconsin Whispers

## Welcome To Wisconsin Whispers...

Where we dish the dirt until we run out of dishes! You are enjoying the "salad plate" version of our online platter of pater that debuted April 4 on Quest's QNU Breaking News website. Our dahlings publisher ZaZa's eyes rolled back into those heavily creased sockets of hers at first read. (And honey, after all those years that you applied eyeliner with a trowel you're lucky to have any lids left!) She insisted that moi share a taste of the Whispers with the Internet-challenged. The full version of this little project which is much more elaborate online (at [www.quest-online.com](http://www.quest-online.com)). It also has dishy weblinks and changes as the dirt arrives... So are we having fun yet? Moi thinks so!

**Trash Talk...** Looks like former InStepper Billy Attewell is trying to kick up a little more dust. Trust moi, she has the size elevens to do it if she wants. Just ask Milwaukee's AlderBigot McGee. He's still doing his best "I ain't afraid of no ghosts" routine weeks after Miz Billy stamped her pumps over his homophobic comments.

Now Miz A has her silkies sliding up her slit over moi's dish on the historic hysteries of La Diva Taylor Dayne (see the original dish below). Miz A called it "trashing" not once but twice on the April 5 edition of the Milwaukee, er, Wisconsin Gay News website ([www.wisconsin-gaynews.com](http://www.wisconsin-gaynews.com)). Well, honeys, nothing is further from the truth! Moi is just like the news pimps over Faux News: Moi just reports, you decide.

Gotta thank Billy boy, though. Within hours, his free plug for Wisconsin Whispers debut dish got us another, more recent delirious diva Dayne sighting at a well known Wisconsin Indian bingo and casino... Whispers is playing email tag with the spy and will share the dirt as necessary... If its legit, you'll hear it here first, probably with a hissy little echo over at WGN...

As for Ms. Dayne's talent, Whispers will leave that to the music critics, some of whom were not so kind during her five year career as a top-selling mainstream artist. Today they call her a "dance music artist." As opposed to what? Real music? Isn't that considered an insult?

Don't believe moi? Read the whole bio and album reviews over at the definitive All Music Guide ([www.allmusic.com](http://www.allmusic.com)). Personally

La Diva Dayne's one huge ballad hit "I'll Always Love You" is one of Whispers' all time faves...

Finally, let's face it girls! Some of us just adore those over the top divas! A train wreck in heels is certainly a lot more fun than a train wreck on wheels. Just ask Edge's Lottie Dodge, Outbound's Cheap Talkin' Chi Chi, and Quest's SoFonda Boyz. Their columns wouldn't exist without them.

And Whispers is certain that the more savvy PrideFest folks are just tickled that there's a little early sizzle about this year's line-up...

**All Divas, All The Time...** PrideFest's announcement of it's 2005 headliners has pleased many but has disturbed a few others. There's no doubt that our own ever-evolving "gay Madonna" RuPaul, 80's disco chanteuse Taylor Dayne, veteran gay comedian Jason Stuart, perennial up 'n comer Jade Esteban Estrada, and women's music fave Pamela Means will sell tickets.

Some, however, wonder if its worth the big bucks to bring in the notoriously temperamental Dayne. At her peak, the reedy Long Islander was sometimes compared to the tantrum-throwing Maria Callas. Things got worse after her star faded in the early '90s.

"She was over the top, outrageously rude to everyone - hotel staff, fans, even her own people," recalled an ex-staffer who worked on Dayne's early 1990's appearance at the Stevens Point Holiday Inn Holidome. "Her attitude even showed up on stage. By the end of her show even the audience had turned on her. Personally I wouldn't walk across the street to see her after what I witnessed!"

The money PrideFest is throwing at Dayne is reportedly not in the Pat Benatar territory, insiders tell us. So the specter of mind-numbing losses is not as great. But the "Hit Me With Your Best Shot" girl was pleasant to work with, even if her show tanked with the queer crowd. Whispers can only hope that another decade away from the top of the charts and middle age have mellowed La Diva Dayne. History suggests that may not be the case: other notoriously "difficult" tune tigresses, a la 60's Motown icons Diana Ross and Martha Reeves, have only grown worse in their AARP dotages.

In the meantime, Whispers cannot wait for the real supermodel cum superstar to show-up

on the Miller Stage: the fabulous Miss RuPaul.

**The April Fool Joke Wisconsin's Gay Community Missed...** Those who checked out the QNU and Wisconsin Gay News websites April 1 saw several stories and links to gay-themed spoofs thumbing noses at AlderBigot Mike McGee, Milwaukee TalkNazis Belling and Sykes, Rantin' Ralph Ovdal and even His HolyHomoHater John Paul The Sequel.... Most of those send-ups are digital vapor now, except for the one groaner the queer newsboys missed: Openly-gay Rep. Mark Pocan's teaser sending up the so-called "Conscience Protection Act" sponsored by a variety of Wisconsin Right To Impose Our Bigotry In Your Bedroom groups and God's Own Party wing of the Wisconsin Republicans. Enjoy!

**POCAN PROPOSES CONSCIENCE PROTECTION ACT II**  
*Legislator says only real way to completely stop abortions is to stop sex*

**Madison** - State Representative Mark Pocan (D-Madison) is proposing a Conscience Protection Act II to go farther than the first measure to protect all areas of conscience by allowing workers to refuse to sell anything that could lead to sex. Pocan said, much like movie sequels, his proposal is bigger and better than the current measure.

"If you really want to stop potential abortions, you have to stop sex, period. We need to go further in protecting workers' consciences than the current proposal. If you really want to have zero tolerance on abortions, we need to have zero tolerance on sex," said Pocan.

The new improved measure Pocan is proposing would allow a broader definition of conscience to include anything that could lead to sex, which ultimately could lead to an abortion. "Condoms, nope. Dim candlelight, no way. Queen size beds, I don't think so. Barry White, definitely not! A combination of any of those elements could lead to intimacy, which could lead to sex, which could lead to abortions. We have to be more proactive in making sure there is absolutely no likelihood of physical contact," said Pocan.

Pocan said his measure would go beyond just health care workers, and include all workers.

"You may not realize it, but the pharmacy is not the only dangerous part of a Walgreens. They also sell condoms, candles, incense, massage oil, cd's and even gushy greeting cards. Who would think that a pharmacy would be so unsafe for the general public?," Pocan asked.

Pocan noted that business groups might oppose his measure, citing the inflexibility of workers to actually work if their jobs interfere with their belief system. However, he noted

has received increased attention in recent months as the Army has struggled to meet its recruiting goals. Twelve gays expelled from the military sued the government in December, citing a Supreme Court ruling that declared unconstitutional state laws against gay sex. The Bush administration has asked a federal court to dismiss the lawsuit.

Army Secretary Francis J. Harvey has said he opposes changing the policy, although Pentagon figures show a sharp decline in the number of U.S. military members discharged for making it known they are gay, falling from 1,227 in 2001 to 653 last year.

A recent congressional study on the impact of "don't ask, don't tell" said that

hundreds of highly skilled troops, including many translators, have left the armed forces because of the rule, at a cost of nearly \$200 million, mostly for recruiting and training replacements for 9,500 troops discharged between 1994 and 2003. Gary Gates, a statistician at the University of California at Los Angeles, estimates there are about 65,000 gays and lesbians currently serving in the military, accounting for about 2.8 percent of all personnel. He estimates that at least 25 gay soldiers have been killed in Iraq.

Stout said he suspected while in high school that he was gay but didn't acknowledge it until later. "Then I noticed that it wasn't a phase or any-

thing. This is me," Stout said. He enlisted in the Army after graduating in 2000. "The 'don't ask, don't tell' policy, when it first came out, was a good stepping stone, but it's outlived its usefulness," Stout added. "We've progressed past it both as a military and as a society."

Recent media polls indicate some increased public acceptance for allowing gays to serve openly in the military, with more than six in 10 Americans supporting the idea while about half supported it a decade ago. An Annenberg poll taken last fall among members of the military showed a majority opposed to such service, though half of junior enlisted personnel said gays should be allowed to serve openly.

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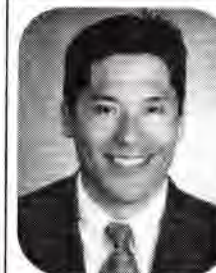
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## PRIDEFEST NAMES RUPAUL, TAYLOR DAYNE AS HEADLINERS



**Milwaukee:** - PrideFest 2005 will host one of the best Pride entertainment lineups in its history, featuring Taylor Dayne, RuPaul, Jason Stuart, Sophie B. Hawkins, Jade Esteban Estrada and Pamela Means among many other performers. PrideFest will take place at Milwaukee's Summerfest grounds along the shores of Lake Michigan in downtown Milwaukee for its ninth consecutive year on Saturday, June 11 and Sunday, June 12.

Saturday's headlining entertainment will kick off at 7:00 PM. with Jason Stuart, one of the country's top openly gay actor/comics. Jason has performed at the Montreal Comedy Festival, Town Hall on Broadway and to 100,000 at the Millennium March. As an actor, he has had a recurring role on My Wife & Kids starring Damon Wayans, playing a gay family therapist. Jason has been seen all over TV on Fat Actress, House, Strong Medicine, Providence, Will & Grace, The Drew Carey Show and Charmed.

Taylor Dayne and her band will follow as a featured performer at 8:30 PM. Highly supportive of the LGBT community, Taylor Dayne stands out as one of music's most dynamic artists. Her versatile and powerful voice has gained recognition in multiple genres from pop, dance and rock to adult contemporary. Taylor Dayne's unique vocal style has

earned her 3 successful albums including the double platinum albums Tell It To My Heart and Can't Fight Fate as well as the gold Soul Dancing. She has sold over 10 million records worldwide, driven by 10 Top Ten Billboard hits, including Tell It To My Heart, Prove Your Love, I'll Always Love You, Don't Rush Me, With Every Beat of My Heart, I'll Be Your Shelter, Can't Get Enough of Your Love, Send Me A Lover, I'll Wait, Planet Love, and the #1 smash Love Will Lead You Back. She has sold-out 2 world tours and been honored with 3 Grammy nominations. As an actress she has appeared in



numerous film, TV and stage roles, including the role of Princess Amneris in Elton John's Aida on Broadway. In addition to her chart-topping hits, Taylor will also perform new material from her next album, due out later this year. Be sure to catch the special, VH1 Remaking: Taylor Dayne, which will air on April 21st.

RuPaul will close out the first day of PrideFest with an extravagant performance at 11:00pm. RuPaul skyrocketed to international fame with the release of the CD Supermodel of the World which was followed by roles in several movies, The RuPaul Show on VH1, many high profile endorsement deals (including a beauty contract with M\*A\*C Cosmetics), a best-selling autobiography and world fundraising for people living with HIV/AIDS. This tour heralds the release of RuPaul's first CD in several years and Ru says, "In many ways I'm going back to my roots. The CD RuPaul Red Hot has all the sassy elements and bumpin' grooves that I'm

known for, but it also provides a deeper look into my world. I'm very excited about performing all of my music for the children at PrideFest."

Sunday's headlining entertainment will open at 5:30 PM with Wisconsin-raised, Out (spoken), biracial artist, Pamela Means, who is known for her "kamikaze guitar style" and punchy provocative songs. Means strays beyond the boundaries of the traditional singer-songwriter genre by incorporating jazz, rock, and blues with an Afro-beat backdrop, creating her own inimitable style and sound. She is winner of the 2004 Outmusic Outstanding New Recording (Female) Award for her self-produced album, Single Bullet Theory. Pamela Means was also named Falcon Ridge Folk Festival's #1 Most Wanted New Artist, as well as Wisconsin's Folk Artist of the Year, Female Vocalist of the Year, and Best Acoustic Act.

Jade Esteban Estrada will follow at 7:00 PM with a dynamic, heat-driven Latin pop set. NBC News calls him "America's Prince of Pride" and Out Magazine christened him "the first gay Latin star." He's been gracing magazine covers and thrilling audiences in seven languages and in 33 countries. The Los Angeles Times calls him "a master entertainer." After back-up dancing for Latin diva Charo, he appeared on a plethora of TV shows like Sex and the City (HBO), The Graham Norton Effect (Comedy Central) and his music can be heard on the Golden Globe and Emmy award-winning police drama, The Shield on the FX Network.

Sophie B. Hawkins will close out the Sunday headliner performances. Even with hits like Damn I Wish I Was Your Lover, As I Lay Me Down, and Walkin' In My Blue Jeans, it's her explosive live performances that have earned Sophie B. Hawkins legions of loyal fans from coast to coast. In 1992 she emerged from a fierce bidding war with a debut album, Tongues & Tails that quickly went gold, earned her a Grammy nomination for Best New Artist, and fired a single, Damn I Wish I Was Your Lover, into the Top Five. Another gold album, Whaler, followed two years later, along with a single, As I Lay Me Down, that would chart in Billboard for a record-breaking sixty-seven weeks. By the time she got to Timbre in 1999, she had won univer-

## SAGE OUTING OFFERS DEADLY THEATER

**Milwaukee:** - Seniors In A Gay Environment will hold a theater outing on Friday, April 15. Attendees will see the production of the comedy "Drop Dead." Show time is 7:30 PM. SAGE/Milwaukee members and friends will gather at the Whitefish Bay High School to see this production. Tickets are \$10. For more information or to make your reservation call Raymond at 414-617-1152.

## GAY ARTS CENTER TO HOST YOGA CLASSES

**Milwaukee:** - The Milwaukee Gay Arts Center has announced that Ricky Heldt, a local yoga and pilates instructor will offer hatha yoga and yopalates beginning Monday, April 18, at the center, 703 S. 2nd St. The one-hour classes will meet Mondays evenings for eight weeks. Yoga sessions will begin at 6 PM and Yopalates will follow at 7:15 PM. Heldt is an experienced instructor certified in both hatha yoga and Pilates and has been teaching hatha yoga and Pilates for over four years. For more information or to register, contact the center.

## AWARD NOMINEES SOUGHT FOR PRIDEFEST KUDOS

**Milwaukee:** - PrideFest presents awards each year to a number of individuals who have demonstrated leadership, community service initiatives and notable achievements. Pridefest welcomes nominations for several award categories:

The Community Service Award is presented to individuals or organizations that have demonstrated exemplary contributions of time to the community and its members. Too often people who donate time and energy to various organizations do not get the recognition they deserve even though their contributions are priceless.

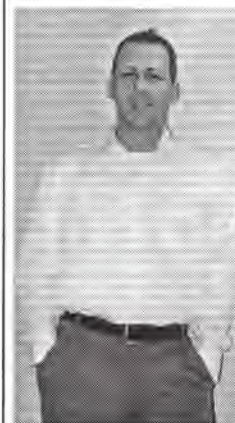
The Stonewall Award is presented to individuals or organizations who have demonstrated the spirit of the Stonewall Riots by fighting to bring about change for the benefit of others. Usually their fight begins as a personal crusade against an injustice, but often leads to far-reaching impacts for the good of our community as a whole.

The Lifetime Achievement Award is presented to one individual who has demonstrated leadership and commitment to the LGBT community. Individuals who receive this award have often been instrumental in changing the course of the community's history.

Award nominations are now open. Community members statewide are invited to submit names and credentials of people they believe deserve recognition by completing a nomination form. Forms are available for download on the PrideFest website ([www.pridefest.com](http://www.pridefest.com)). Nominations must be received no later than April 15.

The PrideFest production team will review nominations and select award recipients. The decisions are final. If you submit a nomination, you may be contacted for further information. Nominees selected for the awards will be contacted to confirm their willingness to accept the award and their ability to be present during the awards ceremony. Awards will be made at PrideFest on June 11-12.

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"I then looked at my own life and realized that I wasn't as out as I thought I was," Schowengerdt said.

"I realized that I self-censor parts of my life from people I know," Schowengerdt continued. "Gay people in general do that a lot I think." According to Schowengerdt, the BlockOut Wisconsin project allows people to take action in "small chunks at their level of comfort." By selecting a small portion of their neighborhood those opposed to the civil marriage ban can express their opinions on the issue to the people they literally live the closest to.

"And hopefully there will be a snowball effect," Schowengerdt added. The project's website encourages spreading the BlockOut petitions to the neighbors, who then in turn can download, print out and share the documents with others. "People then might host a party to energize even more folks," he added, noting that the website has a party planning page.

"Bryan and David are doing exactly what we all need to do in the next 20 months: talking to people one-on-one as to why the proposed civil union ban goes too far and hurts real people," Action Wisconsin Communications Director Joshua Frekker said. "The Blockout Wisconsin project is just one of many such grassroots projects that have sprung up all over the state opposing the proposed constitutional ban. Action Wisconsin will have similar outreach projects underway, but we're always happy to get all the help we can in this massive effort."

Schowengerdt noted the site has been up less than two weeks, but is starting to generate more hits as the word spreads. "We've got people telling us they're linking our site to theirs every day."



### **ACTION WISCONSIN UNVEILS NEW LOGO, UPDATED WEBSITE**

**Madison:** - March 30 marked the debut of Action Wisconsin's new logo. The pale blue design, with its silhouette of the state and a superimposed white equal sign seem reminiscent of the national Human Rights Campaign to some. That's not entirely unintentional, according to Communications Director Josh Frekker.

"There are a number of progressive and political action groups in the state that use both the words 'action' and 'Wisconsin,'" Frekker said. "For those not familiar with our work, the equality symbol set us apart and suggests our mission. For those already aware with the LGBT community's long struggle for equal rights, the logo reinforces with an already familiar symbol."

The logo debuts on the statewide LGBT civil rights organization's updated website, and will be utilized on updated printed materials, brochures and stationery in the coming months.

### **PROUD THEATRE'S SEASON ENDING SPECIAL SET FOR MAY 5-7**

**Madison:** - Join the "R" Evolution! Proud Theater R Evolution, that is. A wonderful evening of theater, music and dance written by and starring the talented youth of Proud Theater -- Madison's premier LGBT and LGBT Allied youth theater troupe will be held May 5, 6, and 7 at the Drury Theater at the Bartell Theater Complex, 113 E. Mifflin Street. Show time is 7:30 PM. Tickets are \$7. Middle and high school students show their student IDs before April 15 to save \$2 off regular ticket prices. Tickets available through A Room of One's Own, OutReach and the Bartell Theater.

Call or email OutReach for more information at 608-255-8582 or [commrel@outreachinc.com](mailto:commrel@outreachinc.com). Proud Theater is a project of OutReach, Inc., sponsored by the New Harvest Foundation in association with Stage Q.

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sal respect for her rare blend of multi-instrumental and vocal talent, songwriting craftsmanship, and gutsy honesty. Now Hawkins is lost in the Wilderness, her first independently recorded, conceived and released album. The provocative singer/songwriter declares her freedom with, paradoxically, the most accessible project of her career. Hawkins is thrilled to perform at PrideFest in Milwaukee. Gay Pride events, she says, are "the greatest thing in the world. Being gay is special."

Other performers scheduled at the Miller Oasis for the June 11 - 12 festival are Mark Weigle, Wise Fools, Tret Fure, Kimi Hayes, Pulsation, Second Union, Dropmore Scarlet, Rufus Soulfu, Iridium, and celebrity illusionists Devon Cass as Cher, Gary Dee as Joan Rivers, and Jeff Murphy as Liza Minnelli, Bette Midler, and Barbra Streisand.

PrideFest offers a huge selection of food, attractions and entertainment that are just as diverse as the community that attends this quality event for all ages. All entertainment is included with a general admission festival ticket that can be purchased each day for only \$10.

## MARK MADISON BRINGS HOME NATIONAL "MR. GAY" TITLE

**Green Bay:** - Veteran entertainer Mark Madison has been crowned Mr. Gay Classique USA 2005. Madison claimed his title in Hickory, NC on March 27. Madison and his partner of 16 years, Loretta LaMour, are long time pageant contestants and promoters. Miss LaMour has won several state titles, including the Bager State's "top tiara," Miss Gay Wisconsin USofA. Madison is the owner of the Miss Gay Wisconsin United States pageant, which held its first state pageant last December.

Madison's crown is believed to be the first gay national title ever won by a Wisconsin contestant, whether male entertainer or female illusionist. Green Bay's Jeff Jennings previously placed as a finalist in the Mr. Gay America contest several years ago, and a number of female contestants have reached the final rounds of several national pageants including the USofA, America and Contiental systems.

The eleven year old USA Unlimited pageant system recently restarted the Mr. and Miss Gay Classique USA Contest. According to pageant spokespersons, moving into its third year of successful competition, the 2005 contest was a great success. The Mr. and Miss Gay Classique USA contests are solely for males at least 35 years old and each year this system grows by tremendous lengths. The 2005 National Contests was held on Easter weekend March 25 - 27. Full information about the USA Unlimited system is available online at: [www.mrgay-usa.com](http://www.mrgay-usa.com).



patient reveals their sexual preference and to send another physician in.

First responders in the Madison area are instructed on domestic violence within the LGBT community, noted Gulknect. However she added that victims of domestic violence may still fight homophobia and not find the support they need, depending on the individual shelter.

Enlightenment through education is what both Melissa Lo of Sex Out Loud and Kristen Bertling of PAVE said they promote on campus. "While Sex Out Loud offers equal entitlement to safer sex and resources, PAVE educates that sexual assault can and does happen to everyone," Bertling said.

Politically speaking, "Gay marriage is currently the most visible face" in regard to gay and lesbian rights in the political moment," Waitrovich said. She recounted how the proposed constitutional amendment to ban civil unions and domestic partnerships in Wisconsin spurred her to become active in the LGBT community.

"I seek 'equal protection under the law' for my family," Waitrovich said of her six-year relationship with her same sex partner and

their 15-year-old daughter. "A married heterosexual perpetrator of sex crimes has more legal rights than I do."

Waitrovich noted civil marriage accords over 1400 rights to traditional families, such as social security benefits for surviving children and the right to make medical decisions for their spouse.

Weiss and Appling both expressed their fears for traditional marriage. "If we extend the rights of marriage to homosexuals and lesbians, then group marriage will inevitably follow," Appling said, claiming that a group who espoused such beliefs already vacationed in the Wisconsin Dells with their proposed plans. "Farmers with their sheep may follow," she added.

Weiss also explained the Roman Catholic Church's position on homosexuality. "Although the Catholic Church recognizes that there may be a genetic characteristic that predisposes people towards homosexuality, the Church does not condone homosexual sex," he said.

The ultimate purpose of sex is procreation, according to Weiss and Appling. As a married heterosexual, Weiss argued that he has the "right to demand sex from his wife."

Appling claimed that one of the repercussions of homosexual unions in Massachusetts will be that schools may now have to teach homosexual sex. "The goal of the Family Research Institute is to help those who can come out of their lifestyle choice," she said.

Appling also claimed to have statistics that show that the average length for relationships among gay men is between 1 1/2 to 5 years. "However, they (also) have multiple sexual partners," she said. In addition, Appling does not think that she should be told that she is hateful, bigoted, or homophobic merely because she believes that that the gay life style is a choice.

Appling also claimed that gays and lesbians should not have children. Children with same sex parents are equally well adjusted, Brown countered. Neither the LGBT community nor their children are more predisposed to suicide, although the rate of suicide among youth is alarming Brown noted. "(As) we evolve towards greater freedom and social justice, in 50 to 100 years, we will look back and laugh when we question the idea of gay marriage," she said. *Story filed by Quest's Madison reporter Jamie L. Steckelberg.*

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### BLOCKOUT WISCONSIN

#### "ADOPT A BLOCK" GROUP TO OPPOSE WISCONSIN'S PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL CIVIL UNION BAN

**Madison:** - A Madison gay couple and their "sister in law" are taking the fight against Wisconsin's proposed constitutional amendment to ban legal recognition of all unmarried couples regardless of sexual orientation to the streets, one block at a time.

Bryan Ochalla, his partner David Schowengerdt and self-identified sister-in-law Jan Schowengerdt have started the project BlockOut Wisconsin, urging people opposed to the civil union ban to "be outspoken" by adopting a city block in their neighborhood and talking to all the voting age residents about the dangers of the amendment bill. The group's website, [www.blockoutwisconsin.com](http://www.blockoutwisconsin.com), advises that it wishes to serve as an adjunct to Action Wisconsin, the leading statewide group working to stop the bill's passage. The group's website also offers talking points, printable brochures and petition forms, and a detailed explanation of the project. BlockOut Wisconsin stresses that it is not in competition with AW, and its donation page refers visitors to a way to financially support AW.

David Schowengerdt told *Quest* the idea for the project was born from the frustrations over the eleven anti-gay statewide ballot measures passing last November. A self-styled "statistics nerd," Schowengerdt quickly realized after looking at the voting patterns in each state that the opposition to the bans came from larger areas where citizens were familiar with gay people.



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## QUEERS, CHRISTIANS FACE OFF ON "THE POLITICS OF QUEER SEX"

**Madison:** - Why does the thought of two women having sex titillate heterosexual men while the thought of two men together repulses them? What does that say about the position of power and politics in our society and who controls what lens we view the world with? Self-identified butch lesbian feminist activist Dana Alder of University Health Services, posed this question April 5 at an hour-long panel discussion entitled "The Politics of Queer Sex". About 60 people, mostly students attended the event sponsored by the UW-Madison LGBT Campus Center.

In an effort to promote civil discussion about these and other topics, forum facilitator Otten invited various student organizations, the Family Research Institute of Wisconsin, the UW Roman Catholic Foundation, Action Wisconsin and Outreach Inc. to participate. Panelists included Mary Waitrovich, Action Wisconsin; Julaine Appling, Family Research Institute; Laura Gutknecht, Outreach, Inc.; Kristen Bertling, Promoting Awareness and Victim Empowerment (PAVE); Melissa Lo, Sex Out Loud; Dana Alder, University Health Services; Jessica Brown, UW Department of Sociology; and Peter Weiss, UW Roman Catholic Foundation.

The tone of the evening was very civil. Audience members listened respectfully as many emotional issues were discussed. Each of the panelists was asked to respond to three questions: 1) Based on the organization(s) you work with, and/or the communities you are a part of, what do you see as the most pressing issues related to LGBT sexuality? 2) What are your organization's and/or com-

munity's goals with respect to LGBT issues and people? 3) What questions or topics would you want to pose to other panelists or the audience to think about?

"The beauty of the counterculture in the sixties was that it 'opened up a space' for us to begin to discuss gender and sexuality," Brown said. "Are we as a country ready to extend such civil protection to the LGBT community, as European countries are already doing?"

Alder pointed out that there is no one community for all of the LGBT population. "We each have different economic backgrounds, education, and interests," she said. "However, the one thing we do have in common is that we are labeled as sexual outlaws by the rest of society." Gutknecht added that transgender individuals are known in society as "throwaways."

Gutknecht pointed out that discrimination still exists for transgender and transsexual individuals, who estimated two deaths occur each month in Wisconsin. The state has not passed legislation to ban hate crimes and discrimination against the transgender community. "Homosexuality was removed from the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders in 1973 but being transgender remains a pathological condition," Gutknecht said.

"Everyone does not have equal access to health care, including those who seek sex change operations," Gutknecht added, characterizing recent legislation that would prevent Wisconsin from paying for one prisoner's request for a sex change operation as "a typical knee jerk reaction."

Alder affirmed that health care contains the same societal power dynamic. "Lesbians are as invisible in the health care system as women are invisible in society," she said, claiming that doctors have been known to walk out of the room when a

## SCHOOL BOARD PROHIBITS STUDENTS FROM PARTICIPATING IN NATIONAL DAY OF SILENCE

**Fond Du Lac:** - The Fond Du Lac school board has issued an advisory prohibiting students at the city's high school from participating in the GLSEN National Day of Silence, scheduled to be held Wednesday, April 13. According to Barb Kostonis of the local diversity awareness group Fond Du Lac: Moving Forward, any student who participates "in any way, being silent, wearing a t-shirt, pin, etc. or handing out any informational material is to be suspended." Quest also has learned that several of the students are planning to participate in the Day of Silence knowing the risk.

"First, the Fond Du Lac school district has required that any information on sexual orientation or sexual identity be removed from the sex-ed curriculum," a frustrated Kostonis told Quest. "Next, the GSA chapter at the high school is under scrutiny and was featured in a newspaper article when complaints were brought to the administration for both the GSA and the Christian club. Now this!"

An April 1 *Fond Du Lac Reporter* story recounted the repercussions following a

student's decision to say "God Bless America" over the school loudspeaker after being instructed to refrain from doing so. School administrators were criticized for telling the student, Republican Club member Calvin Freiburger, to hold off on making the statement until administrators could discuss it. Others complained about the religious references in a public school setting. The situation became so volatile that high school Principal Mary Fran Merwin apologized at the March 28 School Board meeting after Republican Club members verbally "attacked her."

Moving Forward is currently planning a protest on Wednesday, April 13 in front of the school. Kostonis has contacted the local press and plans to contact other media sources as well as the Wisconsin chapter of the ACLU.

"This lean to a new McCarthy era is not only maddening, but frightening as well," Kostonis said. "If this is what occurs before the proposed anti-same sex marriage amendment is put before a vote, I can't imagine the aftermath if it is ratified."

## 2005 PRIDEFEST WEBSITE DEBUTS

**Milwaukee:** - The website for Wisconsin's Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender (LGBT) annual Pride festival has gotten a new look this year. The new site at [www.pridefest.com](http://www.pridefest.com) was recently launched and features information about the many diverse entertainment options and activities at the festival.

"The new design is colorful and dynamic, just like the festival," PrideFest Task Force member Paul Williams said. The website will become one of the main means of communication between the festival and the community, so updates will be added regularly, according to Williams.

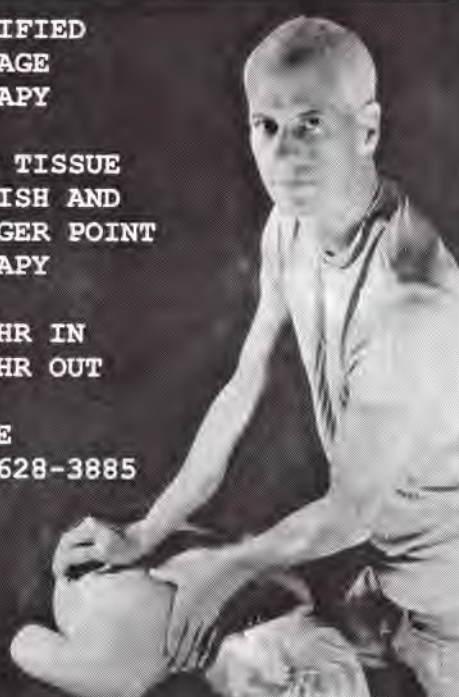
The site received 50,000 hits in 2004 alone, according to PrideFest Marketing Director Ted Eslinger. The new site features the option of entering an e-mail address to receive periodic festival updates. Additionally, the site provides greater exposure for the festival's sponsors.

PrideFest will be held June 11 - 12 at Milwaukee's Summerfest grounds. PrideFest offers a huge selection of food, attractions and entertainment that are just

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## MEN'S VOICES MILWAUKEE SPRING CONCERT TO "JOURNEY THROUGH A MAN'S LIFE"

**Milwaukee:** - "It begins with a single note..." Men's Voices Milwaukee will present their Spring Concert at 8 PM Saturday, May 14, 2005 at the Helene Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts, 2419 E. Kenwood Blvd., on the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee campus. This year's theme is "A Journey Through a Man's Life." Artistic Director John R. Francis will conduct the 40 voice male chorus.

"This concert is not meant to follow any one person's life, like a biography," Francis told *Quest*. "It reflects the path



that many of us continue to take, and how music has played a vital part in that journey."

Advance tickets are now on sale for \$15 each. Group rates are available. Tickets are available from MVM members and the Zelazo Center Box Office. Major credit cards accepted at the box office. For more information, call 414-229-4308.

Advertising is also available in the concert program. For more information, contact Thom at 414-507-0545.

Men's Voices Milwaukee (MVM) is a choral ensemble dedicated to musical excellence by performing a broad range of men's choral music. Formed in June 2001 and originating with 30 singing members, MVM continues to grow. Every member of MVM believes in the most important element of the chorus - the music.

## GALAXY LGBT YOUTH GROUP TO HOLD ANNUAL DANCE

**LaCrosse:** - LaCrosse and Coulee region supporters of LGBT youth are cordially invited to attend the Ninth Annual YWCA GALAXY Ball and Awards Ceremony to be held Saturday, April 16, at the UW-La Crosse Whitney Center (Badger Street between 14th and 15th Sts.).

The evening will begin with a silent auction at 6 PM. The auction will run until 9. There will be an awards ceremony at 7 PM. Dancing will begin at 8 PM and last until Midnight.

Tickets for youth and students are \$5 each. Adults tickets are \$15. In addition to benefitting GALAXY, a portion of the proceeds also goes to the 7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center. For more information about the event, go to the 7 Rivers website at: [www.7riverslgbt.org](http://www.7riverslgbt.org) or contact

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