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TIDE TURNING FOR GAY MARRIAGE

Four Down, 46 To Go As New York Begins Marriage Debate

One by one, the obstacles to same-gender marriage in the United States keep falling.

This April has seen more groundbreaking moves as the number of states allowing same-sex marriage doubled, from two to four. Iowa and Vermont joined Massachusetts and Connecticut in allowing gay and lesbian couples to legally wed. Another eight states are set to vote on similar moves later this year, including New Hampshire, New York and New Jersey.

Gay marriage had been legal in California for five months last year, until voters rolled back the right at the ballot box. However the debate there is far from over. Activists on both sides of the issue are awaiting an expected June 4 Supreme Court ruling on last November's Proposition 8 referendum before taking their next steps.

In lowa, the state supreme court's decision on April 3 to allow such marriages has been seen as ground-breaking because it is the first state in the socially conservative American heartland to allow same-sex couples to exchange vows.

On April 7, legislators in Vermont voted to override Governor Jim Douglas's veto of a bill that will allow gay and lesbian couples to wed beginning September 1. The move was significant because legal marriages for same sex couples in the three other states came in response to court rulings.

On the federal front, a move by city council in Washington D.C. may propel the issue all they way into the U.S. Congress. On April 7, city council representatives voted 12-0 in favor of allowing same-sex marriages performed in other states to be recognized in the U.S. capital. A final vote is set for May. If that passes - because Washington is a federally-administered district - the bill would be sent to Congress for legislative review and vote.

In New Hampshire, the House has approved a samesex marriage bill that is now in the hands of state senators. Hearings held on April 15 gathered national media attention, though the fate of the bill is uncertain.

Democrats control the 24-member New Hampshire Senate, but many have not disclosed how they will vote on the bill, which would take effect in January 2010. None of the nine Republicans in the Senate are expected to support it. Democrat Governor John Lynch is on record opposing same-sex marriage, but he has not said whether he would veto the bill. He signed a law in 2007 allowing civil unions between

same-sex couples.

On April 16, New York Governor. David Paterson introduced a bill to allow gay marriage in the state, likening the effort to civil rights struggles and brushing aside objections from religious leaders.

"Anyone that has ever experienced degradation or intolerance would understand the solemn duty and how important it actually is," Paterson, the state's first black governor, told a news conference in Manhattan. "This is a civil rights issue. Civil rights don't wait for the right time," he said. Paterson was accompanied by city and state leaders, including New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

Gay marriage has broad support in the Democraticcontrolled New York lower house, the Assembly, where it passed in a 85 to 61 vote in 2007. It was not put to a vote in the state Senate, which is expected to put up a fight against Paterson's bill.

In neighboring New Jersey, Governor Jon Corzine has indicated that he would sign a gay marriage bill if sent to him by the state's legislature. Lawmakers appear on the verge of taking up legislation with recent polls showing the state's electorate supporting by a 48-43% margin.

The recent back-to-back victories have also begun to energize gay marriage opponents. On April 14, a right-wing group calling itself the National Organization For Marriage (NOM) unveiled a \$1.5 million ad campaign featuring a slickly-produced 60-second spot featuring professional actors claiming to be ordinary citizens being forced to accept gay marriage and the "gay lifestyle." The Human Rights Campaign responded with a website called "End the Lies" that exposed the "deception and fear" being used in the battle against gay equality, using at one point audition tapes of the actors featured in the commercial. Within days viral video responses to the NOM adsome serious, others hilariously funny - cluttered YouTube and other video blogs.

With four out of 46 states down, it will be a long way until the United States will be able to join the other seven countries that allow full marriage equality. The Netherlands was the first country to legalize gay marriage, in 2001. It's also allowed in Belgium, Canada, Spain, South Africa, Norway and Sweden. More than a dozen other countries recognize gay civil unions and registered partnerships.

WISCONSIN EQUALITY UPDATE

DP Benefits "Certain To Pass," 60% of Voters Approve, Abrahamson Re-Elected As Marriage Ban Case Heads To Supreme Court

Madison - Wisconsin may be taking a back seat to lowa and possibly Minnesota on the marriage equality front, but LGBT activists had plenty to cheer about over the last two weeks. Domestic partner protections now seem like a lock with both the political will and public support behind them. A case that might just overturn the constitutional gay marriage ban is headed to the state's high court. And Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson was re-elected by the same 59-41% voter majority that anti-gay forces like to point out enacted the ban in 2006.

The Joint Finance Committee of the Wisconsin Legislature began formal work on the 2009-10 biennial budget here last week. Though some of the the 85 non-fiscal items identified by the Legislative Research Bureau have been removed from the proposal offered by Governor Jim Doyle, two of the most controversial remain: a statewide smoking ban and domestic partner protections for gay and lesbian couples.

Both are likely to remain in the budget bill, with the latter "certain to pass," according to Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Capitol correspondent Steven Walters. "Lawmakers must decide not only whether state government should offer health insurance to same-sex partners of state workers," Walters wrote in an April 13 column on the prospects for ten "hot button" issues, "but also whether to let those couples register with county clerks to get dozens of legal benefits that state law now reserves for heterosexual couples."

The DP benefits proposal was the only one Walters felt was "certain." Also likely to pass, according to Walters, were the smoking ban, tax increases for the state's richest taxpayers, early release of prison inmates convicted on non-violent crimes and tougher seat belt laws.

However, Walters did not have the benefit of the St. Norbert poll released April 17 in making his DP benefits call. That poll showed the Domestic partner protections package was even more popular than the governor who proposed them. 60% of respondents supported extending legal protections to same-sex couples, while only 54% approved of Doyle's job performance - his lowest approval rating since taking office. On other issues, the poll found 67% approved of

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the high bracket income tax increase, 66% supported the smoking ban and 53% supported the early release proposal. The survey was conducted between April I and April 9 for Wisconsin Public Radio and has a 5-point margin of error.

The same day St. Norbert pollsters finished their calls, the Fourth District Wisconsin Court of Appeals in Madison asked the state Supreme Court to review the case of University of Wisconsin - Oshkosh professor William McConkey as to the legality of the 2006 referendum of the so-called "Marriage Protection" amendment to the state's constitution. McConkey argued that the two questions in the referendum should have been voted on separately. An earlier ruling by Dane County Circuit Court Judge Richard Niess said that the two clauses in the referendum question were "two sides of the same coin" and properly decided with one vote.

Noting "the validity of the marriage amendment is a matter of significant public interest with statewide implications," the three-judge panel issued a ruling which in part read: "the parties here dispute the interpretation of the second proposition in the marriage amendment. McConkey claims that refusing recognition of any "legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage" denies both samesex and opposite-sex unmarried couples access to the same or similar legal protections granted to married couples. Under this interpretation, the validity of such things as domestic partnership benefits or hospital visitation rights could come into question. The attorney general contends that refusing recognition of any "legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage" merely prevents the state from creating some form of marriage-by-anothername for same-sex couples—i.e. civil unions. To the extent that it may become necessary to interpret the constitutional provision in order to determine its purpose, we again believe the Wisconsin Supreme Court is the most appropriate forum for this case.

"Finally, on the question of standing, the attorney general argues that a voter is not injured by a violation of the single-subject rule unless he or she is actually precluded from voting for his preference on one of the multiple propositions set forth. In order for that to occur, the voter would need to allege that he would have voted differently on separate propositions contained in the referendum. McConkey counters that his impact as a voter was diminished because other voters were deprived of the opportunity to agree with his no vote regarding a prohibition on granting rights similar to those conferred by marriage on unmarried couples. That is, if the propositions had been set forth separately, significant numbers of per-

sons may have voted yes to a ban on same-sex marriage, but no to a ban on extending similar rights to unmarried couples. We see little guidance in the case law as to the standing requirements to challenge a constitutional amendment on the grounds of an alleged violation of the single-subject rule. Accordingly, we conclude it is also appropriate to certify this case to the Wisconsin Supreme Court for clarification of the standing issue."

The appeals court ruling came just two days after Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson was reelected in a landslide. Abrahamson defeated Jefferson County Circuit Court Judge Randy Koschnick for her fourth term on the state Supreme Court, making her one of the court's longest-serving members. 59% of voters picked Abrahamson, who is also the court's first female justice, while 41% voted for Koschnick, who will remain on the circuit court bench in Jefferson County until 2011.

The likely success of the gay partner protections, the appeals court decision and Abrahamson's election success seem to be the undoing of the state's top gay marriage cop, Julaine Appling of the Wisconsin Family Council. Appling told the Wisconsin Radio Network she sees a "conspiracy to allow gay marriage."

"Last Friday (April 3) we have lowa's Supreme Court hand down legalized same-sex marriage, and then we have an election here on Tuesday and two days later we get the action from this particular appeals court on this particular issue?" she told WIBA new reporter John Colbert.

Colbert reported that "(Appling) questions the timing" and "(she) alleges that Appeals Court judges want the gay marriage ban thrown out and think that there's a better chance now that state Supreme Court Justice Shirley Abrahamson has been re-elected."

Appling would appear to have a lot of expertise in conspiratorial timing. As the head of the then Wisconsin Family Research Institute in 2006, she was able to use huge amounts of out-of-state Religious Right and Republican Party generated money "donated" just after final campaign reporting deadlines in a last minute push to promote the gay marriage and civil unions ban referendum.



Search for News Editor Mike Fitzpatrick under the name Quest News and add as a friend.

WISCONSIN AIDS RIDE SEEKS INTERNS

Madison - AIDS Network is looking for Interns to assist with the 7th annual Wisconsin AIDS Ride. Under the supervision of the Wisconsin AIDS Ride Coordinator, the intern will be responsible for assisting the development staff in various phases of production of the ACT 7 Wisconsin AIDS Ride, being held August 6-9, 2009.

The internship is designed to provide opportunities for students to learn about all phases of event production included but not limited to: developing event plans and timelines, day to day logistical planning, communication with participants, volunteers, staff and sponsors; and event management, evaluation and follow up. The intern will work closely with ride participants, volunteers, sponsors, steering committee members and management staff to gain a full understanding of the production of the ACT ride. In providing an opportunity for students to learn event production, the intern will be required to have the a number of skills. Interns will need to demonstrate their interest in the coordination, planning and support of special events, daily operational and administrative functions. They will also need excellent organizational and communication skills, and detail oriented thinking. Candidates will need extensive experience with Microsoft Word, Excel and online services as well as a general sense of administrative management.

Interns will be expected to support the ACT Ride Coordinator in various aspects of the ACT Ride planning such as: advertising/marketing efforts, participant support, registration management, donation requests, and vendor research and procurement. They also will provide clerical and administrative support. Interns will also be required to participate in the ACT 7 Ride in an operational position as assistant to the Ride Coordinator.

The intern must be able to work a flexible schedule and attend events outside of the normal work week, and be in attendance of an accredited college or university at the undergraduate or graduate level. They can expect to work 10-15 hours per week leading up to the ACT ride with more substantial hours the week of the event. Interns will also be working with people from diverse backgrounds. Interns for AIDS Network are unpaid.

Interested applicants should submit cover letter and resume to: Angela Dupont, Wisconsin AIDS Ride Coordinator, AIDS Network, 600 Williamson St., Suite H, Madison, WI 53703. They may also submit their cover letter and resume via email at: adupont@aidsnetwork.org. Applications are due no later than May I.

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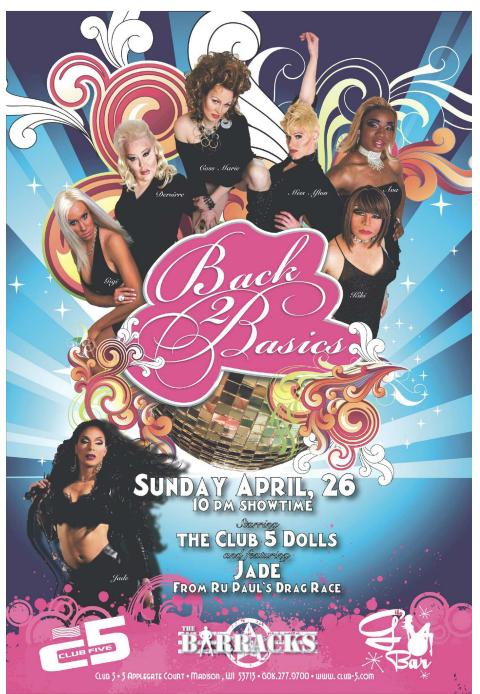
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Below: The Annual RicFest dinner and awards held in Milwaukee.





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- 1. Kid Cudi Day N Nite (Bimbo Jones Mix)
- 2. Lady GaGa Love Game (Dave Aude Club Mix).mp3
- 3. Beyonce Diva (Gomi & RasJek Vocal Remix)
- 4. Pussycat Dolls Jai Ho (DJM Remix)
- 5. Ciara & Justin Timberlake Love Sex Magic (Jason Nevins)
- 6. John Legend Green Light (karmatronic club mix)
- 7. Britney Spears If You Seek Amy (Deejay Angel Club Mix)
- 8. Kanye West Heartless (Kue Klub Mix)
- 9. Lily Allen The Fear (Stonebridge Explicit Club Mix)
- 10. Porn Kings vs Dj Supreme Up To Tha Wildstyle (Spencer And Hill)
- 11. Rihanna Breakin' Dishes (Soul Seekerz Remix)
- 12. Akon Beautiful (Mike Rizzo Funk Generation Club Mix)
- 13. Taylor Swift Love Story (Digital Dog Club Mix)
- 14. Flo Rida feat. Kesha Right Round (DJ Liad Segal Remix)
- 15. Pussycat Dolls feat. Snoop Dogg Bottle Pop (Moto Blanco Club Mix)
- 16. Deborah Cox Beautiful U R (Soulseekrz Club Mix)
- 17. Beyonce Halo (Karmatronic Club Mix)
- 18. Kelly Clarkson My Life Would Suck Without You (DJ VNo ReWork)
- 19. Pink Sober (Bimbo Jones Club Mix)
- 20. Lady Gaga Poker Face (Dave Aude Club Mix)



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THE HARMONY CAFÉ PROJECT: TAKING COMMUNITY CENTERS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

Appleton, Green Bay - What would you call an organization that sponsors a gay youth project, a social and discussion club for LGBT citizens of all ages and hosts meetings of area gay and lesbian social, political, philanthropic, educational and religious organizations? In most cities around Wisconsin, the correct answer might the local LGBT community center. But in northeast Wisconsin, you'd call it the nine-year old Harmony Café project of Goodwill Industries of North Central Wisconsin.

The Harmony Cafés of Appleton and Green Bay offer not only food but meeting spaces for a diverse number of community groups, including those of the LGBT community. The project's "Check It At The Door" declaration affirms that "diversity in humans is a strength," realizes that "it is natural for people to be uncomfortable with those who are different from themselves," and asks those who enter to pledge to "check my biases and temptation to pre-judge people at the door."

It is not unusual to find live music, poetry readings, yoga classes for seniors, knitting circles, autism support groups and LGBT drop-in events going on simultaneously at either of the two Harmony locations. All of these events also happen in a "green" environment, spiced with the aroma of steamed fair trade gourmet espresso drinks or freshly-

baked cookies, brownies and muffins. Both cafés offer full menus from breakfast to late night snack filled with tempting sandwiches, wraps and salads.

Praise from LGBT groups for Harmony Café's concept for the "next generation" of community centers abounds. Lynn Nash, president of Positive Voice (PV), notes that "Harmony has the perfect set-up to be a community resource center."

"Their mission statement is so inclusive that it makes people feel welcome," Nash said. "They network with other LGBT organizations in order to be inclusive as well. The staff is awesome to work with. They are accommodating and friendly. When you walk into either Harmony Cafe you are greeted and

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feel welcomed."

Nash noted that Positive Voice has been able to consistently hold the organization's Transgender Transformation Group at Harmony cafe for the past three years. "It has been a great location and very acceptable for the group members," she said. "PV (also) partners with Harmony on many LGBT events such as 'Night of Noise.' PV also hosts our LGBT drop-in Nights at the Green Bay location on the first and third Thursday of each month. The benefit is not only use of their space to hold events, but more importantly the acceptable environment."

ARCW gay outreach worker Paul "Cricket" Jacob, who also serves as a volunteer on the Green Bay Har-

mony's program committee, also cheers the project's concept, giving Goodwill Industries "two gold stars," one for each Harmony location. "This merger of lifestyles and ideas, under an open-minded and respectful umbrella, broadens perspectives and enriches the lives of the Cafe's guests and participants," Jacob said. "You might drop in to find a drumming circle, a live band, an educational program, a debate between political candidates or face-painting for children. The AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin is one of many organizations fortunate to provide educational functions at the Harmony Café."

The success of the original Fox Valley location has brought about a change of location for the Harmony Café in Appleton. Beginning April 21, Harmony opened its doors at 233 East College Avenue, the site of the former Pilgrim Café and just a few doors west of the Lawrence University campus. The first meeting to be held at the new location? The weekly meeting of the GLBT Partnership, the Café-sponsored gay youth group.

The Grand Opening of the Appleton Harmony Café has been set for May 6. Up in Green Bay, plans are under way for events to mark the formal first anniversary of that location (at 1660 West Mason St. in the former Best Buy building) in June.

Quest News Editor Mike Fitzpatrick recently sat down for an extended interview with the

Team behind the Harmony Café concept, Program Team Leader Shannon Kenevan, who oversees programming at both locations. As Kenevan noted, "Harmony Café is two teams working together - one team is the programming team and one team is the café team. The café team makes the food and manages the building, while the program team run the groups and carries out the mission work of the project." Shannon was nice enough to take a break from activities with his two daughters to speak with *Quest*. Here are excerpts from that interview:

Quest: Tell me about Harmony Café's move to the main drag on College Avenue in Appleton.



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Kenevan: We've been at our current location for a little over five years. When we first had the idea of Harmony Café, we had a pretty clear idea as to what we wanted the programs to look like: a wide variety of programs celebrating the arts and culture, diverse populations. We wanted to have leadership opportunities, and conversational and educational programs for people. The most important thing was to offer safe space that was welcoming to everybody, no matter what.

We weren't as clear on the kitchen side of things. When we first got our building, it had no kitchen to start with. It wasn't necessarily a prime location for a coffeehouse.

About a month before we opened our doors, we thought: "Why don't we sell coffee, and why don't we be open five days a week?" It would be more of a gathering place that would have the food and the drink to attract people who maybe didn't even know anything about our mission.

About three years into it, the coffeehouse piece was starting to take off. We thought: "What would happen if we added a kitchen and started doing food like pizzas, wraps and sandwiches?"

We had noticed that there were some people who would come about 8 in the morning, hang out until Noon then leave and go get lunch somewhere else, then come back until supper. Then they'd go get supper somewhere else. Adding food made it possible for those folks to hang out and support our mission by getting their meals there.

Our lease (for the last five years) was running out. We had to make a decision to sign on for another two years, the max the landlord was going to give us, or were we going to look elsewhere.

At the same time, we thought: "What would happen if this operation was able to move to College Avenue (the busiest street in downtown Appleton)?" There was a great building that happened to be available, right next to Lawrence University and right near what you might call the arts district of Appleton.

There was a lot more space to offer meetings and

program space. It also was a building that was for sale. Also, that building was more designed for a food and drink and coffeehouse operation.

Quest: Harmony sponsors diverse programming for LGBT youth and adults of all ages, correct?

Kenevan: What we have in Appleton right now are two groups that we basically support. One is the GLBT Partnership, a support and leadership development group for youth ages 14-18 who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered. In the past few years we've opened it up to (straight) allies who want to be a part of the group. That group has actually existed since 1998. I was the first director of it, back when that group was part of the Boys and Girls Club.

Actually Harmony Café was started by a teenager and myself. The teenager was a member of the original GLBT Partnership. We got to talking and felt while it was cool to have a safe space like the GLBT Partnership, we felt there was a need in the community to have a safe space that was open to all people - any age, any orientation - but it would still be safe for LGBT youth.

After Harmony Café got up and rolling, the Boys and Girls Club offered us the opportunity to take over the GLBT Partnership. It just seemed to make more sense that program became part of Harmony Café.

The other program that we have leadership of is called Spectrum. Essentially Spectrum is a group of people who have come out of the GLBT Partnership. They're over 18 and had wanted a space to gather. It's essentially the same - a leadership development and support group, though less a support group model and more of a supportive social and educational group model. We get people of all ages. We get people in their 50's and 60's, college kids who hang out and so on.

Spectrum is more peer-led, while the GLBT Partnership has professionally trained, paid staff. They've been meeting for about two years and have about twenty people at every meeting. As for the GLBT Partnership, their numbers bounce around a lot more, just because it's youth. Sometimes they don't get rides, sometimes they're dating. Typically from 10-20 show up at the meetings. In any given year about 150 different youth get involved with the GLBT partnership from all over northeastern Wisconsin.

Quest: So in some ways, the GLBT Partnership has become a community-based regional gay-straight alliance (GSA). But hasn't the Partnership also been an impetus for getting GSAs into the schools?

Kenevan: I know the first GSA in northeast Wisconsin in the Neenah area was started by youth from the GLBT Partnership. They struggled a lot and had some legal issues. But when that one opened, all of a sudden the flood gates opened. Within a year or two all the Appleton schools had ones, all the Green Bay schools had them, and they continued to pop up all over the place. The majority of the youth who took on leadership in those GSAs were members of the Partnership, and have gotten a lot of their leadership skills from being a part of the GLBT Partnership.

Conversely kids in schools hear about the Partnership through their GSAs and then join the Partnership. That bring back new energy to the group.

The (Partnership) staff have also been helpful in consulting for GSAs. All three of us (Kenevan, Rebecca Berringer and Jesse Heffernan) have been asked to do many presentations in schools in northeast Wisconsin. Those presentations and consultations have been in support of GSAs: helping start a GSA, helping when GSAs are having problems - that sort of stuff.

Quest: There's a family group that meets at Harmony Café as well?

Kenevan: There's two other groups that meet there - that are a little less under our leadership. Valued Families, which is considered one of the Harmony Café programs but is led by some community volunteers. They're focus is gay and lesbian parents who get together who have kids. They get together once a month, for about a year now.





I also want to mention the Transgender Transformation Group. It's not one of our programs *per se*, it's led by Positive Voice. They use our space and connect with us. so that's four really unique LGBT groups in total that meet at Harmony Café.

Quest: What about other underserved populations? Are there other groups sponsored by Harmony Café?

Kenevan: I get probably at least on or two, sometimes three or four people a week who come to me with an idea of a program they want to start up. A fairly small percentage follow though and actually start something. An even smaller percentage of folks who start something stay with it and it takes off.

There are a lot of folks who have good ideas but don't have the skills or the connections to how to make things work. Something that we do is called capacity-building. We say: "Yes, that's a great idea. Here's how you can make it happen. Here's how you can market it. If you need help with fund raising, here's how we can help with that. Here's a way to help get people involved, and so on."

We've got dozens and dozens of different programs. For example Conversation Café is a program that we borrowed from folks on the West Coast. Essentially it's a small group talking circle, maybe 6-12 people in a circle and facilitated with very simple guidelines about how to have conversations that can be respectful on challenging topics. We talk about things like abortion, gay marriage, the war in Iraq, poverty you name it. We try to gather people who have different religious affiliations, different political beliefs and so on. We meet for an hour and a half to two

hours. We've got some (hour long) lunch conversation cafés as well.

People come to us with ideas that we've just never even thought of. In Green Bay, we've got a knitting group that meets every Friday and a beading circle that meets every Wednesday. They've been reaching to to people who haven't knit or beaded before.

Another example is from Green Bay. An eight year old approached me (during a tour of the building where Kenevan was explaining the programming concept) and asked: "How about a Lego club?" He talked to his dad about it and this last February the Lego club began. They taught kids how to do engineering principles with Legos. They were doing force, pulleys and levers - building bridges and things like that using Legos for kids from 8 to 16.

Quest: Additionally, I understand that all sorts of organizations are using the Harmony Café for meeting spaces.

Kenevan: With Green Bay model especially, we really wanted to make it an appealing space for organizations to use. We didn't have much space for meeting rooms for the Harmony Café in our old space in Appleton. But we were right next door to the Fox Cities Rotary Multicultural Center. We saw how many groups, how many non-profits existed, who didn't have meeting spaces to run their programs, network or have meetings.

We really designed the Green Bay space with that in mind. We have rooms of different sizes. We have technology and AV equipment. We have a smaller room with couches for things like support groups.

Part of our mission has been to a diversity piece: to be a welcoming space for all kinds of folks. Last Fall and Winter you could walk into the Harmony Café in Green Bay on a Thursday night and find Positive Voice meeting in one room, a Christian group in another room, in the front room a Buddhist organization and up on stage there were different live bands playing, all happening in the same space.

(More meeting space is) one of the nice things about our new building in Appleton. On one side of the building we will have meeting spaces. On the other side we've got the kitchen, food area, cyber café on the main floor. On the second floor there's a mezzanine and on the third floor there's two meeting rooms. One can hold 25-40 people depending on the seating, and the other is a small room for support groups.

Quest: When is the grand opening in Appleton? And how about Green Bay's 1st Anniversary party?

Kenevan: The ceremonial piece of the grand opening is My 6 with the ribbon-cutting. We're also going to have two weeks of grand opening events and celebrations as well. We'll be starting our new hours: 7 days a week from 6 AM to 10 or possibly even 11 at night. That will start May 7 and go through May 23.

We've started talking about our anniversary in Green Bay, but my guess is that we'll really start talking seriously about it when the Appleton café gets up and rolling. One thing at a time!

Editor's Note: For more information about the Harmony Café program, visit: www.focol.org/harmonycafe.





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ON OUR COVER - ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

ARTIST RAM ROJAS' WORK ON DISPLAY AT HARMONY CAFÉ

By Paul "Cricket" Jacob

Green Bay - There are two great reasons to hijack your regular routine and set a couple of hours aside for something special: Harmony Café and artist Ram Rojas. Harmony Café is celebrating its one-year anniversary at its Green Bay location, 1660 W. Mason St. If you aren't familiar with Harmony Café, or haven't been there yet, then I suggest you crawl out from under your rock and check it out! Not only is the facility great, but the café strives

to be green, and houses all kinds of community-minded (& fun) programs and events for all age groups. It's truly a business model for the socially-conscious. Plan to pop in for a hot or cold drink, a healthy sandwich and a look around.

To compliment Harmony Café's important anniversary, Door County artist, Ram A. Rojas, will have a virtual gallery of his work on display during the entire months of May and June for you to peruse or purchase. If you aren't familiar with Ram's work, then I've just identified another good reason for you to be sipping a specialty brew at HC. Here's the low-down on Ram, as I recently had the pleasure of chatting with him (over a tasty Cappuccino).

"I was born in Caracas, Venezuela. From as far back as I can remember I have been inspired by the works of Leonardo Da Vinci and other greats," Ram said.

"He's a natural," observers would say of Ram's artistic talents as a young boy. His remarkable talents, combined with his childhood exposure to, and interest in the art culture provided quite the launching pad for Ram's

quick ascent as a renowned artist. Already training at the Academy of Fine Arts in Caracas at age 14. Ram was selected along with other prodigies from around the world to study at the Academy of Vedic Art in Los Angeles.

His work soon opened eyes, and opened doors in Los Angeles, New York and West Virginia, where he was invited to participate in shows and permanently display some of his fine pieces.

In his never-ending drive to evolve as an artist, Ram traveled to the other side of the ocean to study the great European painters (the Old Masters) of the Renaissance. His work there, illustrating art, history, religion, mythology and science, was published in a variety of books and languages, greatly expanding his territory - and diversity of admirers. But the 'train called Ram' did not stop here. It was off to India to study the culture and methods of oriental art.

His extensive exposure to fine arts and cultures from multiple regions and eras gives Ram a huge well of influence to draw from while transforming his innermost visions into art.

"My art is meant to inspire a fresh perspective on everyday life," he said. "I want it to be as much a meditation for those who repeatedly look at it, as it was for me to create it. I want it to awaken your intuitive intellect."

After returning to America, Ram studied at the Barnstone Studios in Philadelphia, honing his skills, consolidating his experience with universal principles of design, anatomy, composition and color theory. The compilation of tools in Ram's repertoire has earned him respect as a master of many medias and subjects: Beautiful classical oils, impeccably rendered watercolors, delicate drawings and airbrush portraits speak to his versatility.

The Walls of Wittenberg (WOW) project here in Northeast Wisconsin boasts one of Ram's acclaimed masterpieces.

Among the many brightly colored murals that adorn the exterior walls of Wittenberg's downtown businesses, you will find "Foundations of Faith", completed by Ram in 2006.

The mural, gracing the north wall of the Homme Home on Reed Street, depicts early and current churches of the community, sheltered by a guardian angel. Ram immersed himself in the history of the local churches, including the Ho-Chunk Nations, to accurately reflect the communities of faith in the area.

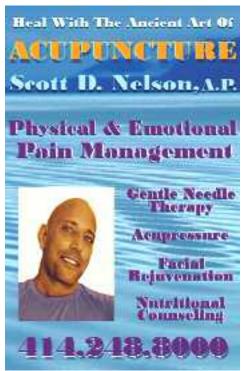
Ram currently resides in Door County. "I'm

fascinated with the beauty of everyday existence here," he said. "Things many take for granted hold a special quality and wisdom of tradition in my eyes. I enjoy capturing all aspects of this unique beauty in my work."

It's true, Door County has many treasures. And after getting to know Ram Rojas, and seeing his work, it's clear to me that Ram is one of those treasures. See his work on-line at www.ram rojas.com or at the Fine Line Gallery in Ephraim, and most certainly at Harmony Café-Green Bay, during May and June. You are also invited to attend a free Artist Reception being held at Harmony Café on Sunday, May 3 from 3-6 PM. Meet Ram, see his work, and enjoy cafe treats and entertainment. The café is open until 9 PM daily, 6 PM on Sundays. Hope to see you there!







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LETTER CARRIERS' MAY 9 FOOD DRIVE TO BENEFIT ARCW PANTRIES STATEWIDE Donations Critical as Thousands Join Hunger Rolls Nationally

Milwaukee, Green Bay - Among the many Wisconsin food banks that will benefit from this year's national Letter Carriers food drive are all ARCW food pantries statewide. The National Association of Letter Carriers (NALC) recently announced that the nation's largest annual food drive to combat hunger will be conducted this year on Saturday, May 9 - the day before Mother's Day. On that day, letter carriers will collect non-perishable donations from homes as they deliver mail along their postal routes.

Food donations from the Letter Carriers is received by ARCW through distribution networks in several cities, or - in the case of Green Bay - directly from the post office collection site the day of the drive. ARCW food pantry manager Randy Bash hopes to find several volunteers in the Green Bay area to help load the agency truck that will be on site. "We could use 3-4 helpers for about an hour on Saturday afternoon to get everything loaded up," he told *Quest*.

The reason help is needed is because the Letter Carriers' drive literally keeps pantries running during the critical summer months when no other major food collection programs occur. "This one drive fills pantry shelves for literally 2-3 months," Karen Gordon, corresponding secretary for the Brown County Food And Hunger Network said, noting that "with the economic downturn this year, that may be an optimistic estimate as many of our network's pantries are literally down to their last boxes of macaroni and cheese and jars of peanut butter."

Even if volunteers cannot help with distribution, they can help by donating food on May 9. "In Wisconsin its just so easy as the letter carriers drop off a



plastic shopping bag to most mailboxes the week before the drive," Gordon said. "You just fill it up and put it out for the carrier, just as you might put out a letter or bill for pick-up."

The 17th annual NALC National Food Drive to "Stamp Out Hunger" is the largest one-day food drive

in the nation. Carriers collected a record 73.1 million pounds of food in last year's drive. The drive is held annually on the second Saturday in May in over 10,000 cities and towns in all fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Donations will be collected by more than 1,400 local branches of the 300,000-member postal union and delivered to food banks, pantries and shelters that serve the communities where they are collected. Assisting in the effort are rural letter carriers and other postal employees, as well as members of other unions and thousands of civic volunteers.

NALC President William H. Young emphasized that as successful as the food drive has been in the past, it simply must be even better this year. "Millions and millions of families are suffering – struggling to make ends meet and put food on the table," Young said. "More than ever food banks, pantries and shelters need our help this year. As families count on them for support, they're counting on us and we must not back off on our commitment."

Young also noted that donations are particularly critical at this time since most school lunch programs are suspended during the summer months and millions of children must find alternate sources of nutrition.

Persons who have any questions about the drive at their location should ask their letter carrier or contact their local post office. Volunteer helpers are also needed at postal sites around Wisconsin. Volunteers who wish to help with the ARCW Green Bay pick Saturday afternoon at approximately I PM on May 9 are asked to email Randy Bash at: randy.bash@arcw.org or call the Green Bay office at 920-437-7400, Ext. 102.

MADISON GAY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION NAMED OUTSPORTS' TOP GAY SPORTS GROUP

Los Angeles - After a month of popular voting and careful consideration by our panel of experts, Outsports is proud to announce the winner of the Local Groups Challenge to find the best gay-sports team or league in the world: the Madison Gay Hockey Association It was a very close final vote, emphasizing the strength of all of Outsports' four finalists. Each of the other three finalists – Cheer New York, G-Force Hockey Club and Philadelphia Fins Aquatics Club – received at least one first-place vote from our judges, who were asked to rank the groups in order of their preference. Ultimately, Madison Gay Hockey Association earned the top spot based on those rankings.

In voting for Madison Gay Hockey, GLAAD's Ted Rybka highlighted their focus on inclusion. "I was struck by several things. They were one of the few teams to mention that they have straight players. I'm a huge believer that homophobia in sports can be lessened by being inclusive and incorporating straight players into predominately gay teams. I also like how they created a non-threatening environment for men and women to learn the sport. (I also was impressed that they were a co-ed organization.) Hockey has the aura of being a hyper masculine sport with no place for women or gay men. I like that they are breaking down that wall by saying, 'You have a place with us. You have a place in hockey.'"

For journalist and Outsports contributor Matt Hennie, it was the group's work with local Gay-Straight Alliances that stood out for him.

"What really grabbed my attention about the Madison group is their work with Gay-Straight Alliances from local high schools. In a practical sense, their work is helping the GSAs raise funds. But more importantly, it's providing a positive look at gay folks and gay athletes to gay students who are working to come to terms with what it means to be gay."

Judges for the final round included author and Outsports contributor Patricia Nell Warren; GLAAD's Director of Sports Media Ted Rybka; journalist and Outsports contributor Matt Hennie; and ESPN personality LZ Granderson. Call for entries for next year's contest will begin in December.

OUTREACH PUBLISHES 19TH ANNUAL EDITION OF THE DIRECTORY

Madison - OutReach has announced the 19th annual edition of The Directory is now available. The Directory is Madison's comprehensive resource guide to LGBT non-profit organizations, community groups, and LGBT-friendly vendors & businesses. Free copies of the Directory are available at a number of Madison locations including: A Room Of One's Own, Four Star Video Heaven, Border's Bookshop (East/West), UW LGBT Campus Center, Community Pharmacy, Steep & Brew Coffee, Madison Public Libraries, and at the OutReach office. For more information or to distribute copies at your location, please contact Harry by phone at: 608-255-8582 or e-mail at: harrys@lgbtoutreach.org . Donations to cover the cost of printing (suggested \$3.50 a copy) are appreciated.

PRIDEFEST TO OFFER HEALTH & WELLNESS EXPO

Milwaukee - PrideFest will sponsor its Second Annual Exercising Pride: PrideFest Health & Wellness area June 11 and 12 during the festival. PrideFest and each of the festival's primary partners - ARCW, BESTD Clinic, Cream City Foundation, Diverse & Resilient, FORGE and Milwaukee LGBT Community Center - are offering LGBT health and wellness-related groups an opportunity to participate in this year's exhibition.

Each organization that participates will receive the following free of charge: both space which includes a tent, table and chairs; a storage bin that includes rain gear, tape, scissors, rope and other items; three admission tickets and a parking pass for each day; insurance coverage under PrideFest's policy; and a listing in printed and electronic materials. Limited electrical access will be available for some booths. Organizations needing additional admission tickets for representatives also will be able to obtain them in advance at a reduced rate.

Application forms are available for download and print out at the festival website: www.pridefest.com. The forms are due by mail on Friday, May 2 to: Mark O'Neil at Diverse & Resilient, 2439 N Holton St., Milwaukee, WI 53212. For more information about the expo, contact Mark O'Neil by email at: moneil@diverse-andresilient.org or by phone at:414-390-0444.

DIVERSION OF THE DAY Community Events Calendar

Wednesday, April 22

Fluid (Milw) Tuaca Party \$3.50 Tuaca Bombs 9-11pm

Friday, April 24

LaCage (Milwaukee) LaCage is celebrating 25 years! Showtime 10pm

Saturday, April 25

ICON (Kenosha) Thrid Anniversary Celebration

JACK (Milw) Spring Break Swinsuit Contest - Compete and win - NO COVER!

LaCage (Milwaukee) Saturday Softball League Party 6pm

Milwaukee Gay Arts Center The Saint Joan of Arc Project Art Exhibition Opening Artists' Reception from 6-9pm with featured artists Sylvie Charbonnier, Katie Kriesel, Fred Laupan, Kate Sherry, Henk Jovbert and others.

Sunday April 26

MONA'S (Milw) Three Strikes Productions Diva Revue - Trina Colby And Friends 10pm

Friday, May 1

Milwaukee Gay Arts Center Matt & Co's Cabaret present an evening of Original Music & Entertainment! Acoustic guitar, indie rock and even an opera aria or two! 8pm Cover \$5

Saturday, May 2

M's (Milwaukee) M&M's reunion party Please see ad this issue.

Madison Gay Video Club "Begging For Shorts (short films)" (Blue Seraph Prod., dir. J.T. Tepnapa, '08) "Masterpiece" (Hot House, '08) 8PM, www.mgvc.org, 608-244-8690 (eve)

Milwaukee Gay Arts Center singer/songwriter Charles McVey is butch, gay, brutal & beautiful with his 3 piece piano/rock band from Lawrence, KS. Local talent Andy Holm opens the show at 8pm Cover \$7

Friday, May 8 & Saturday May 9

Milwaukee Gay Arts Center Women's Voices Milwaukee return to MGAC for their spring Babes on Broadway concert, Tickets: \$12 advance, \$15 at the door Call 414-383-3727

Monday, May 11

Outword's Books (Milwaukee) Outwords Book Club a discussion of And the Hippos Were Boiled in Their Tanks by William S. Burroughs & Jack Kerouac, a long lost classic novels from two of the legendary Beat Writers. Everyone welcome to stop in!

Tuesday, May 12

Outword's Books (Milwaukee) The Lesbian Reading Group @ Outwords The book to be discussed is Linda Morganstein's novel of 1940's Hollywood, My Life With Stella Kane. All interested readers are always welcome to join in.

Thursday, May 14 - Saturday May 30

Milwaukee Gay Arts Center RSVP presents Paul Rudnick's comedy on gay marriage,
Regrets Only, directed by Ray Bradford with an all star cast featuring Colleen Hart, Jack Haar, Mark Hagen, Gloria Loeding Sally Marks & Sandra Stark. All performances 7:30pm Tickets \$15, \$12 Students/Seniors Call 414-272-5694

Saturday, May 16

Madison Gay Video Club "Mulligans" (Wolfe Rel., dir. Chip Hale, '08) "Inside Out" (Colt Studio, '08) 8PM, http://www.mgvc.org, 608-244-8690 (evenings)

Rainbow Club of Central Wisc 2nd spring meeting at Chuck & Bill's, 320 west 2nd St South Ladysmith, WI 54848. Call Terry (715)654- 5044 or mail Rainbow Club of Central Wisc Box 254 Dorchester WI 54425 or chuck/Bill (715)532-0995. Pot luck & cook outmeat for the grill provided, & a plant exchange. 12noon All welcome, join in the fun. Looking to see new faces.

Sunday May 17

KRUZ (Milwaukee) CastawaysMC Beer/Soda Bust Sunday,May 17th. Cost is \$7.00 \$5.00 if your in BOOTS AND BOXERS will have prizes

Tuesday, May 19

Outword's Books (Milwaukee) Author! Author!! Moondancer Drake will read and sign copies of her new novel, Ancestral Magic All interested readers are always welcome to

Clubs and Organizations, Bars & Businesses - Send us your calendar listings to be included next issue. Email editor@guest-online.com



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In other health-related festival news, PrideFest will offer the first annual Vic Milford Run for Charity on Saturday, June 13 beginning at 10 AM. Route details are currently being finalized and will be announced shortly. Runners and walkers will help support this year's beneficiaries: the Zoological Society of Milwaukee County, Ronald McDonald House Charities, and PrideFest. Registration will begin at 8:30 AM on the Summerfest Grounds.

"PRIDE ALIVE FIVE" 5K RUN/WALK REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

Green Bay - This year's Pride Alive on July 11 will begin with the first-ever "Pride Alive Five," a 5K run/walk at 9:30 A.M. The race will begin at the Green Bay East High parking lot, then move through east Green Bay and along the East River Trail, eventually finishing in Joannes Park. This fun run is open to all ages and abilities, with awards presented to winners in each 10-year age/gender division. Participants are encouraged to dress up in their best drag or outrageous outfit for additional Best of Show awards. Racers are able to direct up to \$3 of their registration fee towards this year's community partners: Golden House, The Baird Creek Preservation Foundation, and the GLBT Partnership of Harmony Café.

Early registration and more information is now available online at: www.newpride.org. Register early for a reduced registration fee.

PRIDE ALIVE VIP PACKAGES NOW AVAILABLE

Green Bay - Pride Alive VIP Packages are now available for purchase. The VIP package offers admission to all ticketed pre and post-festival events plus several exclusive items. This year's VIP package includes admission and reserved seating for The July 10 pre-Pride event, featuring a movie showing and drag performances; a Pride Alive T-shirt and goodie bag, drink and raffle tickets for the July 11 Pride Alive festival, admission to the July 12 After-Pride Sunday Brunch, and an artist autographed copy of Pride Alive headliner Vickie Shaw's "Sick and Wrong" Tour DVD. Packages are only \$50 for over \$100 in value. For more information on how to purchase a VIP package, visit the Pride Alive website at: www.newpride.org.





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RAINBOWS IN MILWAUKEE

By Paul Masterson

Milwaukee - Unlike other major metropolitan centers, Milwaukee has no specific LGBT neighborhood. Other cities are well known for their gay ghettos: Los Angeles has its West Hollywood; Chicago, Boystown and New York, Chelsea.

Why Milwaukee's urban development doesn't reflect a similar phenomenon is a matter of debate. Suffice it say, the city's LGBT population is well integrated throughout the suburbs and residential urban areas. Bay View has earned the nickname "Gay View," while Riverwest, Washington Heights, the fashionable lower Eastside, Walker's Point and the Third Ward all have significant LGBT populations.

To serve neighborhood diversity, Rainbow Associations and other community groups have sprung up. Their longevity and activity varies.

MILWAUKEE RAINBOW ASSOCIATIONS

By Paul Masterson

The city's Rainbow Associations are located in Wauwatosa, Sherman Park and Riverwest. Most provide social and civic opportunities with established committees to organize events, political activism and maintain websites or newsletters. Some have regular meetings, potlucks, picnics, book clubs, game nights or other social opportunities for members and their guests.

The Washington Heights Rainbow Association (WHRA) remains as an established and active organization. Founded in 1995 with over 100 members, the WHRA continues to grow. Current president Mary McGrath describes WHRA's mission as one "to foster a better understanding of the gay and lesbian residents within the neighborhood and provide support for our members."

"We also pursue development of social and civic relationships that promote, benefit, and unify Washington Heights, McGrath said. "There are no dues, members belong by participating."

Philanthropy is an important part of its mission. Each year, WHRA funds both LGBT and non-LGBT projects. Past recipients include the LGBT Community Center, the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center and the Washington Heights Neighbor-

hood Association among others.

The next major fund raising event is the annual rummage sale on Saturday, May 9 from 8am to 3pm. This year's sale takes place at the home of Mary McGrath and her first lady Lorraine Samsel, located at 2243 North 58th Street.

WHRA even accepts donations (no appliances, please). Items may be dropped off at the same address on Friday, May 8 from 6:30-8 PM. Proceeds from the sale will help fund a future grant giving. For more information visit the WHRA website at: members.aol.com/washhtsrainbow/index.htm

BAYVIEW GARDEN AND YARD SOCIETY

By Paul Masterson

Bay View boasts a very focused group that has existed since 1995: the Bay View Garden And Yard Society (BVGAYS). Its purpose is to have fun while promoting the Bay View community through the beautification of gardens and yards. This mission serves as a model for others to plant and maintain gardens. BVGAYS also tends public gardens in and beyond Bay View.

The twenty dues paying members avidly pursue the mission. They organize their seasonal planting strategy and social events at meetings held on the last Wednesday of the month at the Beulah Brinton House, 2590 S. Superior Street in Bay View. Their public projects include flower beds at the Milwaukee Fire Department station on Kinnickinnic Avenue and five other locations.

BVGAYS 5th annual plant sale takes place on May 30 from 9 AM to 1 PM at South Shore Park. The sale has become a community happening attracting quality vendors and a broad spectrum of Bay View residents who take advantage of the occasion to purchase annuals and perennials. Group members also exchange gardening tips and renew acquaintances that may have been dormant through the winter months.

More information about the BVGAYS may be found at: www.bvgays.com

If your neighborhood has recently formed a social organization, share information about it and its mission by contacting *Quest* at: editor@quest-online.com





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Theatre Reviews Glenn Bishop

Alter Boyz, National Tour and Salome, Off the Wall Productions

Occasionally, assuming a sufficient period of good behavior has been maintained, the restraints are loosened and Glenn actually finds himself let out amongst his fellow man (and woman). Back a few months, for example, Glenn had occasion to attend a special screening of Gus Van Sant's celebrated biopic, "Milk." Having been thwarted over the Chamber Theatre's highly acclaimed production of "Sum of Us," Glenn was positively giddy with pleasure having received an invitation to the opening night performance of the delightful musical "Altar Boyz," currently saving souls at the Marcus Center's intimate Vogel Hall.

Another opening, another show: Next evening found Glenn at the opening of Off The Wall Theatre's production of Oscar Wilde's "Salome." A decidedly curious, biblical double-header for Glenn.

Having personally been involved in productions of both "Godspell," and "Jesus Christ Superstar" as well as mounting Parkway Elementary's fondly remembered "Easter Eggstravaganza: The Resurrection Revue," Glenn is uniquely qualified to report back on "Altar Boyz," an engaging evening which finds a 5-strong fictional Christian boy band, wrapping up their "Raise the Praise" world tour here in fabulous Milwaukee.

The spirited opening number, "We are the Altar Boyz," introduces the five lads,

three delightfully named after Glenn's three favorite apostles. Dan Scott's oh-so fey Mark is the archetypal boy band bottle blond who spent the evening coveting his neighbor's ass — that of Philip Drennen's absolutely adorable lead singer Matthew, in much the same fashion as did Glenn, as it so happens. Luke (Anton Fero) is a break dancing homeboy, just back from a rehab respite. Orphan Juan (Adam Cassel) boasts some Latin heat plus a mega-wattage smile. Rounding out the quintet is gangly Tim Dolan's Abraham — oh good gosh, good golly! — the Jewish one.

The conceit in Kevin Del Agulia's book is that, thanks to a clever device devised by an electronics corporate monolith, there's a digital readout onstage tracking the number of souls still needing to be saved amongst audience members. One by one, souls are saved throughout the concert thanks to the attractive cast, clever harmonies, Christopher Gattelli's energetic choreography plus some sweetly subversive song lyrics.

Boasting an off- as well as on-Broadway pedigree, "Altar Boyz" is admittedly a bit slow to hit its stride and a "confession session" falls a bit flat but surely Glenn's soul was saved when Drennan's Matthew, wonderfully lopsided smile and all, offered the sweet as spun sugar love ballad, "Something About You."

Go and be saved. Glenn did!

Glenn was in store for some culture shock the next night at "Salome." Best known for such witty comedies as "The Importance of Being Earnest" and "An Ideal Husband," Wilde wrote "Salome" in French, whilst sojourning in Paris during the autumn of 1891, possibly with the legendary diva Sarah Bernhardt in mind for the title character.

A troubled history would ensue, as a production of "Salome" in rehearsal in 1892 was canceled when the Lord Chamberlain, the British government official in charge of theater censorship, banned the play. "Salome" found its way into print in 1893 in French; a translation in English by Bosie, Lord Alfred Douglas, Wilde's lover, followed in 1894 with the now familiar, totally outrageous illustrations by Aubrey Beardsley. Yet Wilde was so greatly dissatisfied with Bosie's efforts, he would subsequently revise the translation extensively.

There would not be a production of "Salome" in London until 1905, several years after Wilde's death.

As is characteristic of much of his dramatic output, Wilde is once again far more fascinated with the sound of his own voice than wth telling a story, here that of the young Judean princess, Salome (Liz Mistele) and her obsession for the captive prophet lokanaan (Nate Press).

Thanks much to the kind seat mate who clued Glenn to the fact that

lokanaan also goes by the more familiar John the Baptist.

In this rare staging, Wilde's purple prose soars in rhythmic measure thanks to Gutzman's scantily-clad yet deeply committed cast who attack their roles with confidence and evident relish.

Jeremy C. Welter's Young Syrian lusts heroically albeit unrequitedly for Salome, while handsome Tyson Monroe's Page, his lean torso bared but for a skimpy Speedo, pines equally unrequitedly for him. Wilde's merry-go-round of obsession culminates with David Flores's painted King Herod willing to give it all up, even half of his kingdom, if only Salome will dance for him.

The notoriously uncomfortable seating notwithstanding, this rarified Wildean fantasia makes for an uniquely fascinating evening's entertainment.

If you go:

"Altar Boyz" runs through April 26 in Vogel Hall at the Marcus Center, 929 N. Water St. Milwaukee. Tickets are on sale at the center's box office, by phone at (414) 273-7206, and online at www.marcuscenter.org.

"Salome" continues through April 26 at Off the Wall Theatre, 127 E. Wells St., Milwaukee. Tickets are on sale at the Off the Wall Box Office, by phone at (414) 327-3552, and online www.offthewalltheatre.com.



CHARLES S. MCVEY TO PERFORM "ANIMAL" AT MILWAKEE GAY ARTS CENTER

Charles S. McVev is a singer/songwriter who uses the medium of music as a backdrop for discussing a wide range of emotional experiences with regard to the human condition. His upfront lyrics allow him to remain frank and open while addressing subjects such as sexuality, suffering, and religious dogmas. His 2007 release, "Modern Living" received critical praise and resulted in over 75 regional performances to promote the album. Recently, McVey contributed to the score of Steve Balderson's acclaimed documentary "Wamego: Ultimatum" and has performed with national acts such as They Might Be Giants and Ian Moore.

McVey's upcoming release, "ANIMAL," is a nine track exploration into the loss of one's faith. Casually labeled as a "spiritual break-up" record, the songs meander through such concepts as sexual repression, doubt, and divine abandonment. The recordings are melodically saturated while remaining emotionally bare, exposing the raw nerves and the disconcerting reflections of a man who wants to believe in God - but doesn't. The album's erotic artwork features adult film star Scott Campbell, and mixes Maplethorpe-esque photography with religious imagery to create a sexy and confrontational package. Within an hour the "edited for content" version of the cover was reported and removed from McVey's MySpace page.

"ANIMAL" features the same line-up as "Mod-



ern Living" with McVey on piano and vocals, Erik Kessinger on drums, and Max Paley on bass. Lawrence musicians Dan Kozak (saxophone, This is My Condition), Josh Atkinson (guitar, Kelpie), and Clark Jamison (percussion, Lila, 11:11) also contributed to the recording. Colin Mahoney (engineering, Split Lip Rayfield) mastered the final product.

The arrangement of the tracks is a conceptual downslide ending in spiritual independence or emptiness, depending on the listener's view of the world. "ANIMAL" does not present an alternative theology, nor is its intent to offer answers or explanations, but merely to raise questions. The listener is encouraged to explore its content with curiosity and an open mind. "ANIMAL" is the culmination of a year's worth of work based on a lifetime's contemplation and it is Charles S. McVey at his most refined.

"...a gifted songwriter..." ~ Timothy Finn * KC Star

"...candidly addresses matters of sexuality with pathos-packed ballads and '80s influenced alt-rock."

~ Richard Gintowt * Lawrence.com

"McVey's piano-based rock mixes innovative instrumentation with lyrics you won't hear anywhere else."

~ Matt Hanne * Liberty Press
"With his gravelly Tom Waits like voice and his in your face look at the world, Charles is a musical force, may it be with you, to reckon with.'

~ Michael Shinafelt * DoorQ.com www.charlesmcvey.com

Tuesday, May 19th 7:00pm **Author! Author!!**

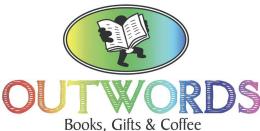
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The Magic Flute

Florentine puts the magic into Mozart's The Magic Flute

Milwaukee's Florentine Opera, back in the Marcus Center after its brilliant Pabst appearance with Handel's Semele, concluded its season with a masterfully staged and sung production of Mozart's *The Magic Flute*.

Principals Ava Pine (Pamina), Ryan MacPherson (Tamino); Craig Verm (Papageno) made their Florentine debuts. Heather Buck played the Queen of the Night; David Cushing was Sarastro and Kurt Ollmann sang the Speaker.

Verm's meaty and almost dark tenor quality gave his Tamino a well-appreciated strength and vigor often lacking when the role is cast to a lighter voice. Pine's Pamina, especially in "Ah, I feel it is vanished", was exquisitely and effortlessly rendered. Buck's Queen of the Night soared despite slight slips through her otherwise strong vengeance aria. Cushing's sonorous deep bass gave Sarastro a powerful character but the oddities of his enunciation were almost distracting.

Rodell Rosel as Monostatos also made his Florentine debut. His impish evil was delightfully sung and portrayed. The three Ladies-in-Waiting and the spirits were equally up to their tasks. They sang and acted their roles with complete sovereignty.

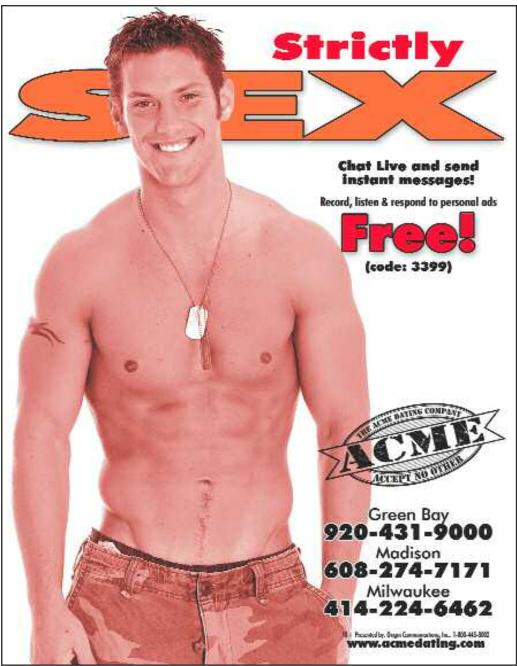
The stark modernity of Noele Stollmack's cubist set created a dramatic barren landscape for the opera's opening and later an imposing temple precinct with effective, nuanced lighting and projection design by Kathy Wittman. The costumes by Christianne Myers created a fantasy Eastern fusion of Japanese kimonos with a Persian touch in pale yellows, oranges and reds that gave warmth and simple vertical line to compliment the coolness of the set. The Queen of the Night, her entourage and Monstatos were, of course, in black. The Magic Flute, despite its comedic moments fairy tale story is, after all, about wisdom and love. The set and costumes effectively stated this sense of purity and virtue.

Hearing The Magic Flute sung in Andrew Porter's English libretto required a slight adjustment for a purist used to the German original. But, the translation is accurate and suits the music well. Mozart wrote this work in the vernacular and using the English version is entirely fitting for an American performance. It's practical as well - *The Magic Flute* contains longer sections of spoken dialogue — a challenge for singers and audience alike.

Maestro Joseph Rescigno lead the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra capably although the orchestra's sound was hardly remarkable. Scott Stewart's chorus direction was solid.

All in all, the youthfulness of the cast gave this performance a palpable vigor. The Florentine certainly succeeded in putting the magic into Mozart's Magic Flute.





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Harmony Cafe 233 E. College Ave., Appleton 54915 920 734 228 www.harmonycule.org www.myapace.com/harmonycafe

Men's Voices Milwaukee C/o U.C.C. 2717 F. Hampshire St. Milw. 53211 (414)861-5526 www.mymchorus.org

Miltown Kings www.myspace.com/miltownkings

LGBT Service and Advocacy Organizations

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Connexus 12408 East Brady Street Milwaukee, WI 53202

Cream City Foundation 759 N. Milwaukee, Suite 212 Milwaukee, WI 53202 (111) 225 0211 director@creamoily/bundation.org

Diverse And Resilient 12408 East Brady Street Milwaykee, WI 53202 (414) 390 0444 director@diverseandresilient.org www.diverseandresilient.org

Fair Wisconsin 122 State St. Suite 309 Madison, WI 53703 (608) 441-0143 www.fairwisconsin.org

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Galland Club 315 W Court St. Suite 201 Milwaukee, WI 53212 (414) 276 6936 mail@galanoclub.org www.galanoclub.org

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Gemini Gender Group PO BOX 44211 Milwaukee, WI 53214 (414) 297 9328

Human Rights League-Political Action Committee (I+RI +PAC) PO BOX 510107 Mihwaukasa, WI 53203 (414) 319-9863 www.hi-poc.org

Leabien Allience 315 W Court Street Milwaukez, WI 53212 (414) 272-9442 Jamm@milwpc.com

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LGBT Social Groups

Washington Heights Rainbow Association (414) 258-8834 washintersinbow@sol.com www.washingtonheightsrainbow.org

> Brew City Bears PO Box 1035 Milwaukee, WI 53201 (414)331-3244 Info@brewcitybears.com www.brewcitybears.com

The Brunch Club jeonleragland@wi.cr.com

Castaways PO BOX 1697 Milwaukee, WI 53202

LGBT Welcoming Churches

Argonauts of Wisconsin 190, Box 22096 Green Bay, WI 54305 www.argonautsil.org argonicws@sbuglobal.net

Black and White Hen Together P.O. Box 50395 Milwaukee, WI 53205 (414) 461-5359 hwmrmilwaukee-glack.com www.hwmfmilwaukee.org

Bear Club 4 Men PO Box 13463 Green Bay, WI 54307 www.bolm.com

Angels of Hope MCC 3607 Libal St. Green Bay. WI angelsofhopemic.org anthrocymemet.net 920 983 7453 Appleton service at ICC Chapel 7241. South River Dt.

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Milwaukee Gay Arts Center 203 S 2nd Street Milw, WL 55201 (414) 383-3727 milwgac/fyshoo.com

Milwaukee Pride Parade PO. Box 070177 Milw. WI 53207 414-607-3793 www.prideparademke.org

PrideFeat PO HOX 511763 Milwaukee, 53203 (414) 272-3378 www.pridelest.com

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PFLAG Racine/Kenosha PO BOX 580058 Pleasant Parine, WT 53158 (252) 694-2729 pflagkenosha@aol.com

Positive Direction Milwaukee (414) 461-5894

Positive Voice PO Box 1381, Creen Bay, WI 54305-1381 (920) 435-4404 info@pvinc.org www.pwinc.org

Wauwatosa Rainbow Association (aka Rainbow Fireflies) (114) 774-9170 [basrainbow(fyshoo.com

Dorlge County Gay/Ri Men's Social Group Of Wisconsin http://groupsystee.com/groups/IXCMSC/ degmagi@yahoo.com

Femme Mafia Milwaukee www.myspace.com/femmemaflamke

Great Lakes Harley Riders PO DOX 341611 Milwaukee, WI 53234 hootedhog@aol.com

Milwaukee Metropolitan Community Church P.O. Box 1421 (1239 W. Mirwani 88) Millowaukees, WI 53204 (414) 383-1100 hris@queechurch.org www.queerchurch.org

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UWM LGDT Resource Center UWM Union W689 P.O. Rox 413 Milwaukes, WI 53201 (414) 229-4116 Jimanayl-awmicelu www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/LGDT

Wisconsin Rainbow Alliance of the Deaf P.O. Box 353 Hartland, WI. 53029 www.mscrad.org

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Children Service Society of Wisconsin 1212 S 70th Street Milwaukes, WT 50212 (111) 153-1100 jane-ottowinessworg www.cow.org The Counseling Center of Milwaukee 2038 N. Bartlett Ave Milwaukee, WI 53202 (414) 271 2565 infe@tocmilw.org www.tcomilw.org

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