

QUEST

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Quest's End Of The Year Top 25:

Top 10 Wisconsin & National LGBT Stories Of 2008 Plus The Top 5 Predictions For 2009

By Mike Fitzpatrick

As has become our custom, for our final issue of 2009 *Quest* invites our readers to take a look back on the top 10 Wisconsin and top 10 world & national stories of the year plus our top five predictions for 2010.

Despite the sour economy and the economic turmoil it caused, 2009 turned out to be a landmark year for everyone in the Wisconsin LGBT community. It was first time in over two decades that pro-gay legislation was passed in the state legislature. It was also a year when the Religious Right lost a pair of battles and Milwaukee's PrideFest broke its all-time attendance record.

Perhaps more importantly it was a year filled with stories of personal courage and triumph. The personal quests of two unlikely heroes from Oshkosh - a curmudgeonly college professor and a fresh-faced gay College Democrat in a long-distance relationship - reminded us all of the difference that a single individual can make in our collective struggle for full equality. --Oh yeah, *Quest* also shed light on the long whispered about same-sex relationship of Wisconsin's most well-known anti-gay agitator. It was a very good year!

Quest's Top 10 Wisconsin Stories of 2009

1. Wisconsin Same-Sex Domestic Partnership Registry Enacted. After taking a step backward in 2006, the nation's first "gay rights" state once again marched forward on its journey to full gay equality with the inception August 3 of a statewide domestic partnership registry for same-sex couples. In the process Wisconsin became the very first state in the U.S. with a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage and civil unions to enact any sort of formal but limited legal protections for committed gay and lesbian partner who choose to register their relationships.

Gay marriage foes decried the incorporation of the legislation into the biennial budget process, while some progressives scoffed at the "21% marriages" because the 43 enacted domestic partner protections failed to address a number of financial and custodial issues most gay couples face.

The DP registry was also a victory for Fair Wisconsin, the statewide LGBT civil rights organiza-

tion that did a lion's share of the behind-the-scenes heavy lifting for the registry proposal. Fair coordinated the critical legal research, coalition building among fair-minded partners, advocacy with gay couples across the state, and consultation with supportive members of both the legislative and executive branches to help craft a proposal that would be palatable to the slim Democrat majorities in both the Assembly and the Senate yet also pass the 2006 amendment's "substantially similar" language barrier.

The registry's enactment demonstrated Fair's ability to move beyond the 20th Century "gay identity" model of factional political advocacy to a new millennium philosophy "negotiation among equals" style. Fair's success also reflected the solid respect the organization has achieved in the last three years for its ability to help elect fair-minded lawmakers. Moreover, the Wisconsin DP registry and its enactment process are now being reviewed by LGBT civil rights organizations in many of the thirty other states with constitutional marriage bans as a lesson plan to achieve similar success.

For all these reasons, the Wisconsin Same-Sex Domestic Partner Registry is *Quest's* top Wisconsin story of 2009.

2. Wisconsin Supreme Court Hears Marriage Amendment Lawsuit.

When voters had the opportunity to decide on whether the so-called Wisconsin Marriage Amendment should be adopted in November 2006, were they cheated out of deciding two distinct questions about gay marriage and civil unions, or were they merely deciding about one question with a pair of closely-related parts?

That was the crux of the two opposing arguments heard last November 3 as the one-time, one-man *pro se* lawsuit against the ballot measure brought by University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh professor William McConkey had its day in front of the justices of the Wisconsin Supreme Court.



The lawsuit focuses on the voting and referendum process, not the validity of same-sex marriages or civil unions as gay marriages still will be illegal in Wisconsin whether the court sustains or rejects the amendment's wording.

Wisconsin voters adopted the amendment in 2006 by a 59-41% margin. A year later McConkey began his self-represented suit in Dane County Circuit Court. McConkey lost the case and appealed. The appeals court later declined to rule on the case, asking the Supreme Court to take it up because of its statewide importance.

The Court is expected to rule on the McConkey case by next summer. But in reaching the pinnacle of legal review this year in his 2 1/2 year quixotic journey to safeguard his lesbian daughter's full equality, Bill McConkey has earned the runner-up spot in *Quest's* Top 10 Wisconsin Gay Stories of 2009.

3. Fundies Foiled As West Bend Library Board Rejects Anti-Gay Book Restrictions.

It was a story that captivated gay youth and freedom of speech advocates throughout most of the Spring of 2009. Fundamentalist blogger and Star Trek fan Ginny Maziarka discovered and began blogging about a five-year old page deeply embedded in West Bend Library website that listed a variety of books that addressed gay and lesbian issues. Maziarka and her husband issued a request that demanded the library board remove books that the couple considered to be "child pornography" from the Young Adult section of the library and the deletion of the offending web page. They also asked for "equal time" on LGBT issues by the addition of books on so-called "reparative" therapy and testimonials by "ex-gay"



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men and women to the library stacks.

Matters first came to a head when Maziarka used her "WISSUP = Wisconsin Speaks Up" blog to generate a crowd so big that a public meeting of the board of the West Bend Community Memorial Library had to be shut down March 3. The meeting was rescheduled, then bumped again amid escalating allegations on both sides.

After a two hour hearing on June 2, the West Bend Library Board by a vote of 9-0 rejected efforts by the Maziarkas and their supporters to restrict access of young adults to the books. In addition to the testimony, petitions were submitted by the Maziarkas and a local anti-censorship group with the latter's signatures outnumbering the Maziarkas' by 1,068 to less than 700. The June meeting - held in the 600-seat gymnasium - was only one-third full.

The Library Board's 9-0 vote included four "nays" from members whose appointments were not renewed by the West Bend Common Council. The council voted to deny the renewal requests because they felt the library board had been stonewalling the Maziarkas. Board members had countered that the board was following the advice of the city's attorneys who sought to avoid lawsuits on the issue.

At year's end the West Bend Community Memorial Library was the recipient of the 2009 Robert B. Downs Intellectual Freedom Award. Ginny Maziarka continues blogging on WISSUP about the issue, but has also expanded to opposing "socialist" health care reform and complaining about the "Communist Christmas tree in the White House."

4. Wisconsin Supreme Court Rejects Appling's DP Lawsuit. Though it may appear to be a sidebar to *Quest's* top story of 2009, the twists and turns of a right-wing anti-gay group's constitutional challenge to the new domestic partner registry for gay couples also captivated activists both right and left during the summer and fall of this year.

The long-promised right-wing challenge arrived last July 23 - less than two weeks prior to the registry's start date - in the form of a petition for an original action filed directly to the state's Supreme Court by Wisconsin Family Action (WFA), the lobbying arm of the better-known Wisconsin Family Council. The WFA suit claimed the registry violates a state Constitutional amendment banning gay marriage or any similar status.

Court action on the case was delayed when Republican Wisconsin Attorney J. B. Van Hollen announced August 21 that he won't defend the state against the suit because he felt the partner registry was unconstitutional. Van Hollen's reasoning directly conflicted statements he made in 2005 suggesting the then proposed amendment would not prohibit the state's lawmakers from creating such a registry.

Because of the Attorney General's last-minute refusal, the court extended the deadline for the state's response to the WFA until September 22. Governor Doyle subsequently appointed Madison attorney Lester Pines to defend the state in the WFA lawsuit.

The high court finally denied the petition from Julaine Appling and two other board members of the WFA November 4. The court rejected the case without comment. Lambda Legal and Fair Wisconsin, the two groups leading the defense of the recently-enacted registry, applauded the court's decision.

In the lead-up to the court ruling, a *Quest* investigation pointed out that lead litigant Appling herself ap-

peared to be eligible for a same-sex domestic partnership. The never-married, 60-something Appling and her long time college chum "sister" and co-worker M. Diane Westphall jointly own a home in Watertown.

5. Oshkosh Man Fights To Free Partner From "Ex-Gay" Camp. During the months of June and



July many in the gay community learned of the sad story of 23 year-old Bryce Faulkner of Eldorado, Arkansas. Bryce was the victim of a June intervention coordinated by his parents with the "ex-gay" ministry Exodus International.

But Bryce was not the only victim. Left behind was a 24 year-old male partner Travis Swanson from Oshkosh, Wisconsin. Despite Travis' efforts to make the story available to a wider public, Bryce's descent into the world of "reparative therapy" remained an internet-only phenomenon until a July 23 piece appeared on - of all places - the "fair and balanced" Fox News Channel.

Quest's subsequent interviews with Swanson revealed to an international audience that Bryce and Travis' story was, on one hand almost classically Victorian in nature; and on the other hand, yet another in a long line of spiritually abusive tragedies against gay children concocted by misguided - however loving - parents or other family members who have themselves fallen under the sway of religious fundamentalism.

Bryce's abduction led Swanson to further hone his already developing political action skills by organizing a Facebook-fueled Halloween protest that spooked the attendees of regional conference sponsored by Exodus International at the American Baptist Assembly in rural Green Lake last October 31. By that time Swanson has received what sounded like a scripted voice mail message from Bryce claiming Travis' attempts to find him were hurting his family.

At year's end, the story is still ongoing and may last for more than another year. For now, no one knows if it will have a happy or a tragic ending.

6. PrideFest Crowds Top 30,000 For The First Time Ever. What a difference a year makes! PrideFest 2008 was a washout, to put it mildly. 2009 turned out to be a record breaker for the festival. For the first time in PrideFest's history, the festival drew in

more than 30,000 attendees to the three-day event.

"The numbers don't do the festival and the work put into it justice," PrideFest President Scott Gunkel told *Quest*. "A record attendance at 30,084, and so far what looks to be a large profit. These numbers don't describe the feelings of pride I have in each and everyone one of the team members and volunteers. I started working with PrideFest back in 1988 having visions of grandeur. Now, seeing them come to life, while actually living in them, is an unbelievable feeling."

Certainly the biggest boost to the weekend was the strong Friday night turnout for the iconic Cyndi Lauper. Wrapped in a feather boa bearing the hues of the rainbow, Cyndi Lauper showed her "True Colors" in a show that went past the festival's scheduled closing time.

On Saturday, midday's sunny skies and temperatures tickling 70 along the lakefront resulted in the festival's biggest day generating near-record crowds. Festival organizers touted a 57% increase in year-to-year attendance.

The crowds were treated to the widest selection of programs and events in PrideFest's 22 year history. Both the health and wellness fair and children's area offered alternatives to the more traditional beer tents and dance pavilion. An encore performance of the recently sold-out production of *The Vagina Monologues* at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center returned to a crowd nearly as big as the show's total indoor attendance. Acts that had been washed out in 2008 such as men's music Bearapalooza troupe finally got their chance to shine.

By nightfall, fireworks erupted on-stage and off throughout the festival grounds. Dance diva Cyon electrified the packed dance pavilion. The 9:30 PM eruption of the genuine article was the biggest fireworks show in PrideFest history. And immediately following the pyrotechnics, music fire erupted on the Miller Lite Main stage as sultry should superstar Brandy warmed up her, banner and sign-waving fans with her new hit single "Right Here (Departed)."

Milwaukee's Pride weekend concluded on Sunday, June 14 highlighted by a brief but powerful performance by the legendary soul songstress Etta James. The 71-year old may have arrived on stage with a powered chair assist and sat through her half hour show, but her vocals were full throttle, mesmerizing one of the most age-diverse crowds PrideFest has ever seen. In all, PrideFest 2009 proved to be one for the record books.

7. AIDS Fundraisers Perk Up As New Wisconsin Gay Infections Soar. Both August's AIDS Ride in Madison and October's AIDS Walk in Milwaukee saw fundraising totals increase, even as new HIV infections, especially in gay men under the age of 25, rose dramatically.

After four days, 300 miles, over 150 riders, almost a hundred crew members and scores of volunteers, ACT 7 (AIDS Network Cycling Together) - the 7th Annual Wisconsin AIDS Ride - came to a wet but welcome close August 9. In the process the fund raiser for AIDS Network became one of the most successful in event's history.

Despite an early morning rain, crowds welcomed the riders and support staff at a closing ceremonies held on Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. There ACT Steering Committee Chair Shawn Waldron presented AIDS Network Executive Director Karen Dotson a check for \$300,236, the second-most raised for any single ride to date. The total came close to the 2005 record of

\$303,500 and was a 4.5% increase over last year's total. ACT 7 also helped push the total raised by the AIDS rides to close to a cumulative \$2 million benefiting the AIDS service agency.

Over 3,000 people from across Wisconsin gathered at the Summerfest grounds on October 11 and raised \$362,278 for the fight against AIDS in the state at the 20th Annual AIDS Walk Wisconsin. The total was an 18.5% boost over last year's Walk tally.

Headlining the opening ceremonies for AIDS Walk Wisconsin was Justin Vernon of Bon Iver. Vernon is an Eau Claire native and one of the fastest rising stars in indie rock music. Walker announced during his cameo concert that a Bon Iver tune would be featured in the blockbuster teen vampire saga "New Moon."

Also speaking at the Walk was Wisconsin U.S. Senator Russ Feingold, who reminded the crowd that the 143% increase in new HIV infections among young gay men in the state over the last three years was sad but dramatic proof that the fight against the disease was far from over.

8. Milwaukee Hosts The NAGAAA Gay Softball World Series. After nearly two years of planning, NAGAAAFest 2009, the Gay Softball World Series (GSWS) opened on the Miller Stage on the Henry B. Maier Summerfest grounds August 31. Milwaukee hosted 127 teams, the greatest number ever at a GSWS. They included teams from the host state: the Boom Bulldogs, Fluid Aardvarks and La Cage Knights from Milwaukee and the Reds and Woofs Madd Dawgs from Madison.

The host committee chose to call the Gay Softball World Series NAGAAAFest in keeping with the Milwaukee Fest tradition. The motto "Fun & Friends First" symbolized the spirit of LGBT softball and its bond with the greater community through athleticism. Throughout the week until the Closing Celebration at the Harley Davidson Museum on September 5, players, fans and the general public experienced that spirit in one of the best-received events in NAGAAA history.

9. Racine LGBT Center Opens. The LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin opened with a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony featuring Mayor Tom Friedel, Common Council President David Maack, Alderman Michael Shields and a host of regional business and gay dignitaries April 5.

Following the ribbon cutting, the center, located at 1456 Junction Avenue here will hold an open house and tours of its facilities until 4 PM.

Local businesses, professionals and organizations welcomed their newest



neighbor with sales at their

stores and giveaways at the Center's opening gala.

"The Center received a grant of \$3500 from the United Way of Racine," Executive Director Bruce Joffe Ph.D. said. "It's one of several major gifts that have come our way in the last few months."

That evening a "Pink Tie Gala Dinner" was held at Kenosha's Club ICON in support of the Center. The formal sit-down dinner offered dishes prepared by some of the finest restaurants and catering services in the area. The menu featured a full lasagna feast - both vegetarian and meat varieties - with all the trimmings plus dessert.

10. Passages: LGBT Ally Dr. Karen Lamb 1937 - 2009. Longtime Milwaukee LGBT ally Dr.



Karen Lamb passed away in Delafield January 30, following a multi-year struggle with cancer. She was the wife of Milwaukee Mayor Henry W. Maier, who preceded her in death.

Through the years Karen was an extremely strong supporter of Milwaukee's LGBT community. Karen and Archbishop Rembert Weakland served as co-chairs on the Community Advisory Council in Milwaukee. That organization was instrumental in founding the Milwaukee AIDS Project (MAP) in 1985. MAP later became the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW), an statewide organization that currently offers medical, dental, housing, mental health, nutritional, prevention and social services to those living with HIV/AIDS.

Karen also held fundraisers for other Milwaukee LGBT institutions such as the Cream City Foundation.

Lamb also wrote a column for the *Wisconsin Light*, with her first piece debuting with the paper in 1987 and her last submission appearing in the paper's final edition in 2001.

Quest's Top 10 World & National Stories of 2009

Worldwide and nationally in 2009, the ebb and flow of the U. S. gay marriage debate saw victories in the Spring and setbacks in the Fall. The year also saw the final nail in the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" gay military ban may have been hammered in by the Pentagon itself and the collapse of the nation's largest newspaper syndicate. At year's end, Uganda - despite unanimous worldwide dismay - seemed poised to deliver a flaming lump of coal into the stockings of its half-million gay citizens, a fire ignited by American evangelicals. Here's *Quest's* Top 10 world and national stories.

1. Gay Marriage Advances In Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire and Washington DC. It was

a warm Spring for marriage equality advocates nationwide. April saw 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. Eight other states appeared set to vote on similar moves, including New Hampshire, Maine, New York and New Jersey.

Maine became the first state in the nation to enact gay marriage without first testing the waters with civil unions, though that bill was rescinded six months later by the state's voters (see below). New Hampshire also joined the parade after Democrat Governor John Lynch struck a deal with legislators to include protections for religious institutions in that

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state's gay marriage bill. At year's end the District of Columbia joined the wedding with a gay marriage bill for the residents of the nation's Capitol.

In November the "everything but marriage" gay civil unions bill received Washington voters' stamp of approval. Wisconsin made news as the first state to offer limited domestic partner protections through a statewide registry after passing a constitutional gay marriage ban. Lastly troublesome Massachusetts - the state that started it all five years ago - lifted restrictions on out-of-state same-sex couples desiring to wed in the Bay state.

Because the pluses outweighed the minuses overall, *Quest* picks our marriage equality successes nationwide as its top gay world and national story of 2009.

2. Gay Marriage Retreats In California and Maine, Stalls Elsewhere. In 2009 May judicial showers wilted many activists' April gay wedding flowers as the California Supreme Court upheld the results of the November 2008 Proposition 8 referendum. The court ruled that while the 18,000 or so gay nuptials performed during the five month wedding window that same court had created remained valid, the will of the 13.7 million state's people - 79.4% of all eligible voters - could not be denied. The ruling renewed anger and boycotts of Prop 8 supporters, especially the Mormon church and calls for yet another vote in 2010, though calmer voices appear to have carried the day by year's end.

Those seeking more public votes in California were certainly chastened by the stunning reversal of Vermont's five month-old gay marriage law by voters in that state last November. Gay marriage foes there imported many of California's Prop 8 strategists and found ample funding from Roman Catholic dioceses across the country. Even the 53-47% final tally seemed to echo California's vote a year earlier.

The election of gay marriage opponent Republican Chris Christie to the governor's office appears to have stalled New Jersey's revision of its civil union law to full marriage, despite an end-of-the year push by the state's Democratic lawmakers. In neighboring New York, the gay marriage bandwagon also halted when the state Senate failed to endorse Governor David Paterson's initiative in early December.

Despite a 2009 Pew Foundation study that showed 57% of Americans support legal recognition for same-sex couples in long-term committed relationships, opinions about how to achieve such recognition remain exceptionally diverse. Other post-November studies show a hardening of the cur-

rent opposition to gay marriage, with opponents holding slim but firm pluralities over supporters. That opposition and the continuing polarization of the gay marriage issue deserves the runner-up spot on *Quest*'s top 10 world and national stories for 2009.

3. U.S. Evangelicals Have A Hand Uganda's Draconian "Kill the Gays" Law. In a story that bubbled to the surface of the world's consciousness beginning in late October, Uganda's proposed law to kill gay and lesbian people for "aggravated homosexuality" was front page news by mid-December. Even more shocking were the clear ties to leaders of the "ex-gay" movement in the United States, prominent among them Scott Lively, author of the wildly inaccurate "Pink Swastika" which blamed the rise of the Third Reich and the Holocaust on the German gay community.

Make no mistake, sub-Saharan Africa as a whole is a hostile climate for LGBT people, with much of that hostility brought by Christian ministries from multiple denominations over the last hundred years. But the clear lines drawn from Republican lawmakers tied to the shadowy Washington DC-based organization and political hostel The Family and even Obama's inaugural invocator Rick Warren and their work guiding the genesis of the Ugandan anti-gay bill stunned many people of faith regardless of their denominations.

With their hands caught in the Ugandan cultural cookie jar, the guilty GOP pols and evangelicals began to disavow their involvement faster than an eight-year old fearing the loss of Santa's toy-laden largess Christmas morning with their last-minute addition to the naughty side of the naughty and nice list. The *mea culpas* claimed misunderstanding of their "love the sinner, hate the sin" message foisted upon misguided Ugandan locals.

There were signs a year's end that international pressure may soften though not necessarily kill the anti-gay bill. For gay equality and human rights supporters, however, the entire Ugandan mess revealed the real underbelly of the American fundamentalist and dominionist movements and how genuine is their deep-seated hatred of gay people.



4. Pentagon Study Condemns "Don't Ask Don't Tell" Policy. October surprises don't often come better than this: the revelation of an article in the Pentagon's top scholarly journal calling in unambiguous terms for lifting the ban on gay servicemen and women serving openly in the armed forces, arguing that the military is essentially forcing thousands of gay people to lead dishonest lives in an organization that emphasizes integrity as a fundamental tenet.

The article was published in the Fall edition of *Joint Force Quarterly*, which is published for the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and was written by an Air Force colonel who studied the issue for months while a student at the National Defense University in Washington. The article concluded that having openly gay troops in the ranks will not hurt combat readiness.

The views do not necessarily reflect those of Pentagon leaders, but their appearance in a publication billed as the Joint Chiefs' "flagship" security studies journal signaled that the top brass might now welcome a debate in the military over repealing the 1993 law that requires gay people to hide their sexual orientation, according to several longtime observers of the charged debate over gay people in the military.

"After a careful examination, there is no scientific evidence to support the claim that unit cohesion will be negatively affected if homosexuals serve openly," Colonel Om Prakash wrote. "Based on this research, it is now time for the administration to reexamine the issue; rather it is time for the administration to examine how to implement the repeal of the ban."

A week after the Pentagon study was leaked to the nation's press, President Obama told 3000 attendees at the Human Rights Campaign's annual Washington dinner "I will end 'don't ask-don't tell.'" While the subsequent standing ovation was enjoyed by all, there was no progress on Obama's promise at year's end.

5. ELCA's Gay Clergy Ban Ends, Schism Looms. Last August, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), the largest and most moderate wing of the Lutheran Church in the United States voted to end its ban on the ordination gay clergy in long-term committed relationships. In the process the ELCA Lutherans joined American Episcopalians in facing defections by churches where conservative congregants sat the majority of the pews.

The vote was the culmination of a years-long process in the ELCA, and was accompanied by plenty of emotion at the convention in Minneapolis. After

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standing in long lines to reach microphones during debates that extended all day, some delegates shook and others cried as they expressed their opposition or support of the measure.

By November the split over gay clergy vote had prompted a conservative faction to begin forming a new church body separate from the ELCA. Leaders of Lutheran CORE (Coalition for Reform) said the organization intends to be a "free-standing synod." A working group would immediately begin drafting a constitution and taking other steps to form the denomination, with hopes to have it off the ground by August 2010.

6. Psychologists Reject "Ex-Gay Therapy." It's been said by mental health professionals since 1973, but when the American Psychological Association declared August 5 that mental health professionals should not tell gay clients they can become straight through therapy or other treatments, it was the most direct hit ever on so-called reparative and "ex-gay" therapy programs.

In a resolution adopted by the association's governing council, and in an accompanying report, the association issued its most comprehensive repudiation of so-called reparative therapy, a concept espoused by a small but persistent group of therapists, often allied with religious conservatives, who maintain that gay men and lesbians can change.

No solid evidence exists that such change is likely, the resolution stated. It was adopted by a 125-to-4 vote. The association said some research suggested that efforts to produce change could be harmful, inducing depression and suicidal tendencies.

Instead of seeking such change, the association urged therapists to consider multiple options, which could include celibacy and switching churches, for helping clients live spiritually rewarding lives in instances where their sexual orientation and religious faith conflict.

The association had criticized reparative therapy in the past, but a six-member panel added weight to that position by examining 83 studies on sexual orientation change conducted since 1960. Its report was endorsed by the association's governing council in Toronto, where the association's annual meeting was being held. The report broke ground in its

detailed and nuanced assessment of how therapists should deal with gay clients struggling to remain loyal to a religious faith that disapproves of homosexuality.

7. U. S. Gay Murder Rate Prompts Final Hate Crimes Law Passage. A mid-June 2009 report documenting a one-year 28% increase in the number of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people killed in bias-motivated incidents may have been the final push needed for Congress to to adopt and President Obama to sign the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act last October.

The 29 killings tallied in 2008 was the highest recorded by the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs (NCAVP) since 1999, according to the June 16 report.

"What we're also seeing, more disturbingly, is the increase in the severity of violence," New York City Anti-Violence Project Executive Director Sharon Stapel said. The New York project coordinates the national NCAVP coalition.

Stapel theorized that at least some of last year's violence was backlash against issues that arose during the presidential campaign. She cited debates about same-sex marriage, the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, and federal legislation that would ban employment discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity as possible flash points. "The more visibility there is the more likely we're going to see backlash, and that's exactly what we see here," Stapel said.

The Hate Crimes bill achieved passage as a rider to the National Defense Authorization Act for 2010 and represented the culmination of a nearly 12 year push to include crimes motivated by a victim's actual or perceived gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability at the federal level. In the process the Act became the first federal law to extend legal protections to transgender persons.

8. Nation's Largest Gay Publisher Shuts Down. America's largest publisher of newspapers serving the gay and lesbian community has closed its doors. Window Media LLC abruptly announced that it was shutting down and all of its newspapers

have ceased publication. The offices of Atlanta's *Southern Voice*, the *Houston Voice*, the *South Florida Blade* and the *Washington Blade* were shuttered November 16.

Window Media LLC's publications included some of the oldest, largest and most influential LGBT periodicals in the United States. Its flagship publication, the *Washington Blade* had just celebrated its 40th anniversary and had a weekly circulation of 23,000. *Southern Voice* had been published for 21 years and had a circulation of 100,000.

The loss of the Windows Media publications continued a year-long pattern of recession-fueled demise among gay print media. In June, gay lifestyle monthly *Genre* ceased publication. In July the *New York Blade* and Great Britain's *Pink Paper*, the country's only gay newspaper, also stopped the presses for good. Even as the Windows Media shuttering made headlines, *Quest* confirmed the planned 2010 downsizing of the venerable newsmagazine *The Advocate* to the status of an insert in the gay lifestyle publication *Out*.

Gay papers weren't the only sting of 21st Century technology however. The recession had been tough on the mainstream press as well. The *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, the *Ann Arbor News*, the *Chicago Sun-Times* and Madison's *Capital Times* have all ceased all or some of their print editions. December marked the final editions of the veteran fine dining magazine *Gourmet* and wedding planner favorite *Modern Bride*. Layoffs and staff reductions had winnowed staffs at the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe* and newspaper giants Gannett and McClatchy publications.

9. National Equality March Draws About 100,000. A crowd estimated at between 75,000 and 150,000 mostly young queer men and women and their allies filled the streets and public spaces of Washington DC Sunday, October 11 during the National Equality March, the fifth such LGBT march on the nation's Capitol since 1979. Put together in less than four months by a mixed coalition of LGBT human rights groups, the rally may have been the smallest such demonstration in gay civil rights history, but it was also the most-cost effective and a strong signal that the "Stonewall 2.0" movement first evidenced by Join The Impact simultaneous nationwide rallies last November is not only alive and

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well but growing in its organizational power. ("Join The Impact's" rapidly-organized post-Prop 8 nationwide protest in November 2008 landed on top of *Quest's* Top 10 national stories last year.)

The next generation's message was clear: they are tired of waiting for full equality, from workplace protections to marriage rights.

10. Texas Mayor Quits To Join Illegal Immigrant Partner. There may possibly be more de-



serving stories for the last spot on *Quest's* Top 10 world and national stories of 2009, but for sheer joy very little can beat a story that came to light last May in the sleepy Texas town of San Angelo. Just a month after winning his fourth term in office with a landslide majority, Mayor J. W. Lown abruptly resigned his office to join his life partner, a Mexican man who had been living illegally in the U.S.

The 32-year old Lown sent a cellular phone text message to the city manager of the west Texas town just hours before he was due to be sworn into office, advising he wouldn't be at the ceremony. City officials later found a short letter of resignation on Lown's desk also stating he had moved to Mexico.

Lown subsequently told local media that his partner came to the U.S. five years ago and their relationship began in March 2009. With his partner unable to legally remain in the U.S., the mayor said he realized around election day - May 9 - that he faced a choice: betray his duty to abide by the law by helping the man hide from immigration authorities; end the relationship, or join him in Mexico. He chose Mexico.

It may not have been as world shattering as the 1936 abdication announcement of Britain's King Ed-

ward VIII to marry Wallis Simpson (uttering the immortal "I have found it impossible to carry the heavy burden of responsibility and to discharge my duties as king as I would wish to do without the help and support of the woman I love."), but it is a reminder three quarters of a century later that - straight or gay - people will do amazing things for their soul mates. Happy New Year and a gloriously gay 2010 to all!

Quest's Top 5 Predictions For 2010

Before looking at my new predictions lets see how I did in 2009. Here were the five forecasts:

1. The UW System Will Finally Get Domestic Partner Benefits. Yes they did, but there was a pleasantly unexpected bonus: so did every other same-sex couple who wanted a limited mix of benefits! My guess was that the benefits package would be bundled in a biennial budget bill that would pass on time for the first time in memory - both of which also turned out to be true. So that's kind of a point and a half, but I'll settle for the one.

2. The California Supreme Court Will Void Proposition 8. No they didn't but the Court did rule in favor of retaining as valid the marriages of the 18,000 gay couples who beat the election day deadline to the altar, something I pointed out in the full original prediction. That's worth half a point.

3. For 2009, It's The Economy, Stupid - Not Gay Civil Rights. Obama's aggressive first year agenda focused on economic stimulus packages, health care insurance reform and Afghanistan surges, not gay equality initiatives. I predicted platitudes, not progress federally in 2009. That's why Obama was the keynote speaker at the HRC's signature annual rubber chicken fest last October. Please pass the gravy and score one more point for the predictor.

4. Obama Will Get To Nominate At Least Two Supreme Court Judges. He got one, not two, as Sonia Maria Sotomayor became the first-ever Latina Supreme. That's another half-point.

5. Cold Economic Climate Causes Consolidation Or Collapse. Though I had focused more on the not-for-profit sector in my prediction, it did turn out that a number of gay entities either closed their doors, or consolidated. Let's see: Early in 2009 GLAAD absorbed the Commercial Closet in the not-for-profit media watchdog arena. In the business world, the owners of Here! bought the PlanetOut

empire for a song, reducing the once mighty biweekly newsmagazine *Advocate* to an insert in the gay lifestyle monthly *Out* beginning in 2010. And the largest gay print media conglomerate in the country closed abruptly in November, shuttering what many have considered the gay "paper of record" for decades - the *Washington Blade*. You can sadly add another point to the tally.

That's an accuracy score that pushes past the 80% mark - way better than my dear departed prognosticating idol Jeanne Dixon's less than 5% accuracy ratio. So, once again dabbing on a bit of her brilliant red lip polish, here are my predictions for 2010:

1. The Wisconsin Supreme Court Will Sustain The "Marriage Protection" Constitutional Amendment. The fact that William McConkey's "two question" case got as far as the state's top court was pretty amazing to begin with, but court precedents against the question-splitting concept in similar cases in Tennessee and Georgia and the Prop 8 decision in California suggest the court will rule in favor of sustaining the 2006 referendum banning gay marriages and civil unions as valid. After listening to all the arguments, my confidence here is 80%.

2. Wisconsin's Domestic Partnership Registry - The Fight Ain't Over Yet. The Wisconsin Supremes may have dismissed Julaine Appling and the Wisconsin Family Action group's lawsuit, but it was not on the merits of their arguments. Legally the WFA had tried to cut to the head of the judicial line. I expect the suit to begin again at the circuit court level, where it should have begun in the first place. I also suspect we will find the timing of the WFA lawsuit's reintroduction will coincide nicely with the 2010 election cycle, where the registry and the way it was enacted will provide fodder for GOP candidates from gubernatorial hopeful Scott Walker to every Assembly candidate seeking to overturn the Republicans' loss of the lower house of the Wisconsin legislature in the Obama landslide two years ago. Looking back on Julaine's long history of coordination with the GOP as the *de facto* chair of the party's get out the "holier than thou" vote committee, my confidence here is 80%.

3. Democrats Will Retain Control Of Congress in 2010. No matter how much Americans may be disenchanted with federal Democrat leadership at the end of 2009, their distaste for Republican



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rule is even stronger. And Republicans still are seen as ultimately responsible for triggering the economic downturn that now churns most of our national discontent. We may see the beginnings of an independent movement arise that will eschew the hot button issues of both the left and the right, but election laws and campaign funding issues will limit any rise in non-major party affiliated candidates to a handful at best in 2010 races. The Democrats will lose some seats but may even retain their super-majority in the Senate. November's far away so my confidence here is 60%.

4. Federal DOMA Repeal? No Way, But "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"? Maybe. As gay marriage opponents are always happy to point out, every time gay marriage gets to the ballot box it loses. New York Representative Nadler's proposed repeal of the federal Defense of Marriage Act will go nowhere in 2010. However, the tide of public opinion has turned in favor of gay service members being able to serve openly. Combine that with the military's need for more cannon fodder on the killing fields of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" military ban looks ready for dishonorable discharge. However, if Taps for the ban is not played by early summer, expect it to remain in effect until after the November election cycle is over. My confidence here on DOMA repeal is 90%. Call it 60% for DADT.

5. Governor Scott Walker. Again, it's almost a year away, but the first open seat race for Wisconsin's chief executive will come down to the two men now leading Milwaukee: County Executive Scott Walker and Mayor Tom Barrett. Walker has been elected twice in what used to be considered one of the most Democrat-leaning areas of Wisconsin. Barrett has lost political capital in the recent attempt to take control of the Milwaukee School Board. It sits poorly with minorities locally - including some in the gay community - and progressives statewide.

Outside of Milwaukee and their respective party faithful, both men are essentially ciphers at this point to most of the electorate. Despite all the negative campaigning to come, both men start out as likeable and middle-of-the-road to the average Wisconsin voter. The sour economy and historic Republican electoral discipline statewide add two thumbs to the GOP side of the scale. Expect to see the truly polarizing Mark Neumann to drop out before the Spring primary and the still well-loved Tommy Thompson to be at Walker's side during the Fall campaign. My confidence here is 70%.

That's *Quest's* psychic look into what will be an interesting 2010 even if we never see another political tea bagging party (as opposed to the gay kind) again. What's your take on 2009 and our prognostications for the coming year? Join in the online discussion by pointing your browsers to *Quest* on Facebook. You'll find a link at: www.quest-online.com (You must become a fan of *Quest* to add to the dialogue. If you're already a Facebook member it's easy!)

WISCONSIN NEWS:

Milwaukee County Board Sustains Walker DP Veto

Milwaukee - Milwaukee County will not authorize a study to determine the cost and impact of providing benefits for the same-sex domestic partners of its employees. The County Board failed to override County Executive Scott Walker's veto of the earlier study measure December 17 by a vote of 12 to 7.

"I understand the logic behind 'OK we can't afford anything' but I just don't understand why you can't support the study to find out how much it may or may not cost," Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic said following the vote.

Opponents of the study believed that the county should not even consider domestic partner benefits while it makes other budget cuts and imposes worker furloughs. "It just crystallizes for me that we're going to have to ask these very significant considerations from our union employees as well if we really take seriously the deficit we're in, and the financial ramifications of that," Supervisor James Schmitt said.

In a statement issued following the vote Walker said he was pleased his veto was upheld, claiming that domestic partner benefits would have cost Milwaukee County \$4 million dollars annually.

Those numbers were false, according to the Milwaukee-focused LGBT advocacy group Equality Wisconsin (EW) which had called for an override of the Walker veto. "Equality Wisconsin is disappointed that mistruth won out" Project Manager Lizzi Dahlk said. "(Despite the loss) it's not a question of 'if' but 'when' Milwaukee County joins the majority of large public and private employers its size that offer domestic partner benefits."

EW noted that the county's own fiscal analysts advised the study would cost nothing because it used internal research resources, and a *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* story supporting significantly lower costs for the benefits.

The *Journal-Sentinel* had reported that the City of Milwaukee, which has included domestic partners in its family benefits since 2001, and currently enrolls 30 families at a cost of around \$200,000. The story also noted that the Milwaukee Area Technical College has seven employees with domestic partner coverage.

However, the \$4 million "fictional price tag" dominated discussion. EW claimed that the Walker administration worked in tandem with the Madison-based Wisconsin Family Action (WFA) group to disseminate the fictional cost of \$4 million a year to taxpayers. WFA claimed on its website that it paid for 8000 robo-calls asking its supporters in the county to call supervisors about the issue. The WFA's lawsuit opposing the Wisconsin statewide domestic partnership registry was thrown out by the Wisconsin Supreme Court in November.

Madison Groups Sponsor LGBT Strategies Session

Madison - StageQ, Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus, *Our Lives* magazine, the Gay-Straight Alliance for Safe Schools, Leztalkmadison, OutReach, Wisconsin Capitol Pride and the Business Alliance are co-sponsoring a presentation by Adam Schesch, Ph.D. on effective strategies for LGBT liberation. Dr. Schesch's presentation will begin at 7 PM on Tuesday, January 5 on the Evjue stage at the Bartell Theater, 113 E Mifflin Street.

Dr. Schesch is a local historian who has studied global resistance struggles, and movements for liberation. He will be speaking about how to apply that cross-cultural experience to current battles for LGBT rights in this country, including same-sex marriage. There will be an open discussion with the audience following Dr. Schesch's talk.

The event is free and open to the public. According to StageQ Artistic Director Tara Ayres, attendees are encouraged to "come prepared to think, to talk and to plan!"

7 Rivers LGBT Resource Center Annual Meeting January 9

La Crosse - The LGBT Resource Center for the Seven Rivers Region will hold two events on Saturday, January 9, 2010: the organization's Annual Meeting and a listening session with area elected officials.

The Annual Meeting will be held from 10 AM to Noon in the classroom of the People's Food Coop, 315 5th Avenue South, five blocks southeast of the center. RSVPs are requested. To RSVP, please call 608-784-0452. All paid members are eligible to vote during the business portion of the meeting.

The 7 Rivers Center will also sponsor a Legislative Meet and Greet from 1 - 3 PM at the Center, 303 Pearl St.

Interested center and community members are invited for an afternoon with local and state legislators to talk about the Center, the work the center does, and needs for members of the LGBT and allies communities. Light refreshments will be provided. While RSVPs are not required, they will be appreciated. To RSVP, call 608-784-0452.

Rainbow Over Wisconsin Annual Meeting Set For January 11

Appleton - Rainbow Over Wisconsin will hold its Annual Meeting and a community networking session Monday, January 11, 2010 at the Harmony Café, 233 East College Ave. beginning at 7 PM in the café's conference meeting room. ROW's monthly business meeting and officer elections will be conducted at 6 PM at the same location. Both meetings are open to the public.

ROW is also inviting grantees and other community-based organizations with missions impacting the LGBT community to participate in a community

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networking session following the Annual Meeting. "We selected the Harmony Café site for this year's Annual Meeting specifically because two other café-sponsored LGBT groups ROW supports meet there the same evening," ROW President Dean Dayton said.

Dayton noted that ROW members who attended a similar community meeting in Green Bay last Fall reported that attendees there had voiced concerns that they were unaware of the services and programs being provided in the area by community-based groups. "It makes sense for Rainbow Over Wisconsin, the charitable foundation that often provides grant underwriting or fiscal sponsorship for area gay groups, to take the lead in facilitating such community networking," he said.

For more information about Rainbow Over Wisconsin and the Annual meeting, visit the ROW website at: www.rainbowoverwisconsin.org

Chippewa Valley LGBT Center Expands Hours

Eau Claire - The LGBT Community Center Of The Chippewa Valley has announced it will expand its hours beginning in January. The Center will now be open every Saturday night in addition to Friday nights and other nights with scheduled programs. The new Saturday hours will be 6 to 9 PM.

Each Saturday will have a theme. The first Saturday of each month will be Game Night. Both board and video games will be available.

The second Saturday of each month will offer a potluck meal. Each monthly potluck will have a theme, beginning with the January 9 Mexican night. Attendees are asked to bring an appetizer, an entrée, or dessert with a Mexican theme. "Mockaritas" (non-alcoholic Margaritas) will also be served. The February 13 potluck will have a vegetarian theme.

The third Saturday of each month will continue to be the center's "Saturday Night at the Movies," which features the showing of a LGBT themed movie. The fourth Saturday of each month will be a book club and coffee house night. The center's Lending Library Committee will select and announce each month's book discussion club offering and offer a variety of coffees.

Upcoming January events at the LGBT Community Center of the Chippewa Valley include Fair Wisconsin's Chippewa Valley Action Network meeting on Tuesday, January 5 and volunteer training on Friday, January 8.

For more information about the LGBT Community Center of the Chippewa Valley, stop in at 510 S. Farwell St. during hours of operation, call 715-552-5428 or visit the center's website at: www.thecentercv.org.

New Year Brings 3 New OutReach Groups

Madison - Meditation, SOFFA support and gay-identified narratives are the subjects of three new groups set to debut in 2010 at OutReach, 600 Williamson St. here.

The Queer Meditation group will debut on January 28 and continue every second and fourth Thursday at 7 PM. Queer Meditation is an open group intended to explore the benefits of meditation and to discuss the relationship between gayness and spirituality.

The format will consist of an opening partially-

guided meditation, listening or watching a lecture followed by discussion. Occasional guest speakers are also planned. Lecture resources will come from gay Buddhist resources.

Madison-based organizer Eric has had experience with meditation for around 7 years. "It continues to play an informative role in my life," he said. "It has been argued, and I think rightfully, that it's impossible for gay people to achieve external social liberation without first achieving some kind of internal liberation as a gay person, for example, acceptance of one's sexual orientation."

The SOFFA Support Network will hold its inaugural meeting on January 19 at 7 PM. The network is a drop-in peer support group for those people who find themselves in the significant other, friends, family or ally (SOFFA) role in a transperson's life.

According to organizer Tiffany Drake, the group is a place to share both the losses we experience in transitioning with our transperson, as well as embrace the joys. Topics covered in this group include identity politics, the process of grieving, coming out to friends and family, navigating relationship changes, and the legal rights for trans couples.

This group is open to all people, whether they identify as straight or queer, as long as they are a SOFFA. Following the opening meeting, the group will run every other Tuesday at OutReach. For more information, contact Tiffany at: t.drake77@yahoo.com

A new biweekly "Reading, Writing & Relating LGBTQ Narratives" workshop will be open to all LGBTQ adults beginning in late January in late January or early February on Wednesday nights at OutReach. The workshop aims to bring together a diverse group of individuals for meaningful and thought-provoking dialogues in a welcoming environment. Participants will read and respond to LGBTQ literature, produce personal narratives by sharing our stories orally and/or in written form. The workshop will also provide a key opportunity to make connections with others that both honor our differences and contribute positively to a sense of community as LGBTQ people.

For more information, become a fan on Facebook or email: lgbtqnarratives@gmail.com.

Pride Parade Announces 2010 Plans Milwaukee

Milwaukee - The Milwaukee Pride Parade has announced that Sunday June 13 will be the date for the 2010 Pride Parade. This will be the 5th year of the revitalized event and will coincide with the Pridefest celebration to be held at Henry Maier Festival Park. The Parade route will again begin at the intersection of 2nd St. and Greenfield Ave, and end at the intersection of 2nd St. and Seeboth Ave.

The theme for the 2010 event is "Twisted Fairy Tales." Although units are not judged on the theme, parade organizers encourage all of the parade entries to consider incorporating the theme into their presentations. Despite the "twisted" theme, all units are reminded that they must present an entry that is suitable for all-ages viewing.

Applications for the 2010 Parade are available for download at the recently redesigned website at: www.prideparademke.org. The early registration fee will be \$50 until May 15, 2010.

Parade organizers also have begun seeking sponsors for the 2010 pride parade. Sponsorship information is available on the Pride Parade website or by

calling 414-607-3793.

Volunteers for the parade are also being recruited. Applications are available on the parade website or by contacting the Volunteer Coordinator by email at: volunteercoordinator@prideparademke.org.

Recently elected officers for the Milwaukee Pride Parade are Jim M., President; Frank P., Vice President and Chip W., Treasurer. The secretary position is currently vacant. Brent H. has returned as the Parade Coordinator. Jeff T. fills the new position of Volunteer Coordinator.

For any other information please feel free to contact organizers by email at: paradecoordinator@prideparademke.org or by phone at: 414-607-3793. Please call between 11 AM and 9 PM Monday-Saturday.

Quest's Next Issue Is January 21

Santa says we've been good, so the staff at *Quest* will be taking a well-deserved and all too-short short winter's break after this issue goes to press. Street date for our first issue of 2010 will be January 21. Deadline for ads and submissions is January 12.

However, until our next issue arrives QNU will keep you up on breaking gay news in Wisconsin and the world each morning as we have for the past six years. If you haven't caught the QNU habit, join the thousands who already do each week: go to

www.quest-online.com

and click on the QNU button there.

While you're on the *Quest* home page, why not also join us at our social networking fan page on Facebook. It's just a click away and easy to join if you're already a Facebook member.

And from all of us to all of you, we hope you've donned your gay apparel and enjoyed some or all the holidays this festive season offers: Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year's, Solstice and Yule (not to mention Tohji-Taisai and Gahambar of Maid-yairem for our Shinto and Zoroastrian friends)!

We also bid fond farewell of sorts to long-time news editor and webmaster Mike Fitzpatrick who is retiring from both positions with the close of 2009. Mike will continue to contribute occasional pieces and interviews in 2010. However, the continuing time commitments of his more than a quarter-century of HIV/AIDS work, not to mention his ongoing involvement with Fair Wisconsin and the Rainbow Over Wisconsin charitable foundation plus the nearly forty hours he was putting in weekly on average for *Quest* simply have become too much for the old boy. We wish him well.

Guest Artists Announced For "The Long and Short of It"

Milwaukee - Fourteen guest artists will appear with Paula and Colin Cabot in "The Long and Short of It: A Night with Colin and Paula Cabot," presented by the Skylight Opera Theatre. The limited-run revue opens with a special sold-out New Year's Eve performance and runs through January 10, 2010, at the Studio Theatre of the Broadway Theatre Center.

The show pays homage to 50 years of artistry, entertainment and hijinks at the Skylight Opera Theatre, where the Cabots met, performed and worked for many years. Paula and Colin promise a combination of personal memories and widely loved music to mark the Skylight's 50th Anniversary Season. Each of the 10 performances will have a different twist,

and a different mix of performing artists from the Skylight's past.

The guest artists are: Elaine Parsons-Herro, Ray Jivoff, Mark-David Kaplan, Pam Kriger, Kathy Magestro, Norman Moses, Kurt Ollmann, Ellie Quint, Molly Rhode, Carol Greif Schuele, Kay Stiefel, Chase Stoeger, Bill Theisen, and Jack Forbes Wilson.

Collectively, Paula's and Colin's guests span four of the Skylight's five decades and have appeared in dozens of productions, from *The Fantasticks* in 1972-73 through shows scheduled for the current season. Theisen, who got his start in the chorus of the Skylight's 1981-82 production of *The Mikado*, is now the company's Artistic Director and is also directing this revue. Jivoff, whose first Skylight performance was in 1990's *Girl Crazy*, is Associate Artistic Director.

As Colin Cabot, who with Paula has run a farm in New Hampshire for the past 12 years, quipped about his guests: "Old theater friends never die, they just re-compose."

Paula Cabot made her Skylight debut as Paula Dewey in the title role of "Oh Kay!" She went on to appear in numerous Skylight productions, among them Polly in *The Threepenny Opera*, Josephine in *H.M.S. Pinafore*, the ingénue in *The Cocoanuts*, and Amalia Balash in *She Loves Me*. Her stage work has taken her across the globe, including the Body Politic Theatre in Chicago and the York Theatre and Musical Theatre Works in New York, among many others.

Colin Cabot began his association with the Skylight Opera Theatre in 1974, as assistant to Managing Director Clair Richardson. In 1977 he worked with Gian Carlo Menotti at the Festival dei Due Mondi in Spoleto, Italy. He returned to the Skylight as Managing Director the following year, when he devoted his time to planning and raising money for the creation of the Broadway Theatre Center. Colin's family gave the lead gift that named the theatre which opened in the fall of 1993. Colin remained as Managing Director until 1989 and also served as Interim Artistic Director for

two months in 2009.

"I don't think there is a better way to celebrate the Skylight's 50th anniversary than with Colin and Paula on stage once again," Theisen said. "They are two of the most talented people I know and an integral piece of this company's history. Hearing Colin tell his hilarious stories of Clair Richardson and the old days at the Skylight, and listening to Paula not only sing gorgeously but also share her remarkable interpretations of songs ranging from Harold Arlen to Stephen Sondheim, makes *The Long and Short of It* the must-see event of both 2009 and 2010!"

"*The Long and Short of It*" opens December 31, 2009 and runs through January 10, 2010. The New Year's Eve performance is sold out. There are five additional evening shows and four matinee performances. Tickets are \$35.50 each. To order tickets or for more information call: 414-291-7811 or visit the Skylight website at: www.skylightopera.com

Comic Genius Paula Poundstone Returns To Wisconsin January 16

Manitowoc - On Saturday, January 16 the Capitol Civic Center here will present comedian Paula Poundstone. Armed with nothing but a stool, a microphone and a can of Diet Pepsi, Paula's ability to create humor on the spot has become the stuff of legend. People typically leave Paula's shows debating whether the random people she talked to during her performance were "plants" - which they never are - and complaining that their cheeks hurt from laughter.

Paula's spontaneity and razor-sharp wit have made her one of the most popular panelists on NPR's hilarious Peabody Award-winning weekly news quiz show "Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me." Paula's commentaries also can be heard on NPR's Morning Edition and read on the Huffington Post and comedy website 23/6.

Poundstone's first book, "There's Nothing In This Book That I Meant To Say," featured a foreword penned by Mary Tyler Moore, and was published by Random House. She recently released her first comedy CD: "I Heart Jokes: Paula Tells Them In Maine," that features sixty minutes of hilarious comedy recorded live at the Stone Mountain Arts Center.

Paula has been named the 2009 National Spokesperson for the Association of Library Trustees Advocates Friends & Foundations (ALTAFF), a national network of enthusiastic library supporters who believe in the importance of libraries as the social and intellectual centers of



communities and campuses. Paula is supporting libraries on a local level by partnering with promoters and the local Friends organization in cities where she performs. The local Friends group receives tickets for use in fundraising or promotion as well as a portion of the book and CD sales after her performance where she makes herself available for signings.

"It's funny that we think of libraries as quiet demure places where we are shushed by dusty, bun-balancing, bespectacled women," Paula said. "The truth is libraries are raucous clubhouses for free speech, controversy and community. Librarians have stood up to the Patriot Act, sat down with noisy toddlers and reached out to illiterate adults. Libraries can never be shushed. If you haven't been to your library lately, you're overdue."

Paula has had several solo specials on HBO and most recently on Bravo. She was the first woman to win an ACE (the Cable Emmy) for Best Stand-up Comedy performance and the first woman to be invited to perform at the distinguished White House Correspondents dinner where those in attendance included the President. Paula has made frequent TV appearances including Letterman, Leno, Craig Ferguson, as well as Garrison Keillor's, "A Prairie Home Companion" radio program.

Showtime for the January 16 event will be 7:30

PM at the Capitol Civic Center, 917 S. 8th Street in Manitowoc.

Tickets are \$32.50 & \$41 and available by calling: 920-683-2184 or visiting the center's website at: www.cccshows.org

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2009 The Year in Review in LGBT Cinema

by Glenn Bishop

Still brimming with holiday cheer – not to mention plenty of spiked eggnog – Glenn decided to watch just one more Christmas film before turning his attention to his next assignment, **2009: The Year in Review in LGBT Cinema**.

But which film to choose?

The 1940s were a period bursting with cinematic Christmas cheer. The granddaddy of all Hollywood Christmas films, of course, is **"It's a Wonderful Life."** Didn't Glenn read somewhere that during the month of December there is a special **"It's a Wonderful Life"** cable network? One that plays **"It's a Wonderful Life"** all day, every day: 24/7 until the 25th? No?

Other 1940s film classics include **"Miracle on 34th Street,"** **"The Bishop's Wife"** and **"The Man Who Came to Dinner."** Featuring an absolutely glorious, totally over-the-top performance from Monty Woolley, **"The Man Who Came to Dinner"** very nearly made Glenn's film list last issue. Curiously, studio mogul Jack Warner worried "that Woolley's homosexuality would be obvious in the scenes." Really, Jack?

Still, how could Glenn not choose **"Christmas in Connecticut,"** a film possessing special resonance for Glenn this festive season?

Barbara Stanwyck is another sexually ambiguous Hollywood star of the 1940s and in **"Christmas in Connecticut,"** Stanwyck's character Elizabeth Lane plays a magazine columnist. Just like Glenn! In one of her columns, Elizabeth Lane bemoans to her readers that she has been unable to locate just the right rocking chair. So what do her fabulous readers do? You guessed it! They sent her rocking chairs. They sent her dozens of rocking chairs. Dozens.

Last issue, Glenn bemoaned the inevitable disappointment at finding no "Easy-Bake Oven" under the tree Christmas morning. Well, not this year! Many thanks to two loyal **Quest** readers, Victor and Ken, who made this Christmas just a little more special for Glenn!

And without further ado, **"It was the best of times; it was the worst of times"**

"It was the best of times..."

Okay, maybe 2009 wasn't exactly the best of times in LGBT cinema. No high profile LGBT films found their way to America's multiplexes in 2009 as did **"Milk"** and **"Brideshead Revisited"** in 2008. Nor were (good) DVD releases as plentiful as in previous years. Happily, that may well change in 2010 as several tempting titles, including **"Little Ashes"** and **"Breakfast with Scot"** are due for release in January and February.

The always dedicated Glenn continued to (futilely) stalk multiplexes in such faraway destinations as Madison, Sheboygan and even Chicago as well as watching countless DVDs including virtually every-

thing from last year's fabulous Milwaukee LGBT Film Festival. Bleary-eyed perhaps, Glenn has emerged from the dark with a special, hand-picked selection of the five best LGBT cinematic experiences of 2009.

Number 5: **Patrik, Age 1.5**

Excellent performances abound in this romantic

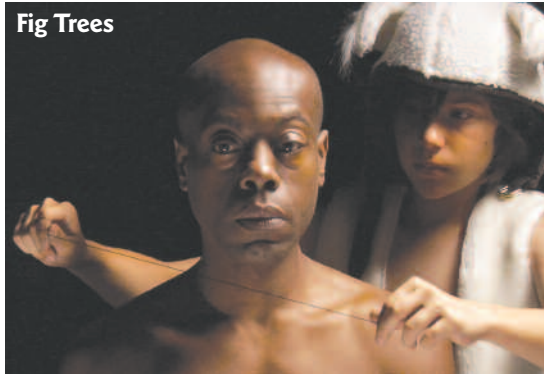
Patrik, Age 1.5



comedy offering a gay couple unpleasantly surprised to learn that they are fathers not to a cute infant boy age one and a half but instead a sullen, homophobic 15 year-old convinced his virginal little tush is ever at peril. Thanks to a few intriguing, unexpected plot twists, **"Patrik 1.5"** deftly avoids both sitcom hokeyness as well as the dreaded earnestness of a Lifetime™ channel "movie of the week." Not that Glenn is without a quibble or two. Far be it from Glenn to mention that hothead Sven and criminally cuddly Goran seemed a totally mismatched couple. Or that blond, cute-as-a-button Patrik is as believable a "thug" as, well... Glenn himself would be. DVD release: TBA

Number 4: **"Fig Trees"**

Fig Trees

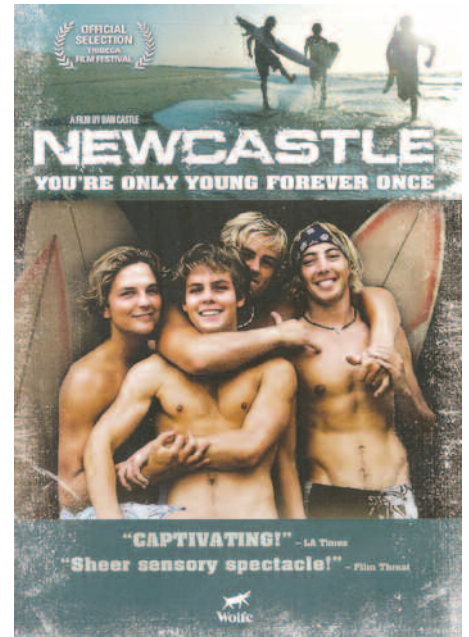


Despite Glenn's urging, far too few ventured to see John Greyson's extraordinary, positively astonishing documentary, **"Fig Trees"** when it played the Milwaukee LGBT Film Festival this fall. Exuding a Derek Jarman-esque cinematic sensibility, **"Fig Trees"** is an opera-infused depiction of the struggles faced by AIDS activists Tim McCaskell of Toronto and Zackie Achmat of Capetown as they fought to secure access to treatment drugs. Boasting "a surreal narrative that features Gertrude Stein, a singing albino

squirrel, and St. Teresa of Avila in its exploration of the meaning of pills, saints, and activism," **"Fig Trees"** is at once maddening, baffling and wonderful; by far the year's most strikingly original LGBT film. DVD release: TBA

Number 3: **"Newcastle"**

"Newcastle" is equal parts music video, sports film, coming-of-age story and (almost but not quite) soft-core erotic entertainment. Reveling in its extraordinary cinematography of lean, gorgeous, nearly naked teenage surfers challenging 10-foot waves, **"Newcastle"** is an absolutely splendid valentine to Aussie surfers. Lachlan Buchanan's Jesse is awfully pretty but would be a rather more appealing and



sympathetic a character if he toned down his "rebel without a cause" act. Still, he's positively cuddly compared to Reshad Strik's Victor, whose testosterone production would appear to be in perpetual overdrive. Then, finally, there's the gay, emo brother Fergus. Glenn only wishes his story would have had a bit more prominence in Dan Castle's screenplay. Available on DVD SRP: \$24.95

Number 2: **"Fashion Victims"**

On paper, **"Fashion Victims"** looks quite impossible. How do you introduce a thoroughly despicable character such as the curiously endearing Wolfgang (Edgar Selge), send him on a wickedly mean-spirited yet hilarious personal journey of self-discovery, one which makes **"Dante's Inferno"** look positively pastoral? Heck, if Glenn had a glimmer of a clue, he'd be making films, not just reviewing them. Cleverly, director Ingo Rasper tempers any potential comic excesses with an immensely appealing coming-of-age gay romance. Despite a killer screenplay, **"Fashion Victims"** might yet have failed without its immaculate cast of marvelous comedic actors led by Selge, Traute Hoess's devastatingly detestable Brigitti and most of all, Florian Bartholomai's adorable Karsten. Available on DVD, SRP: \$29.95

Number 1: "Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement"

How could a simple documentary about a 1950s lesbian couple have left Glenn limp, blubbering like a schoolboy and clutching a soggy wad of tissues? How indeed? Yet that is exactly what happened during a screening of Greta Olafsdottir and Susan Muska's "Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement." "Edie & Thea" is an extraordinarily simple portrait of two feisty, funny older lesbians deeply in love. They offer a fabulous oral history of pre-Stonewall New York City as well as their deeply personal quest for a proper (Canadian) marriage, where they might



exchange the simple vow, "With this ring I thee wed." For over forty years Edie and Thea shared a life, took lavish trips to Europe and continued to dance long after paralysis from MS left Thea wheelchair-bound. "Edie & Thea: A Very Long Engagement" is quite simply an unforgettable portrait of an unforgettable couple.

DVD release: TBA

Honorable Mention:

Number 10: The DVD release of two LGBT classics from the 1980s:

"Law of Desire" and "We Were One Man"

Number 9: "On the Other Hand Death"

Number 8: "Make the Yuletide Gay"

Number 7: "Hollywood Je T'aime"

Number 6: "Every Little Step"

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"It was the worst of times..."

The cinematic purgatory of 2009 included the tuneless musical nightmare "Fruit Fly" as well as "Prodigal Sons," a thoroughly unpleasant documentary which never came close to living up to its pre-Film Festival hype. Also, far too many gay filmmakers continue to eschew competent acting and strong narratives, choosing instead to simply go for the fast buck by casting attractive young male actors and get them to take off their clothes: see "Siren in the Dark" "Otto: or Up with Dead People" and the truly wretched, "Skull and Bones"

Nor Glenn can forget to add the incomprehensible "Bruno." All Glenn can ask is why?

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**Above: Boom Christmas Party
Below: Triangle Christmas Party**



DIVERSION OF THE DAY Community Events Calendar

Friday, January 1, 2010

Outwords Books (Milwaukee) Holiday Open House! Open 12 noon to 5:00pm Help us celebrate the joy of the New Year on New Year's Day and find all Books, Calendars, Holiday Cards and DVDs on special!

Saturday, January 2

Madison Gay Video Club "Bob's World: Life & Boys of AMG's Bob Mizer" (AMG, dir. Bob Mizer, 2009) "Gridiron Gang Bang" (All Worlds, dir. Chi Chi LaRue, 2009) 8:00 PM, <http://www.mgvc.org>, 608-244-8690 (evenings)

Sunday, January 3

OutReach (600 Williamson St. Madison) OutThere (18-24) Social Group All-Ages New Year's Potluck. check out www.outtheremadison.org for more information about the group

Tuesday, January 5

Evjue stage Bartell Theater (Madison) Effective Strategies for LGBT Rights: New Directions StageQ, Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus, Our Lives Magazine, Gay-Straight Alliance for Safe Schools, Leztalkmadison, OutReach, Wisconsin Capitol Pride and the Business Alliance announce a presentation by Adam Schesch, Ph.D. on effective strategies for LGBT liberation. Dr. Schesch is a local historian who has studied global resistance struggles, and movements for liberation. He will be speaking about how to apply that cross-cultural experience to current battles for LGBT rights in this country, including same-sex marriage. There will be an open discussion with the audience following Dr. Schesch's talk. Come prepared to think, to talk and to plan! Free & open to the public. 113 E Mifflin Street Madison

Friday, January 8

Napalese (Green Bay) Argonauts club Night. 9 pm Beer/Soda bust \$9 and a raffe.

Sunday, January 10

Kruz (Milwaukee) Castaway's M.C. Beer/Soda Bust - 3 - 7pm Theme LONGJOHN PARTY.

Monday, January 11

Outwords Books (Milwaukee) Outwords Book Club: discussion of Fellow Travelers, a romance set during the McCarthy-era. Everyone is welcome to stop in!

Tuesday, January 12

Outwords Books (Milwaukee) The Lesbian Reading Group @ Outwords The book to be discussed has not been selected. Please call for info. Everyone welcome.

Wednesday, January 13

OutReach (600 Williamson Madison) Q Cinema International Film Group Madam Sata (Brazil) A story inspired by the life of one of the most remarkable figures in Brazilian popular culture, João Francisco dos Santos (1900-1976). In turn, bandit, transvestite, street fighter, brothel cook, convict and father to seven adopted children, dos Santos--better known as Madame Satã--was also a notorious gay performer who pushed social boundaries in a volatile time. The story begins in 1932, in Rio de Janeiro's bohemian Lapa district, when João Francisco is about to achieve his dream: becoming a stage star. In the sordid yet lively world of Lapa--populated by pimps, prostitutes and other denizens of Rio's underworld.

Saturday, January 16

Drag Kings @ Miramar Theatre (Milwaukee) It is time for you to try drag out on our stage for Miltown Kings' Half and Half show. We will be turning over half our show to guests. Doors open at 9pm, \$5 cover. Fmi on how to guest preform visit miltownkings.com 18+ show

Madison Gay Video Club "Redwoods" (TLA Rel., dir. David Lewis, 2009) "Reckless" (Hot House, dir. Steven Scarborough, 2009) 8 PM, www.mgvc.org, 608-244-8690 (evenings)

Napalese (Green Bay) WinterQuest! Argonauts 35 Anniversary Dinner and special club night \$30. Apply online www.argonautsll.org hurry space is limited. Cocktails 6pm, Dinner 7 pm. Entertainment, Bust and Prizes that evening.

Positive Voice (Green Bay) *Mama Mia* Purchase your own tickets. We'll meet after the 2pm matinee for drinks.

Friday, January 22

Frank's Power Plant (Milw) 3 Kings Drag Show -Games, raffles, drink specials. \$3

Wednesday, January 27

OutReach (600 Williamson Madison) Q Cinema International Film Group Fire (India) Taboo-busting drama about forbidden passion between two Indian wives. It is said that when this movie premiered in India, posters were torn down and there was a lot of public protest. This film powerfully demonstrates the struggle of two women in love in a culture so deeply entrenched in ritual and tradition. All this against a backdrop of an India which itself is struggling for freedom from these same values. This film is both political and personal and never too preachy or idealistic on either front. A true film such as this one deserves to be seen by all people of the world.

Thursday, January 28

Triangle (Milwaukee) 3 Kings Benefit Drag Show - to represent Wisconsin in the Oklahoma City USofA competition. Drink specials.

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www.shoreline-milw.org

Wisconsin Gay Hockey
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Women's Voices Milwaukee
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LGBT Service and Advocacy Organizations

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pflagmilwaukee@hotmail.com

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(262) 694-2729
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jrmurray@uwm.edu
www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/LGBT

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Oh, The Places You'll Ho

Anthony Paull

Oh, how I love my boyfriend; he makes the best death threats. And no, not the kind you think, but rather the kind where each time he's sick, no matter acute, he's ready to set up house at the nearest hospital, where he can be waited on hand and foot. "Baby, can you come over and let out the dog. I got sick," he moans on my voicemail early this morning. "I'm headin' to the emergency room. Uuuuuuh."

Alarmed, I quickly ring his cell, where his English mother answers, stating he's doubled over in pain with food poisoning. It appears the spinach on his pizza at lunch had been riddled with E. coli, prompting him to suffer a massive attack of crippling cramps, diarrhea, vomiting, and dehydration. Not particularly sexy, I know. Well...except he is at the hospital, and I have been searching for a fun, new venue for us to have sex.

Gross, I know, but I'm human, horny, and impulsive, and I'm not about to deny my urges because it won't go over well with the masses. You see, I've grown tired of the same bedroom, bathroom, and kitchen table routine, and recently, I'm hot on the idea of taking my temptations to the public. Is that so odd? Really, haven't we all wanted to get pumped somewhere we might but probably won't get caught? Isn't that the modern-day equivalent of having a virtual finger shoved up your butt? Doesn't danger lead to a more dynamic climax? Or am I merely really, really, really reaching?

Oh, who cares? I'm not responsible for my crazy state of mind anyway. I'm blaming these sick, sadis-

tic, and sultry thoughts on my friend, Ana, whose erotic adventures seem so much more interesting than mine.

Of course, I'm completely jealous. With Ana, nothing is sacred; she gets to knock knickers with her boyfriend anywhere and everywhere. The public parking garage, the beach, the back seat of her BMW, the Zone Bar aisle at the health food store—baby, it's all good when the thought of being brazen enters her mind. And if her boyfriend utters no? Well, she simply ties him up. It's easy; scarves are in this season.

"But seriously, it's not like any sane man *ever* technically refuses anyway," she confesses.

"Well, what if he just got done puking into a bucket at the hospital?" I ask, over a cup of coffee in the heart of downtown, near the public park. "Do you think it would be wrong for me to ask him to pleasure me a few hours later? Be honest? Is that sexy?"

Bewildered, she blinks three times and smiles, blind-sided by the question. "Outdoor sex is always sexy," she responds, with trepidation. "But I suppose there *are* exceptions. Maybe you should consider somewhere else."

Too late, I already have this ridiculous thought in my mind, and I want to try and make this hospital bit work, even though my friend Steve calls to tell me I am acting crazy. "Ugh, you're not going to have sex with him at the hospital. Stop acting stupid."

"What's wrong with it?" I ask, readying myself with a new designer pair of underwear, hand-stitched from France. "I used to do this kind of stuff all the time in college."

"Whatever. It's not cool," he replies.

"Why? Because you didn't think of it? Well, I'm sorry if I'm ahead of the curve."

"Yeah, you're just so cutting edge," he quips. "Why don't you screw him in a port-o-potty while you're at it?"

"You're not funny."

"I'm telling you, your boyfriend is not going to find sex at the hospital cute or sexy. And neither are you."

This is what I'm thinking about as I drive into the hospital parking garage, where I place the car in park and solemnly stare into the rearview mirror. Sitting alone, I realize Steve is right. This isn't sexy. Rather, it's a pathetic attempt to find that very same rush I had in college, where public sex in a car or a study carrel at the library was a prerequisite. Since turning 30, I find myself longing for that very same fix, having grown tired of being quarantined to a boring bedroom because I'm supposed to act like a grown-up.

The truth, I don't feel grown up. I'm just as ready, willing, and able to have a public sexual encounter, except I can't find time to plan for it due to working 50 hours a week, along with taking care of other adult responsibilities.

"That's why it's not sexy," Steve tells me, when I call him to say I chickened out. "You're not supposed to plan it out. It should be spontaneous. That's what makes it thrilling."

"So what? Am I just supposed to screw him whenever the mood strikes me, wherever we may be? What if we're not prepared and someone catches us?"

"That's the one *good* part of being an adult," he astutely replies. "You can afford bail."

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(An effervescently gay advice columnist)

Disclaimer: Although the author of this syndicated column holds a doctorate in clinical psychology, the tongue-in-cheek advice given is for entertainment only and is not a substitute for therapy. Barbie responds to all emails...whether you deserve it or not. Send your questions to Uncle Barbie at: askunclebarbie@aol.com

A FLEA ON THE DOG OF HUMANITY

Dear Uncle Barbie,

I want you to know I am only writing you because some of my coworkers said that I really needed to. I really don't think I need any advice because there is nothing wrong with me. It's the other people around me that have problems. The world is screwed up, not me. When I try to get some service at a store, they don't know anything. So I tell them they don't know what they are talking about. They think I am rude, but really they are the ones at fault. I believe in speaking my mind. I am not antisocial. Actually, I can fit in with any crowd because I have learned how to imitate other people. When I am around a group of people, I just pretend to be like the rest of them. It works. I just wish everyone wasn't so stupid. It is unfair that I should even have to share the world with them. It is so frustrating. What can I do about this?

Signed, David K.

Hello David,

Upon analysis of your situation, I sense two issues here, your behavior and your personality. Your lack of a consistent behavioral pattern seems to be in tandem with your transient personality traits. Although a correlation exists between the two variables, there is no evidence that a causal effect is occurring. Therefore, we cannot conclude that one causes the other. Nevertheless, just because a causal effect has not been definitively established does not mean that your behavior and your personality are acting independently of one another. In fact, I believe they coexist in an interdependent relationship--albeit a dysfunctional one.

Regarding your personality, you are lacking in a firmly established identity which causes your actions to be quite disordered and chaotic.



You seem to have an aversion to tranquility. Don't you know that the biological formula of nature asserts that all living organisms strive for a static state of homeostasis. Put less scientifically, we all have an inborn tendency to seek out happiness. It is our nature. So tell me, then, why do you actively resist living your life in harmony with those around you? Are you one of those people who has their karmic energy poles reversed? Is it because you have lived so long as an adversary that you have grown accustomed to it? It is almost as though you choose to relate to others through conflict. You are like a scarecrow in the great vegetable garden of life--you frighten everyone away. I admit, it is a known psychological phenomena that emotional

conflict can produce an artificial sense of bonding. However, you have adopted an oppositional style of interaction as a permanent course of action. That pattern needs to be broken. You appear to have that special type of personality that can only be tolerated when you're sleeping. Well, that's about all I can do for you as an advice columnist. Any further attitude adjustment that needs to be done is between you and your pharmacist.

Yours Truly, Barbie

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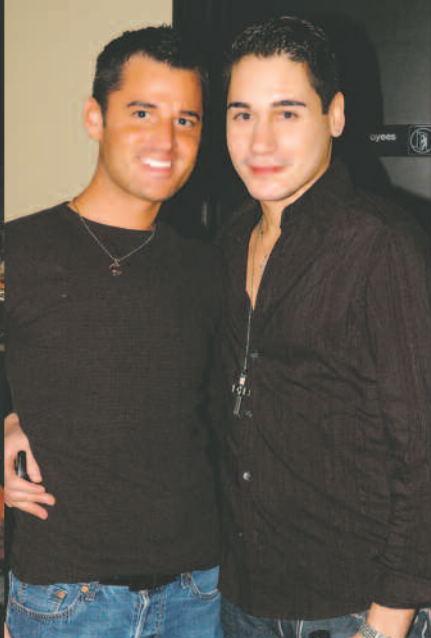
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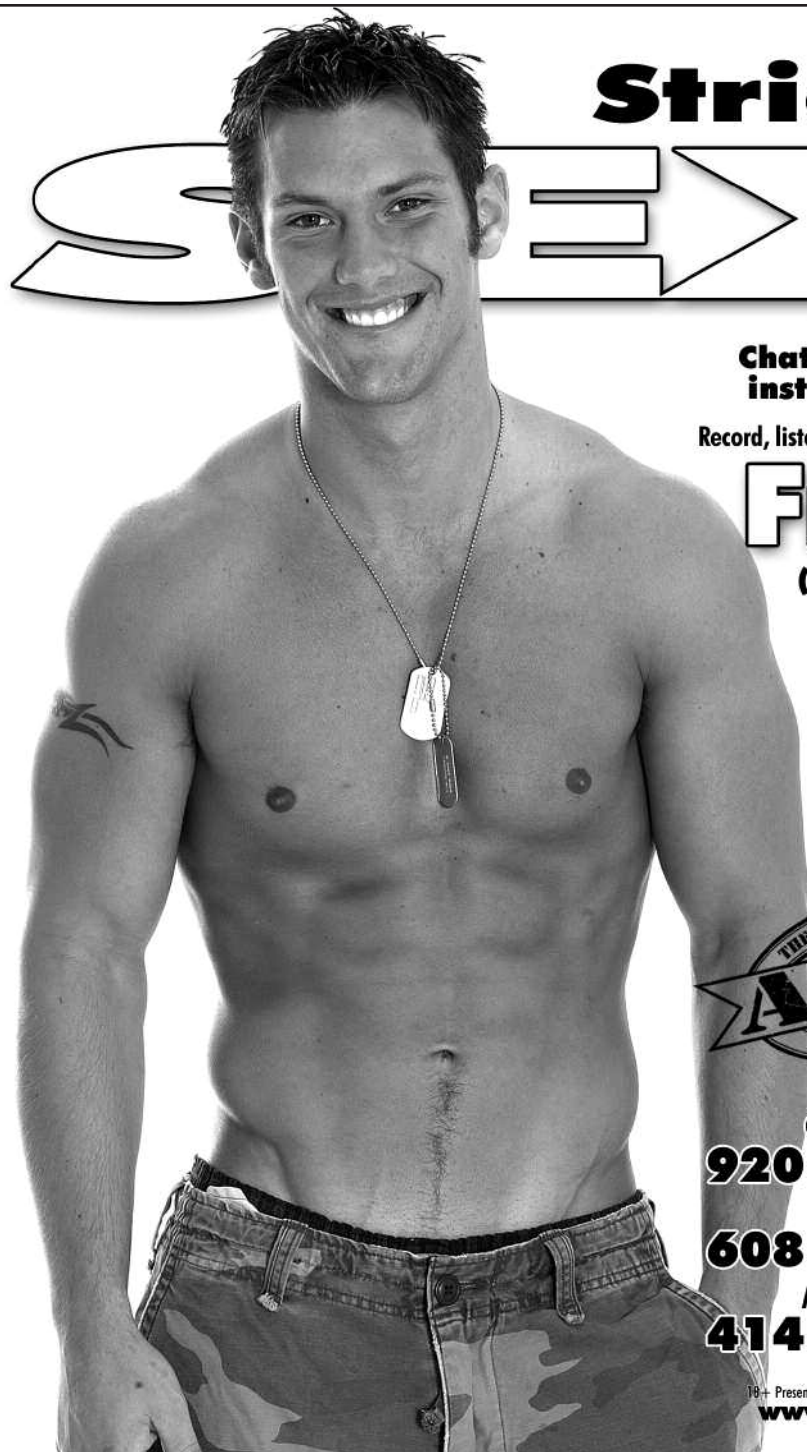
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