













IT GET'S BETTER! ONE MAN'S JOURNEY

As far back as I remember I have always known I was gay. I went through the same things most others have from the name calling in elementary and middle school to the complete denial when the accusations came. I dated girls and tried to be "normal". Finally, in high school I stopped fighting and came out... well, sort of. My core group of friends knew and that was it. I never told my family or others. I started dating guys here and there. Life felt good, I guess. There was still part of me that was hiding and not being completely out to the world.

In 2000 I started a new job. I met a friend. She and I became really close. We started seeing each other after work. She knew I had been with men and women and she was cool with that. In fact, in a very short amount of time, she became my best friend. She accepted me for who she saw in front of her. I was sincerely enjoying the happiness she brought in my life. In October 2001, we married.

In November 2008, life was good. We had three children by then. Our youngest was about to turn one. But something inside of me was changing. I started thinking about who I am. The thoughts grew deeper and deeper every day. There were days I would find myself curled up in a ball not wanting to move, talk, or laugh. I didn't want what I had anymore. Some time went by, and I was obviously growing distant. We weren't talking much and we were losing our smiles. I called my sister and my dad and cried. I told them I was gay and I was going to leave my wife. I left work early and packed some things afraid that after I told her, she'd want me to leave. That night after we put the boys to bed, I sat her down and told her "I can't do this anymore because I am gay". Shattered, I watched the love of my life fall

to pieces right in front of me. I felt something I had never felt before, I had truly come out. I said the words I am gay and as much as I wanted to smile, I couldn't. I just destroyed a fairytale. We talked for hours that night and continued talking over the next few weeks. The plan was for me to move out in late January. The emotions that we both experienced during those couple months are emotions I would never wish on my worst enemy. Christmas came. We did everything we could to hide it from our families as we haven't told them all yet. After the New Year, fear started to overcome me, am I really doing this? This is selfish, I can't do this, my family needs me, and I'm staying. And, that I did. We talked things out and made a plan to move forward regardless of everything that just happened.

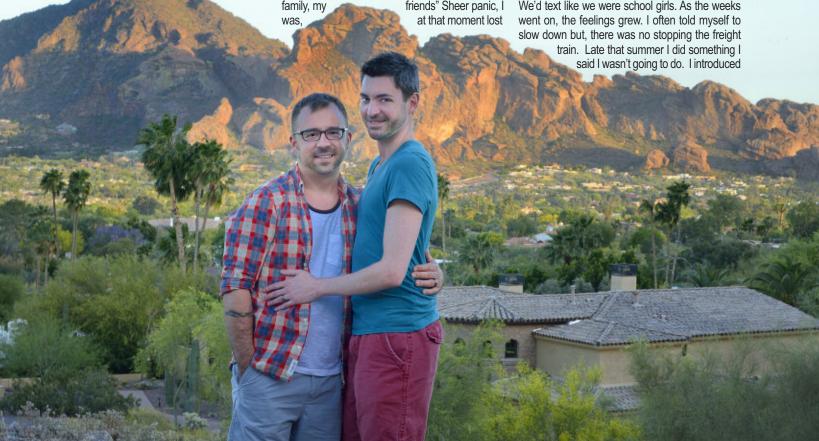
Then, a little over a year ago, it happened all over. I couldn't hide anymore, I told my wife. I broke her heart for a second time. This time was worse, because we both knew this time it was really happening. We were both losing our best friend and it was extremely hard on us. We waited for the end of the school year before telling the boys. That moment when I told my boys something that would change their lives will be forever engrained into my memory. I told them I was moving out and that I still loved their mother. However, I am Gay. We all shed a few tears but, the only response I got from my then 14 year old was "it doesn't matter, you're still our dad". It was a tough time for all of us to say the least. Then, the day came that I did something I never did before, I moved into my own place. Oh, that first night alone. My family offered to stay with me but I knew I needed that moment to have a good cry. "What did I just do?" "What about the boys?" "How are they going to cope?" "How do I tell my work, my friends" Sheer panic, I family, my

by Brad R Schlaikowski

but, I knew that I would make it. No, I knew WE would all make it. We worked out a schedule for the boys so both of us had equal amounts of time with them. We both started a new journey in life.

Coming out wasn't about the physical parts of any relationship. I knew I wanted to share my life with another man. My problem was I had no clue where to start much less go on a date. I haven't had to worry about that for over ten years. So, I did what I felt every gay man did at some point... I downloaded Grindr - an eye opening experience to say the least. I wasn't looking for a relationship, but at the same time I wasn't against it either. I had just left a marriage so why not have some fun for a while? I went on a few dates, saw a couple of nice guys but, I wasn't trying to settle down. So I moved on. Hindsight being 20/20, I'm sure there are a few choice words they have for me. Then, I started chatting with this guy. I thought to myself, he looks out of my league but I'd say hi at least. To my surprise, he responded and we stated chatting sporadically, then more often, then daily. I grew the courage to ask him to meet me. Of course he played hard to get for a while. On a Sunday in July, he messaged me. He said he was going to meet his friend but if that doesn't work out he'd meet me for a drink. HA! I'm his backup plan? Thankfully, his friend cancelled. He messaged me to meet him at Fluid for a drink. We sat in the back and talked for what seemed to be hours. We heard Bush was playing at Summerfest so we decided "what the heck" and off we went. I'll never forget that night, standing on the bleachers, there was a moment he held my hand. I could do nothing but smile. That night started a whirlwind....

The days I didn't have my boys I was with him. We'd text like we were school girls. As the weeks



Nick to my boys. It was important for me to know if they'd all connect before my feelings for him grew deeper than they already were. So, we arranged for him to meet us at Chill on the Hill. He brought Artie, his adorable dash hound. From that moment on, my youngest son was hooked. He had two new best friends and I was chopped liver. Nick and I decided it would be best to ease him in and not have him around every day so, that's what we did. As I watched him interact with my children, I knew if there was a man I was willing to share the most important people in my life with, I wanted it to be him.

On December 23rd, with the help of 20 family members and friends, I asked Nick to marry me in the middle of the ice rink downtown. Right there, out in the open, not hiding who I am and who I love from any one. They played a song that Nick once play for me. I got down on my knees. Our family and friends held signs I made. All the other skaters stopped to watch as Nick said "yes" to my proposal. Nick moved in and we started our lives together.

This past year and a half was certainly not sunshine and daisies, I missed my best friend. At first we barely spoke. As time went on we became more cordial. It was slowly getting better. We hadn't filed for divorce until this past March. We had our first hearing on a Thursday. That afternoon I sent her a text as I knew that day would be hard for her. I told her I was and will always be there for her if she needed a friend. That night we made plans to meet for a drink that following Monday. Monday came. I was nervous. I told Nick I was only staying for an hour and made an "escape plan" just in case. We ended up sitting there for over two hours talking,

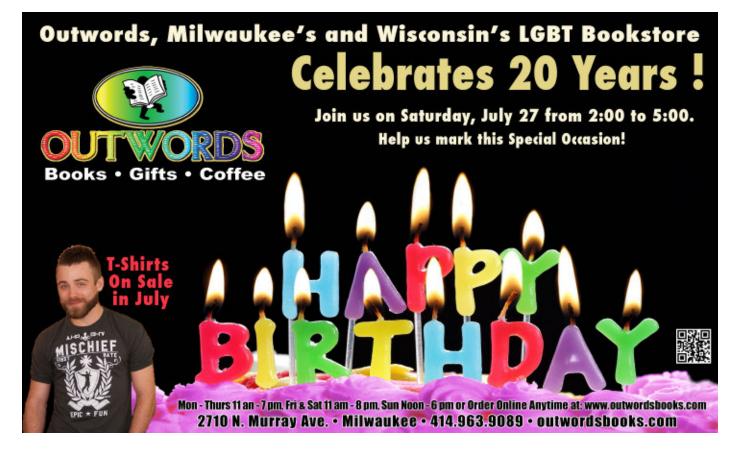
catching up on each other's families, poking fun, laughing and sharing what experiences we'd had so far separately. At one point, she said, "Brad, you have no idea what it is to be a single girl at a bar". I gave her a look and said "HA!" and she realized "Oh yeah, maybe you do". We had a really good time. Before we parted ways, I asked her about meeting Nick. She responded "soon".

On a Sunday night, this past spring, she and I made plans for the three of us to meet for drinks. Well, we ended up sitting out on her deck instead. I sat there thinking to myself, "This is really happening!" She and Nick were talking about going shopping, my youngest son was playing in the sand box, my two older boys bopped in and out of the conversation and we were all having a good time.... Together. Our divorce will be final in July. We are supportive of each other once again.

If someone were going through a similar situation, I'd tell them staying in their situation isn't benefitting anyone. Both deserve to love and be loved the same. I'd tell them it's going to be hard for their children and that it will be extremely important for them to communicate openly and honestly with them and to share their feelings with them often. They need to know how confusing it is going to be for them and not to be offended if any of their children don't know what to say or how to talk about their feelings and questions they now have. They may need a third party to talk to and that's ok. There are days I think about how every situation I have dealt with over the past year and a half could have went. How scary it was coming out to my family, at work and to the world, and how finding love again is such an incredible feeling - especially when you get to be who you were supposed to be. They need to know they are not alone. I knew absolutely no one in the Milwaukee gay community but they welcomed me with open arms. I'd tell them that many of the new friends I have made are already like family to me. I'd tell them to allow themselves the time to cry but to always remember they made the decision to come out and be who they are. I'd tell them to remember how so much has changed since those tormenting days in High School. Now it's more acceptable to walk down the street holding their lovers hand. I'd tell them to be courageous, to live this one life they get to the fullest, to find their smile and be proud of who they are. Just because we may have come out late in life doesn't change the past. In fact, I'd tell them to never EVER regret their past. Whether they are married and had children or they are a 17 year old and are just too afraid to come out, every experience they have had in the past has made them who they are today. And, tomorrow, the people they meet will be there for them. I'd tell them, it gets better.

Through courage, pride and support from all those around me, it got better and I honestly couldn't be happier.

Editor's Note: Nick and Brad will "tie the knot" in March 2014. Although DOMA paves the way for an eventual end to discrimination of LGBT couples getting married, Wisconsin still has an amendment to its constitution that will not allow them to have a real marriage at this time. Nick and Brad have instead opted to register in Wisconsin as domestic partners. A save the date announcement goes out to family and friends sometime in July or August of this year.



Gay Married with Children Part II

by Paul Masterson

Part II of this series on LGBT families with children focuses on a Milwaukee lesbian couple. They were interviewed about their decision to have a child, the process, and the happy result.

Married in 2009 in Canada, and registered as domestic partners in Milwaukee, Mary and Jill* have actually been together for nine years. Mary always had thoughts of having a family. Jill needed some convincing. Aside from the usual demands of parenthood, there was a matter of cost and the realization that raising a child meant a lot of responsibility. But, one partner is a city employee. The expense hurdle was cleared when city extended health insurance benefits to domestic partners. A European vacation together sated their Wanderlust that could not be indulged once a baby entered the picture. The time seemed right.

In a very relative sense the way to a family for women is ultimately simpler than for men. Whereas men are only able to adopt, women have an additional option – they can biologically bear their own children. The emotional, medical, and legal costs are significantly decreased in favor of natural parents. Adoption issues described in the first part of this series - like the birth parents reneging on their promise to relinquish parental rights, or the greed of adoption agencies and lawyers, don't apply. However, the legal labyrinth in a State with an anti-gay marriage amendment and the costs associated with children still create issues that need to be considered. There are other potential complications as well.

The Decision

For many established LGBT relationships, their life commitment settled either legally or at least emotionally, the desire to create a family seems a logical next step. For this lesbian couple, having a child wasn't always part of the plan. "We started talking about it four of so years ago. Mary wanted to have a child and I got convinced. It wasn't something I was initially interested in doing. I didn't have a frame of reference. I never have babies around me," Jill said. But she soon embraced the idea.

For Mary, a family had always been a possibility. "I have siblings with children but they're quite far away so it's not like I participate in raising their kids. Having our own family seemed like a natural thing to do. Jill and I didn't want to be an older LGBT couple who realized they should have had a family when it was too late," she said. "We also knew our families would be supportive."

With the myriad of questions they would now need to ask, like when and how, Mary and Jill went through the lesbian grapevine to find resources and referrals. "Not all health care professionals are welcoming to LGBT couples. Even if they are, they may not be familiar with our particular issues...or vocabulary,"Mary said. "It's important to rely on the experience of other lesbians who have personal experience."

Once the decision was made, the next consideration was whether to adopt or to carry. Both are pursuing careers. Jill has a 9-5 job with little leeway in terms of maternity leave. Mary has a more flexible schedule as a

consultant. Her hours would allow her to defer to the demands of pregnancy. Other factors included health issues. Mary is diabetic and Jill didn't want to carry. She has PCOS (polycystic ovary syndrome) which can cause infertility.

"We looked at foster adoption. We were very nervous about bringing in a child who might be taken away from us," Mary said. Jill reacts, "Hell no. We heard about several couples who did that. They had the child in custody and bonded. Still, even over years the child could be taken away...unless its a safe haven baby but even that's a long process. The birth parent has rights and a judge could decide to give the child back. Private adoption is safer but expensive. There's also the emotional aspect. Pregnancy is 9 months of bonding and the relationship is established."

"Jill and I have a personal distrust of the medical system. But I really wanted to carry, go through pregnancy and labor. I take care of myself and eat properly. I felt I could do it," Mary added.

With Mary's intent to carry, the next question was "who would be the sperm donor?" Some couples choose a relative or friend. For Mary and Jill, that option was limited. There's also the inherent risk when a known third party is involved. Like birth parents relinquishing their parental rights, the "third party" may exercise influence in child raising. Prearranged contracts notwithstanding, legal disputes and conflicts can arise. Mary and Jill decided on the path of least potential resistance. They solved the problem by using a sperm bank.

"Anonymity has its merits," Jill said. The sperm bank provides donors' biological and biographical information as well as a health history that goes back generations. It's kinda crazy. It's like a catalog. There's a voice clip, career details, interests and a baby picture, too. There's no current photo but a silhouette. The baby would have Mary's genes so we choose a donor who was ethnically similar to me - eye color, hair color, skin color matched. We looked for athletics, career and interest matches. We ruled out some based on the voice clip," Jill explains. "We also ruled out anyone with diabetes. I'm a Type A diabetic and we didn't want to risk it. Then the fun begins," Mary added.

The Pregnancy

Getting pregnant was a snap in Many's case. They were successful on their first try. It was a fairly typical pregnancy Mary recalls. "1st trimester exausting. I felt awesome during the 2nd trimester. During 3rd trimester I gained 30 lb of water weight and couldn't get comfortable. It was physically painful and very fatiguing. I couldn't lift things. The baby was moving a lot. But it was totally worth it. I could never have done it if I didn't have a supportive partner. It's just to hard. "

Jill rolls her eyes. "There were somethings I had difficulty with. Mary was fine. We had to adjust our diet - no salt in the third trimester for example. Keeping up with medical stuff was tough but that was our particular situation."

They also hired a doula, a birthing assistant who advocates for the birth parents and provides assistance throughout the pregnancy. It was good idea in their case because they didn't have local family members to give advice. They wanted someone to be there for them and run interference with the medical staff. It was useful to help navigate the process. The doula participated in the birth along with Jill.

According to Mary, the medical industry pushes C-section, epidural pain medication, and other unnecessary

procedures. "The USA has the world's highest c-section rate, 35%. I researched a lot in preparation. We did birthing classes for natural and hospital situations. Most labor averages 18 hours, usually under 24. I went 42. At 26 they push for a C-section. The doctor is a surgeon and makes more money doing a c-section rather than a normal birth. If you're doing a hospital a duala is the way to go. She adds support in a situation like this. Staff even commented on the fact that I went through the full labor. We actually threw the doctor out. The baby was strong the whole time. My mother had a 9lb baby and I did too."

The Cost

Any pregnancy is costly. In Mary and Jill's situation if they did not have health insurance they could not have gone forward. Because Jill is diabetic it was a high risk pregnancy. There were multiple health care professionals involved with lots of appointments.

Artificial insemination is certainly cheaper than adoption The sperm bank charges \$500 per vial. This couple bought a 4-pack. Although there is no refund on the others Mary and Jill can have them stored. If they decide on having another child, they have a head start. The actual procedure to administer the dose costs less than \$300 and up to \$800. Some facilities also require a psychological evaluation. There's a charge for that, of course. It pays to shop around.

Calculated into the equation is lost work time, insurance co-pays, and the sundries. The duala charged S500. She made multiple visits before the birth, then during the pregnancy for 36 hours. She also made follow-up visits and gave support for possible post-pardum depression.

Additionally, legal fees for guardianship and other legal proceedings add significantly to the tab. A will costs \$500, a parenting agreement \$1000-1500, to name just two.

The Paperwork

Domestic partnership in Wisconsin does not deal with children. An LGBT couple that creates a family, even through a pregnancy by one partner, still faces a mountain of legal paperwork. If something should happen to the couple, what happens to the baby? With little legal recourse available to protect alternative families, a child and surviving parent will find themselves in an unmerciful judicial morass.

For each parental right guaranteed to a straight couple, LGBT partners need a legal document. A parenting agreement is necessary. Although it is possible for both be on the birth certificate elsewhere, not in Wisconsin. The partner has to get guardianship through the court. In the event of the birth parent's death, the care of the child must be mentioned in a Will so custody goes to the partner. Otherwise, child will go to the parents or next-of-kin. Guardianship only lasts as long as the birth parent is alive.

Ready?

For Mary and Jill, the birth of their healthy baby girl was the happy culmination of a long process. Their decision to create a family was based on communication, extensive research and careful consideration. "Family and friends' support, whether emotional, financial (baby showers, etc) or just pitching in to move furniture or otherwise contribute to all the logistical demands of baby care, is essential," Mary said. Jill adds, "the stakes are high here. It's not just about the couple. It's about a child and a family, and a future."

*names changed by the writer for privacy reasons

On Second Thought... Bye, bye DOMA, good-bye!

Opinion by Paul Masterson

We've waited and waited. Our victories have often been tempered by depressing defeats. A dozen States offer same-sex marriage rights, 37 others, including Wisconsin, specifically deny them. We have a constitutional right to the pursuit of happiness but that, in the name of States' rights, seems to be at the mercy of a pervading bias and bigotry.

As LGBT people throughout the country woke up on, June 26, 2013 (just two days before the anniversary of Stonewall), there were great expectations, anticipation and a glimmer of hope. The Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) was poised to announce decisions on two marriage equality cases, California's Proposition 8 and the infamous 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA). With the recent the

momentum of all the recent strides in LGBT equality, there was palpable optimism that the highest judicial body of the land would finally recognize our inalienable right.

Then the news broke. In a 5-4 decision the Supreme Court struck down DOMA as unconstitutional. It passed on ruling on Prop 8, deferring to lower court rulings that had already invalidated the anti-gay marriage law. That means there is now Federal recognition of legal same-sex marriages and, in California, same-sex marriages can resume.

Of course, the State of Wisconsin's official comment on these historic rulings made clear that they have no impact here. That brings us to another subject.

Just the day before, a SCOTUS decision proved a disappointment for those who defend another obliquely related constitutional right. It involved the Voting Rights Act. It may not seem that LGBT peo-

ple were affected but we are. The same political forces that seek to deny LGBT rights are the ones that pursue a strategy to undermine our other democratic institutions – like the right to vote. Whether through intimidation, id laws, redistricting or other forms of gerrymandering, voter suppression affects us all. It's a flanking movement designed to attack us indirectly. The target is any group likely to vote for Democratic candidates. That includes a broad spectrum from younger voters to seniors and minorities. Chipping away at the Democratic base is just one of many tactics used to help install the Walkers, Bachmans, Perrys, and Sensenbrenners. They are not our friends.

So while we celebrate our latest victory, let us not forget our road to freedom and to true equality is paved with the votes of many beyond the LGBT community. We should never forget the struggle for voter equality is an integral part of our struggle as well.

DAIRYLAND CLASSIC RETURNS TO MILWAUKEE

by Paul Masterson

Summer would not be summer without The Dairyland Classic Softball Tournament (DLC), Milwaukee's annual gay softball event. This season, the 2013 DLC (the 36th!) returns to the city two months early. Due to the Harley Davidson 110th Anniversary over Labor Day weekend, the SSBL"s traditional end of summer softball extravaganza has been rescheduled and moved to July 4th weekend.

Dozens of teams from throughout the country will play in C Competitive and D Recreational divisions. The Round-Robin games take place Saturday, July 6 with Double-elimination games on Sunday, July 7. C division plays at Brookfield's Wirth Park. Wilson Park on Milwaukee's south side hosts the D Division.

Tournament Director Doug Weber expressed his thanks to SSBL Commissioner Brian Reinkober, the many DLC volunteers, event sponsors including the

Cream City Foundation, The DoubleTree Hotel, P&N Promotions, and Hybrid Lounge among many others. "We owe our sponsors a lot of gratitude for making the DLC possible. This year's Dairyland Classic will be a very special July 4^{th} celebration. We're looking forward to sharing Milwaukee's festival season with hundreds of softball players who will get a taste of the city in the height of summer - there's so much: the Lakefront Fireworks on July 4, Summerfest, the Milwaukee Art Museum, and Brewers' games.

Of course, there will be plenty of DLC action on and off the fields as well. We have our DLC Pre-Registration Party on Thursday at Boom, a Registration Party on Friday at the DoubleTree Hotel (4-11pm), and the Party in the Park on July 7 from 3-11pm. Awards ceremonies take place on Sunday. Of course, players will get to explore the Milwaukee night life as well," Weber said.

This year, the DLC's signature Tournament Party takes place on Saturday from 3-11pm on Catalano Square in the Historical Third Ward. The public is invited and encouraged to attend and enjoy SSBL's jocular ambiance, food and drink, as well as awardwinning Tribute-artist impersonator, Betty Atchison performing live as Cher and Lady Gaga along with the Vixen Dancers!

Zumba @ MGAC

The Milwaukee Gay Arts Center announces expanded summer dance programming. Starting Saturday, July 6, certified instructor Ty King will teach Zumba and African-Caribbean dance classes. King (aka djty), a well-known local professional dancer, fitness instructor and dj , adds his own particular energetic flair and fun to the art of teaching these two classes. He has taught and danced nationally and internationally with a repertoire ranging from cardio funk to ballet. Class sessions run Saturdays. Cost is just \$40 for 5 classes.

Zumba 11am-11:50am

African-Caribbean Dance, 12pm-1250pm

Contact Ty at 414-306-1586 for more information. Classes take place at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 South 2nd Street, one block North of National Avenue in Walker's Point.

Soul Spectrum

Produced by djty, MGAC launches a new variety night, *Soul Spectrum* featuring black and Latin performers. Drag, singing, dancing, comedy, bands and other talent are currently sought for a monthly show. The first show takes place July 27 at 9pm. A \$5 door donation is requested.

Contact Ty at 414-306-1586 for more information and to schedule an audition.

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Peck School # Arts







Glenn did not intend to review **Behind the Candelabra**, at least not initially. But how can anyone, least of all Glenn, keep away from cinematic maelstrom that is director Steven Soderbergh's (reported) final film?

Social media, serving now as something of a global water cooler, has been a-buzz with hype in advance of the HBO premiere. Indeed, HBO's debut screening of **Behind the Candelabra** offered the cable network giant its highest ratings for an original HBO film in more than a decade.

Based on Scott Thorson's kiss-and-tell memoir, **Behind the Candelabra**, the big question would be whether or not acclaimed director Steven Soderbergh would find substance beneath Liberace's carefully constructed image?

The answer proves elusive.

Although vaguely recalling Liberace from appearances on various 1960s chat and variety shows such as Mike Douglas and Ed Sullivan, the flamboyant pianist never numbered amongst Glenn favorites.

In addition to the Liberace, 1960s television offered up a number of performers and television characters whose sexual orientation should have been evident even during those wonderfully innocent pre-Stonewall days.

Thinking back, Glenn could mention Billy De Wolfe, cast as the upstairs neighbor on Doris Day's popular sit-com and a true successor to the likes of Edward Everett Horton, Eric Blore and Franklin Pangborn. Who could possibly forget Jonathan Harris' cowardly Doctor Smith on Lost in Space. In what began as a serious space opera, a futuristic take on the classic novel Swiss Family Robinson, Lost in Space quickly transformed into pure camp. The pinnacle surely being the episode during which the good doctor somehow manages to turn into a living and breathing stalk of celery.

Lost in Space mercifully came to an end in 1968.

Then there was Paul Lynde, first as acerbic Uncle Arthur on **Bewitched**, later burned into the collected consciousness of Middle America as the "Center Square."

Much as Paul Lynde relied on his quick wit and barbed tongue, Liberace lurked behind a façade of rhinestones and furs. Yet both would become embraced by mainstream America, as incredible a notion as that might seem today.

Yet those looking for insight into just how Liberace became such a beloved figure will not find it in **Behind the Candelabra**.

Richard LaGravenese's screenplay finds the iconic Liberace (Michael Douglas) in 1977, twirling a sold-out Las Vegas casino crowd around his ring-encrusted little finger. His mother (the fabulous Debbie Reynolds) benignly looks out from the audience which also includes 17 year-old Scott Thorson (Matt Damon).

Scott is the guest of Liberace's friend Bob Black (Scott Bakula, almost unrecognizable behind the mustache). Predictably, Scott is duly mesmerized meeting Mr. Showmanship. An invitation to brunch is quickly extended, an affair which is all very "virgin to the slaughter" if Glenn might be allowed to mix his metaphors.

Only briefly glimpsed is the soon to be out-going friend/protégé Billy Leatherwood (Cheyenne Jackson).

In gratitude for Lee's generosity – Liberace was known as Lee to his friends — Scott offers to provide an eye solution for Lee's blind poodle, Baby Boy; a solution that must be delivered immediately and by hand. Liberace's subsequent seduction of the innocent Thorson is swift, shameless, totally expected and indeed, exceedingly cringe worthy.

In these early scenes Damon's Scott is suitably earnest and sincere yet hardly believable as a teen. Michael Douglas looks every minute of his 68 years despite the fact Liberace's age in 1977 was a decade younger.

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

From Richard Burton and Rex Harrison in **Staircase** to **Brokeback Mountain** and on to Jim Carrey and Ewan McGregor in **I Love You Phillip Morris** and now **Behind the Candelabra**, there's been, at best, an uneasy relationship between mainstream Hollywood and films boasting a gay theme.

Without the luster of such Hollywood royalty as Matt Damon and Michael Douglas with their names, metaphorically, above the title, **Behind the Candelabra** doesn't get made. Since it was HBO to the rescue, there's no way to guess if it would have suffered a similar fate as **Phillip Morris**'s dismal tally or indeed would have struck box office gold.

Despite the lavish interiors, **Behind the Candelabra** often looks dull, very much like the made-for-cable feature it wishes not to be. Happily, amidst the rhinestones and gilt, there's true acting gold from a variety of supporting players, particularly Debbie Reynolds as Liberace's mother, Rob Lowe as a reptilian plastic surgeon and Dan Aykroyd as the business manager who might not get invited to dinner but will be around a heck of a lot longer than will any of Lee's boys.

To their credit both stars throw themselves, quite literally, into their respective roles.

Matt Damon is challenged in **Candelabra** into playing something of a chameleon. Plump and pleasing in the early scenes, his Scott claims to be bisexual but (albeit briefly) looks to be truly, madly, deeply in love; he is never cuter than when he insists that Liberace isn't interested only in... well, the obvious.

What with the plastic surgery, the liquor, the drugs and an opulent lifestyle that is surely harder work than it looks, Scott ages not by years but by decades. Is it a wonder that Liberace quickly casts another young lad in the role of Scott's understudy?

Douglas' Liberace is smoothly calculating, often distant and manipulative. There is throughout his performance a veneer of artifice, regardless whether he's on stage seducing an audience of blue-rinses (and their bemused husbands) or seducing Scott in the hot tub, glass of Champers in hand. And beneath this veneer of artifice there is, miraculously, another, even thinner veneer.

Absolutely everyone Glenn has even a passing acquaintance with has already seen **Behind the Candalabra**. Most, too, plan on purchasing the DVD when it becomes available come September. Glenn however, is likely to pass.

Just the facts...

Behind the Candelabra has a running time of 118 minutes as is in English.

Behind the Candelabra will available on DVD on September 17, 2013

Versatile actor Scott Bakula has recently been cast in the film adaptation of Brent Hartinger's popular Young Adult novel, **The Geography Club**.

Once Scott is fully in residence, Billy is sent packing. Next to go is the jaded houseboy Carlucci (Bruce Ramsay). Perhaps, mused Glenn, Scott will be smart enough to avoid the reject pile.

Professions of love are made. Damon's Scott is extraordinarily believable and genuinely sympathetic even if the scenes in the bedroom, surely intentionally, border on the grotesque.

What follows is indeed a cautionary tale, of love perhaps and greed; all proving rather sordid and sad.





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Now that summer is in full swing, Pridefest is past and the boys are all nice and bronzed, I thought we'd focus on food...summer desserts in particular! I know you're looking for my advice column, but my tummy is grumbling for some grub, and my bitchin' kitchen is serving up no-bake sweets for summer parties.

You see, last summer I hosted a soiree at the Rusty Nail Trailer Park. Okay...maybe "soiree" is the wrong word. I threw a drunken bash with lots of beer-bellied men, a few heavily tattooed broads and a whole lotta craziness! A great time was had by all.

After the barbecue, I served up three creamy nobake pies that the folks loved. Not to pat myself on the back, but these desserts were light and refreshing. Best of all they were friggin' easy! I made them ahead of time and stored them in the freezer. Now, you can do the same for your summer-time backyard bashes. Whip 'em up, keep your kitchen cool, and eat good and shut up!

FROSTY LEMONADE PIE

Here's an old-fashioned favorite that's just as good today as it was the first time some cute little bunwearing grandma served it up. Easy, fast and nobake, it's the perfect treat for summer fun.

1 tub (8 oz) Cool Whip, thawed 1 can (14 oz) sweetened condensed milk 3/4 cup lemonade concentrate, thawed 1 (9-in) graham cracker crust

Set the Cool Whip in a large bowl and fold in the milk and lemonade. (Do not over mix.) Spoon into the crust. Cover pie and freeze overnight. Remove from freezer 15 minutes before serving.

Ruthie's Culinary Clues

For the best results, don't thaw the lemonade concentrate all the way. Add a few drops of yellow food coloring to the whipped topping mixture if you'd like.

KEY LIME DELIGHT

What a great surprise this treat is! You don't get to enjoy the tart-tangy taste of key lime every day, so this dessert is always popular.

1 can (14 oz) sweetened condensed milk 6 tablespoons key lime juice 1 tub (8 oz) Cool Whip, thawed 1 to 2 drops green food coloring 1 (9-in) graham cracker crust

Combine the milk and lime juice in a large bowl. Carefully fold in the Cool Whip. Stir in the food coloring. Spoon into the crust. Cover pie and freeze overnight. Remove from freezer 15 minutes before serving.

Ruthie's Culinary Clues

Head down South and you'll discover that "real" key lime

pie isn't green at all. If you want to be all fancy-smancy, simply leave out the food coloring. Look for key lime juice near the lemon juice at your grocery store.

CHOCOLATE ICEBOX PIE

I couldn't serve up this smorgasbord of frosty bites without a chocolate sensation, now could I? Following the same formula, this creamy cocoa treat (sounds like Prince) is sure to become an all-time favorite.

2-1/2 cups miniature milk chocolate chips 1 tub (12 oz) Cool Whip, thawed 1 (9-in) chocolate crust

Melt the chocolate chips in a microwave at 10-second intervals, stirring after every 10 seconds. Continue until completely melted and smooth. Cool only slightly. Fold in Cool Whip until well combined. Spoon into the crust. Cover pie and freeze overnight. Remove from freezer 15 minutes before serving.

Ruthie's Culinary Clues

Be careful when melting the chocolate. If it burns, you'll have to start over. If you'd like, toss some chopped chocolate mints, chopped nuts or even diced peanut butter cups into the creamy mixture. When unwrapping the crust for this, or any of these pies, save the clear plastic lining. Invert the lining, and then use it to cover the pie before popping it in the freezer.

STRAWBERRY SHORTCAKE TRIFLE

I know what you're thinking. You're saying to yourself, "Hey, Ruthie! I don't like pie! Have any no-bake summer desserts for me?" Well, put on your big-girl panties, honey, because I've got a surprise for you! This warm-weather nosh takes advantage of summer-ripe berries, can be made a day ahead and feeds a crowd, making it ideal of large get-togethers.

(10-in) prepared angel food cake cups sour cream

1 box (16 oz) powdered sugar 1 can (5 oz) evaporated milk

1 tub (12 oz) Cool Whip

1 jar (16 oz) strawberry glaze 2 quarts strawberries, hulled and sliced

combine the glaze and the strawberries.

Slice the cake into 2-inch pieces. In a large bowl, combine the sour cream, powdered sugar, evaporated milk. Fold in the Cool Whip. In another bowl,

Set the cake pieces in a clear trifle bowl. Spoon the sour cream mixture over the cake. Gently spoon the strawberry mixture over the sour cream.

Ruthie's Culinary Clues

Look for prepared angel food cake in the bakery section of the supermarket. Don't have a trifle bowl? Use a punch bowl or any large glass bowl. For the best flavor and texture, cover and refrigerate this dessert a night before serving. This layered treat looks impressive enough, but if you really want to "wow" your friends and family, top the dessert with a few chocolate shavings.

Got a recipe for Ruthie? Have a problem only she can solve? Send it her way! Write her at: <u>DearMsRuthie@Yahoo.com</u>. If she publishes your dish, you'll get a free Bitchin' Kitchen T-shirt!



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Are we all having a "Wicked-ly" good summer? Just a reminder that the witches are still kicking up their collective heels at The Marcus Center through Sunday, July 7, defy gravity, and be very popular by treating that special someone to a trip to Oz!

Those wonderful Wicked Stars performed a wonderful cabaret to benefit the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW). The Skylight Music Theatre's Cabot provided a great setting for a most memorable evening.

What better way to celebrate Independence Day, 2013, America's 237 birthday; than by doing "Party in the Park!"? SSBL (Saturday Softball Beer League) and The Dairyland Classic host THE party of the Holiday weekend. The event returns to Catalano Square in the heart of The Historic Third Ward. Craig & Dawn of Club Charlies will be the host bar. I love this place, the Gayest Straight pub – ever and Dawn & Craig are great Allies to Our Community.

The extravaganza starts at 3:00 p.m. Saturday, July 6, the always enchanting Dear Ruthie will femcee and Betty Atchison headlines as Cher and Lady GaGa, featuring the Vixen Dancers. For more details – www.ssblmilwaukee.com

Our stellar Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM) is hosting another must-see exhibit now through Sunday, September 8 "30 Americans". This show is a dynamic exploration of contemporary American art made by African American artists dating as far back as 1970. Nearly 80 photographs, paintings, sculptures, installations, and works on paper and in digital media by thirty-one artists raise questions of what it means to be a contemporary artist and an American today. Congratulations Barbara Brown Lee, Senior Director in celebration of 50 years with MAM – Brava!

"Live at Pack Pavilion" starts up again this month with The Slide Brothers Tuesday, July 23 the sounds of Blues, Rock, and Soul all combined with an outcome that is uniquely their own. The following Tuesday, July 30 The Dunwells debut on the stunning Marcus side lawn, with music described as a strikingly exhilarating blend of English Rock and

American Roots. These outdoor concerts continue through next month.

Other outdoor options, now that summer has finally blown in:

The Bristol Renaissance Faire starts Saturday, July 6 – Monday, September 2, for the scoop-age please visit: renfair.com/Bristol/

Bastille Days storm East Town, Cathedral Square Park Thursday, July 11 – Sunday, July 14. Viva a tres good time!

South Shore Frolics at South Shore Park the same weekend Friday, July 11 – Sunday, July 14 fun on both sides of Brew City's downtown.

Festa Italiana – the granddaddy of all Ethnic Festivals runs Friday, July 19 – Sunday, July 21 Henry W. Maier Festival Park, always a great time, on a great lake.

Port Fish Day – Saturday, July 20 Port Washington Lakefront Harbor, upper and lower Lake Parks – well worth the drive!

GermanFest comes home to Milwaukee Thursday, July 25 – Sunday, July 28 the Summerfest Grounds come on down and enjoy all four days! That's a lot of beer!

Brady Street Festival takes place on Saturday, July 27 on Brady Street, it's only one day – but do we put a lot into it! Post party always at The Hybrid.

One of my most favorite artist and a dear friend Shelby Keefe has a new professional home in The Historic Third Ward. Urban Sanctuary 181 North Broadway – across the way from The Skylight – in the Art Asia building, downstairs from Cuvee – how convenient! You must visit! www.studioshelby.com

Into Art? Got Art? Why not make your own Art? Splash Studio, a Painting Bar – 184 North Broadway 414-882-7621 www.splashmilwaukee.com – schedule a party, painting, sipping, learning, and growing! And when the party is over, you will hopefully have something frame-able...

Saturday, July 20th John Weiler and I return to the stage at The Harbor Room to commemorate their anniversary – lucky number 13! We'll sash the Mr. Harbor Room for 2014 in need of a sash, title, fun,

romance, and all things unprintable? Come on down!

Since last we played – PrideFest 2013 took place – what a ball, and no rain! What a fabulous time I had with my sisters-in-sin, Maple Veneer, Mrs. Beasley, and Rich – an honorary "sister". Craig Bodoh asked the magnificent Maple, the flawless John Weiler and me to host the PrideFest Leather Fetish Fashion Show – what a fun three-way! And thank You – what a great audience! And of course the hot, Models that in spite of the cool temps, raised a lot of temperatures!

Scott Gunkel, Kate Sherry and their devoted Staff did another fantastic job of letting us be! I love Pride-Fest it really is a "Reunion" where else is it that we're all together, enjoying, sharing, and expressing who or what we are?

The B.J. Daniels All Star Review was all that and soooo much more! B.J. is Royalty, Drag and otherwise! She still has it, and knows what to do with it! No one can mesmerize an audience like this Entertainer. I've been fortunate to know B since the mid-80's, we were in the Cream City Chorus together, among other great experiences like Doris Delago's HIT Shows at The Marc Plaza! So glad we haven't lost B to a bigger town or market. Shining alongside her creating quite the heat wave were: Goldie Adams, Shannon DuPree from Hamburger Mary's, Shauna Love, Jackie Roberts, Miss Nova Divine — to name just a few of the sterling starlets that brought glamor personified back to PrideFest and The Miller Stage.

B.J. closed the show by acknowledging two of her all-time, all-star, favorite colleagues Holly Brown and Ginger Spice – unfortunately these dynamic divas couldn't be with us due to AIDS. However their memory and magic is still with us and revered. An added bonus the return of the Voice of Club 219 – D.J. Kim, "Kimberly Ann"! Back in the day, you couldn't do 219, without climbing to the roof and chatting with Kimberly Ann – he still can spin the music – like nobody else!

Well as Miss Scarlett O'Hara is quoted as saying "tomorrow is another day", so from PrideFest and the B.J. Daniels All-Star Review into the night we partied, and then arose too quickly to prepare for the Pride Parade 2013! Brent & Jim and Crew have this down to a fine science! Paul Fairchild, President of the Cream City Foundation, engaged me with their spiffy new logo to co-host the Parade with him. We were granted permission by the Walker's Point Mobil



Station/American United Taxi Cab Service to set up camp on their site once again, thank you Mike! I was lucky enough to get a brand new stage set, Mohawk Jeff and his team made everything look stage ready. And while they were doing the set, I was having the transformation done at Goldie Adams'. Goldie gives good face – and I wouldn't appear anywhere without her powers of pancake and Max Factor. A quickie with Toby and B.J. at Woody's and my carriage was a waiting. The debonair Paul Fairchild escorted me from Woody's – to a smart, convertible, compliments of Doris Day's Fan Club President, the beautiful Bobby Patrick, and down the Parade route we sauntered to my home base – Boom/The Room.

I paid homage to Marlo "That Girl" Thomas with a decidedly retro late 60's look including the optional kite – designed by artist Burt Gross of The Domes. As we sailed onto South Second Street my arrival was to the theme song from the above mentioned TV hit. What a great attendance, the weather did cooperate, no rain, the esteemed Judges sat across the street from us - including Peggy Magister, the owner of Crazy Water! I must thank, acknowledge, and credit all the Angels that made this one fly - - Roger RamJet, Joe Kender, Ron, Mohawk Jeff and Team, Mike, Kyle, Paul, and Bobby Patrick, Goldie Addams, Maple Veneer, Brian Buchberge & Andy Schlaider, Dan Musha, Burt Gross, Paul Fairchild, Chuck Gorsz, the photographer - a future Ansel Adams, David Lauersdorf, my Interview-ees - who sat down to be "grilled" - Carl Bogner - LGBT Film Festival, Susan Modder - representing the UWM LGBT History Collection, Joe Pabst - Philanthropist Extraordinaire, Michael Lisowski and Dee from "Queer TV", The Florentine Opera's Jill Bruss and Sarah sharing that the Florentine will be 80 this year! So glad something is older than me! Also the Florentine is very involved with the Community with The Camarata Opera Party Group, that hosts Opera Parties before each opening in The Room of Boom, Katie Belanger with Fair Wisconsin, Mary Hartwig from ARCW promoting the AIDS Walk and Wicked Cabaret, and the many Stars in the Audience I did give shout outs to but time prevented from visiting with: Internationally accredited artist Patrick Farrell, Jody Michael Armata from Northshore Funeral Services, Mark Pilsnik, Dr. William Keyse Rudolph with MAM, Mayor Tom Barrett - whom I walked with for a bit, regards to Paul in the Mayor's car, County Executive Chris Abele, whom I had a photo op with - he is very attractive, Gwen Moore - who actually got out of her car and danced a bit, Peggy Romo West, JoCasta Zamarripa, Sue Black, Pride Parade Grand Marshall, who owns the Milwaukee Wave and is their Executive Director, and threw a soccer ball to us, and please forgive me if your name wasn't included in this recap - - you're all so important and appreciated! When the Parade concluded, by coincidence to the Donna Summer hit – "Last Dance" people actually did just that! They took to the street and felt the music. Thank You Police staff who allowed this and got into the moment and enjoyed! One minor setback, with the set – not everything was secured and like Boy George, I tumbled for you, thank God for a bouffant wig! You can never say I haven't "fallen" for You! All that was bruised, my ego! Next year, I'll have to have a seat filler, before I take to the stage to make sure all is secure! LOL

I slipped in and sipped at The Room, their gorgeous garden, & Boom. Catching up with Oblivia, Tim Hampton, Mark the Cop, Burt, Lance, David, Jennifer, & so many!

Then onto Fluid and the remarkable Bill Wardlow, John, Will, Lizzie Bordeaux, this is where we got the list of Parade Winners – Kudos to all that participated and added so much to the day!

Over to call on Betsy at Walker's Pint and party with the Girls!

Then to Club Charlies (they were fabulous in the Pride Parade – with their special treat) for a bite and catch up with Dawn, Craig, Brian (Mr. Softball) Reinkober, and all the gang on the other side of the river.

From Charlie's it was to Kruz where the party never ends! I visited with Serge who welcomed "That Girl" kite and all so royally,

Then onto This Is It – where Eric, Tyler, Jerry Gin&Tonic, and George were keeping us well liquored and of course that great juke box!

Congratz to PGLAG's very own sweet Georgia Henry on being awarded and earning the PrideFest Community Award for all she does for all of us!

This year's Parade Winners were:

Best Marching Unit, and you have to appreciate a unit that marches, Planned ParenthoodBest Decorated Car – The Friends of M.A.D.A.C.C.Best Float – M. Salon Spirit Award – Club Icon – great seeing Clint in town, this castle in the corn field always impresses!

Before the Parade passes by, PrideFest, and just what a fantastic weekend it was - - the event filled timetable really started on Thursday, June 6 – with The 2nd

Annual Big Gay 5 K! Milwaukee Gay Sports Network (MGSN) & PrideFest Milwaukee held this Walk/Run to benefit ARCW. Sponsored by: MSGN and PrideFest, with a grant provided by The Cream City Foundation what an awesome way to launch the festivities! You will want to take part next year, even as a cheer leader or observer. http://milwaukeegaysports.com/biggay5k/

Deepest condolences to Sir Chip Wagner on the loss of his beloved Frank, we lost a great man with Frank – ironic for him to pass away on Pride Weekend. Besides being Chip's partner, Frank was a Pride Parade originator and a great asset to our Community. You will be missed!

This just in as we go to press, it has been reported to me that BooBoo of The M&M Club has died. Known more formally as Robert Kaufman, he started his career as a bartender at the original M's, worked his way up to bar manager, and then ran the place -- a fixture in our community known for a great sense of humor and love for Country Western music is now gone. Since the closing of the Gay institution, BooBoo had been plagued with failing health; hopefully he is now at peace after a very long and painful journey. I hope he gets to "Go Walking After Midnight" with his cherished Patsy Cline...

On a much happier note, Congratulations and my very Best Wishes go out to Chris Knutson & John Kushik for tying the knot! Yes, they may have had to travel out of state to do it, but they did it, and held a sensational celebration at Potawatomi Casino Ball Room. What a joyous occasion, including family, friends, co-workers and a Tazzbah reunion!

fun I shared with the ecstatic couple and their guests: Keane, Michael, Craig, Darwin, Tony The Piano Man, Roger RamJet, Don & Steve, and many more. The marvelous music, food, setting an ideal evening - - long may they love!

Food Time: I returned to The Capital Grille for another fabulous feast! Outstanding on all fronts! I got my favorite table, sitting under Golda Meir's portrait – we all look good in her company, a great Server Angel Sevilla, yes he was named accurately, and a meal fit for a king! 414-223-0600 located at 310 West Wisconsin Avenue – if you're looking for perfection, look no further!

Remember, it's the glamor, not the grammar – will summer ever get here? Enjoy and appreciate as I remain, still Cordially yours,.

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Well here we are again, in the wonderful month of July. And yes, for those of you who remember this is my birthday month. And no, I won't tell when it is or how old I am, you are going to have to get me pretty drunk to tell you any of it! Well having said that I just want to say that I hope you all had a great time at Pridefest and at the Pride parade last month. Please also keep in mind all the hard work that went in to making those two events such a success. So if you get a chance let the Pride Parade and Pridefest know how much you care by telling them through their websites, pridepardemke.com and pridefest.com respectively and on their facebook pages @Milwaukee Pride Parade and @PrideFest Milwaukee. Now that we have all of that out of the way let's get on with the purpose of this column.

I figured this month I should talk about some of the extremes of piercing, especially since now we are starting to get into the extreme temperatures of summer. So without any further babble from me let's get on with it.

The most common extreme piercing you will see is the surface to surface piercing. These are the piercings you see on the back of people's necks and on their arms, and pretty much any where else you can think of. These piercing are fairly new to the piercing industry and because of this everyone has their own ideas about the way they should be done. I could get into the reasons for why you should get this and why you shouldn't get that, but that would make for a pretty piss poor and boring column. So I am going to tell you this, check your shop out and be very comfortable with them before you think about getting this type of piercing. Also remember that just because you know the piercer and they are cool this does not make them a great piercer and hell they may have never have done a surface piercing in their life. So ask and be thorough, and also remember that there is no reason not to shop around.

Surface piercing take quite a while to heal, they can take as long as 6 to 9 months before they are healed enough to even change the jewelry. They

are irritated very easily, so make sure that you take good care of your piercing and don't monkey with it or play with it! Always remember to keep your piercing clean and don't let it get sunburned!

One of the other more extreme piercings that are beginning to be seen are implants. That's right I said implants, and I don't mean boob jobs or dick jobs! Implants go under the skin and create a design that looks three dimensional once they are healed. As with surface piercings these are not to be taken lightly as major problem can arise if the procedure is not done correctly.

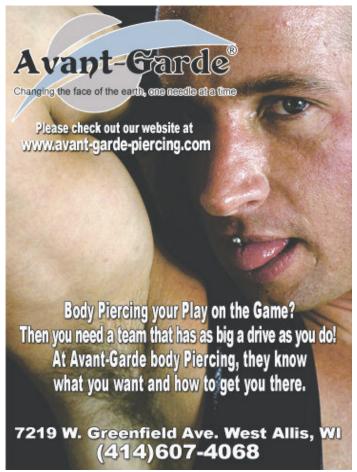
That is about all I really have to babble about this month, so having said that lets get on with some reader mail.

Dear Brent,

I have been reading your column for a long time and there is one thing I have to ask. How do you come up with the ideas for your column and why do you have such an attitude about it? — **John**

Well thanks for writing in John. As far as how I come up wit the idea's that is easy. I just sit down and think of something good to write about. As far as my attitude, I really don't think I have an attitude. I like to think of it as my writing style, and it's not my fault that I do it in my own little crass way. I also have the attitude I do because this is something very important to me, and I will never step down to anyone when it comes to things that are important to me.

Well it seems I have run out of room again, I want to thank you all for reading and don't forget if you have any questions that you want answer email me at avantgarde@voyager.net. Until next month, have a great time in July and enjoy the fireworks! (Whether they are in your pants or in the air!)







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Two 718 E. Burleigh St. Walker's Pint 818 S 2nd St (414)643-7468 Woody's 1579 S 2nd (414) 672-0806









13th Anniversary JULY 19th, 20th & 21st



Sign Up NOW for our 13th Annual MR HARBOR ROOM CONTEST.
Applications now available at bar.

Friday July 19th Meet N Greet the Judges & Contestants 8 pm to 12 pm

Saturday July 20th - 11 pm MR HARBOR ROOM CONTEST Emceed by John Weiler, Karen Valentine & DJ Kelly

Sunday July 21st
Patio Cookout & Beer Bust
3 pm to 7 pm



SPECIALS 8P,-CL

Monday

\$1 OFF BOTTLED BEER

Tuesday

\$1.50 OFF ALL IMPORTS

Wednesday

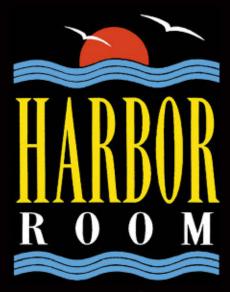
\$1.50 TAPS OF MILLER & SCHLITZ

Thursday

\$1.50 OFF ALL RAILS

\$3 Pabst Tallboys EVERYDAY

HAPPY HOUR M-F 3-8 2-4-1 Drinks & FREE Pizza



117 E Greenfield Ave MILWAUKEE 414.672.7988 www.harbor-room.com