

QUEST



QUEST MAGAZINE
VOLUME 21 ISSUE 1
JANUARY 2014

DJ CHOMPER

PAUL MASTERSON INTERVIEWS
THIS RISING TALENT

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The Rep
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JANUARY 7 – FEBRUARY 9

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End of the **RAINBOW**

By **Peter Quilter** | Directed by **Mark Clements**

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END OF THE RAINBOW

THE MOVING, MIRACULOUS PORTRAIT OF GAY ICON JUDY GARLAND, COMES TO THE REP!

Friends of Dorothy, Rejoice! The Milwaukee Repertory Theater continues its 2013/14 Season with a celebrated production of Peter Quilter's *End of the Rainbow*, a new play with music. The recipient of international rave reviews including four Olivier Award nominations and three Tony Award nominations, *End of the Rainbow* stars 12-time Jeff Award-winning Chicago actress Hollis Resnik as the iconic Judy Garland. Joining her are Thomas J. Cox (Anthony), Nicholas Harazin (Mickey) and Rep Associate Artist Jonathan Gillard Daly (Various). Directed by Rep Artistic Director Mark Clements, *End of the Rainbow* was featured in *Time Magazine*'s "Top Ten" List and called "electrifying" by *The New York Times*. *End of the Rainbow* is set in December 1968. Judy Garland is about to make her comeback ...again. In a London hotel room preparing for a series of concerts,

with both her new young fiancé and her adoring accompanist, Garland struggles to get "beyond the rainbow" with her signature cocktail of talent, tenacity and razor-sharp wit. This savagely funny drama offers unique insight into the inner conflict that inspired and consumed one of the most beloved figures in American and LGBT popular culture. The production features Garland's most memorable songs including "The Man That Got Away," "Come Rain Or Come Shine," "The Trolley Song" and, of course, "Somewhere Over The Rainbow."

End of the Rainbow runs in The Rep's Quadracci Powerhouse from January 7 – February 9, 2014. "A pre-eminent singer and movie star, Judy Garland is a seminal figure in American entertainment and a cultural icon, who still makes a huge impact across generations, even over forty years after her

death," says Artistic Director Mark Clements. "*Rainbow* – not a musical, but a play with some classic songs – offers the opportunity for a truly tour-de-force performance that explores the joy and the heartbreak that sum up Judy's life so well."

Milwaukee Rep will host a series of special events and programs around *End of the Rainbow*: Rep In Depth – get an insider's look at the production from Rep Associate Artist Jonathan Gillard Daly with a discussion beginning 45 minutes prior to every performance. For details on other *End of the Rainbow* events and tickets go to www.MilwaukeeRep.com

or call The Rep Ticket Office at 414-224-9490. For Group tickets call: 414-290-5340.

(prices begin at \$20)

TICKETS/INFORMATION: 414-224-9490 or buy tickets online at www.MilwaukeeRep.com

QUEST TURNS 21

WISCONSIN'S LONGEST RUNNING CONTINUOUSLY PUBLISHED LGBT MAGAZINE HAS A BIRTHDAY

We are excited to bring you issue number one of Quest's 21st year of publishing news and entertainment for Wisconsin's LGBT community. As I reflect back on this and my choice for our January cover, I remember the reasons *Quest* came about. You can probably blame it all on my childhood.

As a toddler I became enthralled with playing music on record. I am not sure how my mother managed to stay sane with all those hours of tinny screeching "music" from those little yellow and orange 78 rpm records she would give me to play on my phonograph.

As a teenager, I played around with a home-run radio station being a DJ for the kids on my block. As I turned an adult and came to terms with being a young gay man, it was again music that lured me in. The Roxy Lounge in Green Bay had a juke box on a small second floor. We would run upstairs to dance when a favorite song came on. Someone thought it would be great to set up some turntables and play the records like a DJ would. I guess I volunteered to set up my own equipment and then later discovered I was in this alone now and would also be the DJ.

Years later after DJing in Madison, Green Bay and Rochester New York while attending RIT for a career in photography, the chance to become a bar owner presented itself when a bar I had worked at for many years, *Who's* was going to close. The thought of running a bar AND being the DJ where I could have full control was too much temptation and *Za's* was born.

21 years ago, frustrated that smaller cities did not get the needed attention in the existing gay press I decided my bar along with others across the state

could use something new. We called it *Quest*.

Quest was a first in many ways for LGBT publishing in Wisconsin. We were the first to publish outside of the two bigger cities of Madison and Milwaukee. We were the first to offer an 800 number and faxing. We also were the first to offer email and a website. Most importantly we were the first to publish using the new desktop publishing equipment which made all this possible at a much lower cost to our advertisers. I had previously done paste-up for newspapers and made darkroom halftones and negatives, so I was well aware the revolution the Macintosh, *Quark Xpress* and *Adobe Photoshop* was.

Quest today is a group of writers based in Milwaukee and photographers based in Milwaukee, Madison and Green Bay. We continue to try and bring a voice to all corners of Wisconsin. We deliberately include lesbians, female impersonators, leather daddies and bears who are a part of our diverse community even though I sometimes get flack for not trying to make the magazine more mainstream.

Our format these days is concentrated on the "gay lifestyle", but we are mostly about entertainment including movies, music and theatre. I get a little thrill therefore to be able to feature a new, young DJ talent on our cover this month known as DJ Chomper. He reminds me of how and why I started down this long journey and met so many wonderful gay brothers and sisters along the way. It is young persons like him that is our future and I think that future is bright.

Mark Mariucci (Za), Publisher

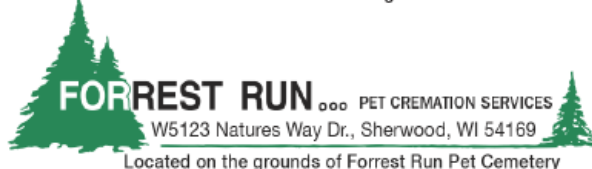
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AN INTERVIEW WITH DERIC SCHWARTZ AKA CHOMPER

by Paul Masterson

If you make the rounds in Wisconsin club scene you may have danced and sung along to Chomper aka Deric Schwartz. An up-and-coming young DJ originally from Hartford, WI, Chomper has been living in Milwaukee over 4 years. For this energetic 22 year old his DJ career has already taken him to most of the regions leading clubs and major Pride events. The list includes Boom & the Room, La Cage, Studio 200, Shelter Club and Napalese Lounge in Green Bay, Woof's in Madison, Madison Pride and Milwaukee PrideFest's main stage. He currently has residency at Filibusters in Sheboygan.

Chomper's career began as a member of a progressive metal band playing electronic music. A self-taught musician, he plays bass, basic guitar, piano and drums. His taste moved from metal to electronic when he began writing electronic music for fun. He then moved into DJing. He soon found his genre niche. "I do progressive house, electro-house, top 40, or a recognizable mix...something people can sing along to. I usually have a pre-made play list based on what I think the audience will work with the energy of the crowd & improvise like. But I can if I think they want something different. For example, Milwaukee has a really typical top 40 taste. People like to sing along. I do my own mashups so I go from older to new stuff. I go for a big sound, make sure people know the words and throw in surprises. I have a Beatles mashup. I build it up and then throw in random music. It keeps people's attention. Some DJs create a typical mix and people don't even notice what they're playing. My style is designed to make people notice. It's my personal touch," Chomper said.

But DJing is more than just a play list. It's about psychology and a touch of musical science. It's knowing your audience and knowing what they want to hear. "When you play that big sound and people sing along with their hands up, it means they're happy and having a good time. DJing is half the battle. A lot has to do with the light and sound as well and I do that as well," Chomper explains.

"Some DJs play what *they* want. They don't don't take requests. That makes them look conceited.

You hope your audience will trust you but I try not to be rude. If someone asks for a request that doesn't fit the pattern, I try to fit it in when it works. I interact with my audience. I talk to them. Some DJs hide behind their booth. I'm on the mic, making sure people are listening and making them part of the show."

As for the science, Chomper reveals his secret. "I use a method called *Mixed in Key*. It's software for harmonic mixing. It identifies the key a song is written in. The scale it uses is like a clock. It's complicated but the idea is to raise the energy according to harmonic steps. When I do a pre-made set list, I control the harmonic mix. You get a better flow by using this system of harmonic steps. Some DJs just play songs. They

can be successful but they can also lose the energy that way. You have to have the pattern of what's hot but keep in the scale. Let's say I have an older song that is in the same harmony scale as a new song. When you move from one to the other it keeps the energy flow going. I didn't know about this when I began. A friend asked if I used *Mixed in Key* and I said 'tell me

more.' I taught myself how to use it. Since then my sets are a lot smoother. There's a lot more energy levels and conscious manipulation of the audience response. Now when I listen to radio shows or live sets I know the music. I can tell if someone is using the same system.

There's a key sequence that is recognizable. If something is out of sync it's noticeable."

Chomper's gigs are, for the moment, mainly in Wisconsin but he plans to head out of the region in 2014 and develop some other career goals. "I'm traveling a lot. I want to play other clubs and festivals in Chicago. I have some connections in Fort Lauderdale as well.

I'm also involved in the Bear and Leather community. T.C. Hammond won Wisconsin Leather and I'm doing the circuit with him as part of his title holders community service.

Career goals ...right now realistically it's a hobby. I'd like it turn into something real, like a studio set up. I'd like to help other DJs in any genre like rock, pop, and hip-hop."

Chomper offers advice to future DJs, "be dedicated and be ready to travel and drop anything for a gig. Know your audience and your equipment and get to know your venue. Get a residency if possible.

When I first did Filibusters, I got referred by someone. I just did my thing with no expectations. Everybody was super nice. After I played the owner offered me a full time gig. It's basically

getting into a place and working well with the other staff. So it's a whole experience. Whatever will draw people. But, as I said before, make your audience part of the show. And, keep the crowd jacked."

**Readers can find Chomper at
[Facebook.com/Chomperwi](https://www.facebook.com/Chomperwi)
and sample his mashups at
soundcloud.com/djchomper**



RENT HIKE FORCES MGAC TO LEAVE WALKER'S POINT LOCATION

By Julia Kind

After 8 ½ years, Milwaukee Gay Arts Center (MGAC) closed its doors at its Walker's Point location. The unique LGBT, non-profit, all volunteer arts organization received notification in late October that a new tenant willing to pay 50% more rent had been found. MGAC was out November 30. QUEST's Julia Kind spoke to one of its founders and current executive director Paul Masterson about this unexpected turn, MGAC's past, and its future.

QUEST: Before we get into the crux of the matter, can you give us some MGAC's background and history?

Paul Masterson: Sure. In spring of 2005 the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center opened with a musical variety show, *Gay Broadway*. That was followed by its first art exhibition, *Tapestries*. The exhibit featured Wisconsin related AIDS quilts from the DC based Names Project as well as works by local artists. To my knowledge it was the first time the AIDS quilts had been brought to Milwaukee. I should also mention the matter of our name. When we first conceived the center, we debated the name. We wanted to be high profile and not hide behind an acronym. We also felt calling it "LGBT" would lead to confusion with the LGBT Community Center. So we went with the Milwaukee "GAY" Arts Center. That didn't please the Ls, Bs, and Ts. But, the reality is that's the one word everyone understands. In the historic coming-out episode of "Ellen", she declares "I'm GAY." So we declared it. Cream City Foundation had a "GAY Neighbors" campaign five years later. They got the same push-back from certain community leaders. But, like I said, their studies came to the same conclusion: GAY is a universally understood word. So they went with it.

QUEST: And from there?

PM: From there we took off. We had LGBT relevant art shows, produced theatrical shows, dance and music. The first theatrical production was Jonathan Tolins *Twilight of the Gods*. Ray Bradford of RSVP Theatre directed. Later we had our own in-house theatre company. We produced a run of great productions including *Angels in America*. We had a troupe come in from England and did a play entitled *Seduction*. There were a lot. And Theatrical Tendencies did three shows at MGAC. Art shows went up every 6 weeks. We showcased predominantly local artists but national and international artists as well. Our musical offerings ranged from Baroque to folk. The space has very live acoustics so the experience was wonderful no matter what genre.

QUEST: You didn't mention *Naked Boys Singing*.

PM: Right, how could I forget? That was to be our big opening hit. It was an international success and we thought, as a new arts company, we'd produce it to give us a lot of exposure, so to speak.

QUEST: Well, it did.

PM: Exactly. But not quite as we intended. The

city's licensing department called the Milwaukee Police Vice Squad and had us closed down. Someone in that office thought we needed a theater license. We didn't. During the process of depositions and negotiations we also learned that "someone" in the licensing office felt we would incite a riot between Christian zealots and audience members. The police moved in and shut us down. About a week later, however, the city sent us a letter saying we could run the show while they investigated. The show was remounted a couple of months later but by then the financial damage had been done.

We have an odd political sensibility in local LGBT activism. We feel its necessary to conform to "their" expectations so we can earn our rights. That, for some, means sacrificing our identity so we become acceptable.

QUEST: And you sued the city.

PM: Yes, we did. We came to a settlement five years later. The original case went to Federal Court and was thrown out without prejudice. The ACLU then picked it up. It was a grueling experience. By the time it got to the ACLU, the other MGAC founders had moved out of town. I was left to represent us through the entire legal process. I really have to thank the ACLU and the lawyers who represented MGAC. I could not have hung in there without their dedication and perseverance.

QUEST: And they settled?

PM: Yes, eventually. They say you can't fight city hall, but we did and we won. The irony was the lack of community support. After the closure, we were criticized by some for having produced the show in the first place. It was a shameful response. They missed the point. Yes, it was a silly show with a gay male focus but it was fun and completely unoffensive. We have an odd political sensibility in local LGBT activism. We feel its necessary to conform to "their" expectations so we can earn our rights. That, for some, means sacrificing our identity so we become acceptable. I don't believe we should. One of my favorite quotes is from the German gay activist, Rosa von Praunheim, who said, "it's not the homosexual who is perverse, but rather the society in which he lives."

QUEST: So how did the community leaders react to MGAC's victory?

PM: I got an email from one person, a call from another and a couple of congratulatory remarks from others. It was disappointing but not surprising. It's Milwaukee and the LGBT community isn't up for confrontation. There was no real appreciation or support for the effort. The ACLU defended us but the LGBT community looked the other way.

QUEST: So tell us more about MGAC.

PM: As far as I know we are one of very few independent LGBT arts organizations worldwide.

There are community centers with galleries or that put on plays or show movies. There are other "for profit" galleries and theaters. But, as far as I am aware, we are pretty unique. Last year I heard someone in New York City had launched a similar organization using MGAC as a model. I don't know how successful it is. It's NYC after all and LGBT arts are well represented otherwise.

QUEST: MGAC also fields a softball team.

PM: Yes. We were first associated with the SSBL team sponsored by Queer Life News, known as the Queer Life Gnus. When the paper went under I thought it was a good idea to keep the team going. We had a great roster of players...and still do. It's an amazingly diverse mix of gay, lesbian and straight players, ranging from university professors to baristas. It's all about fun, sportsmanship and, above all, camaraderie. This year we took first place in our SSBL division. We're the only team not sponsored by a bar. Over the years I've tried to get other LGBT groups, like the Community Center, to sponsor a team. I don't understand why they don't. SSBL represents the good of our community. A board member once asked why MGAC has a softball team. I thought the question really exposed the issue. We are part of the community, LGBT and non-LGBT, and it just seems logical to participate in the community. As an arts organization we might appear elitist or somehow disconnected. In fact, art is the expression of who we are. It doesn't set us apart. It's our heart.

QUEST: Alright, so what happened?

PM: Funding has always been a dilemma. Years ago, I had a conversation with Maria Cadenas, the former executive director of Cream City Foundation (CCF). As usual, I was begging for money. Her response was "my funders are business people not artists." The message was, it's about the bottom line and unless a business can reconcile a positive financial impact, in other words, a potential profit for its investment, the arts are not a priority. We've struggled as a result. Some years were better than others. Joe Pabst, through his CCF fund was a regular donor and we received a Milwaukee Arts Board Grant, the first awarded to an LGBT organization. Other years have been quite lean. Keeping up with the rent and costs was always difficult. The gentrification of Walker's Point raised the property values and the landlord, logically, took advantage of that. We had a month to month lease and he found another renter, a bicycle shop, willing to pay 50% more rent.

QUEST: What's in the offing?

PM: For the moment we are headquartered in the PrideFest office at the LGBT Community Center. We're looking for a new space but in the meantime we're planning various events at other venues and, of course, at PrideFest, where we have our own MGAC stage and manage the Art and Culture Building. We'll be playing softball with SSBL next season as well. We're carrying on regardless.

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Director Sam Feder in person!

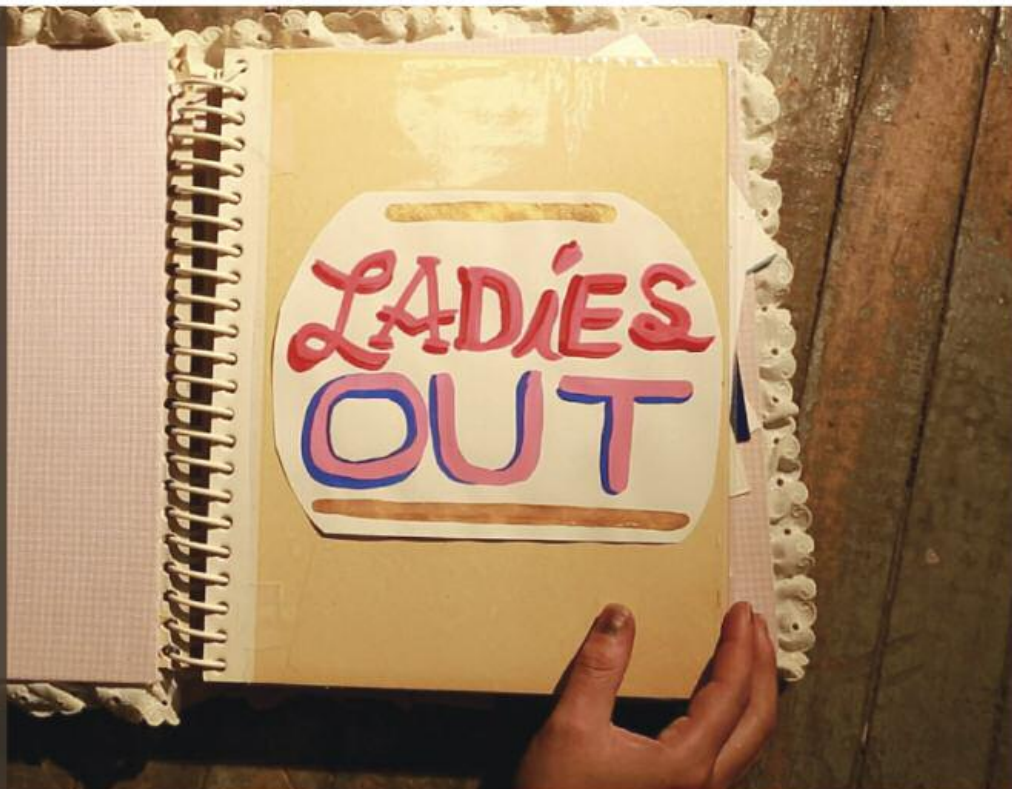
Sam Feder's playful and meditative documentary joins performance artist and writer Kate Bornstein on her latest tour, the film capturing rollicking public performances and painful personal revelations as it bears witness to Kate as a trailblazing artist-theorist-activist who inhabits a space between male and female with wit, style and astonishing candor.

MARCH 6, 7PM
UWM UNION THEATRE
FREE

LADIES OUT

Filmmaker LOIS BIELEFELD in person!

LADIES OUT shines a light on a spirited community of Milwaukee lesbians over the age of 40 who gather monthly to catch up and get down on the dance floor. "My goal is to celebrate these women's lives and the vibrant community they have formed by exploring their individual life stories," director Bielefeld reports. "LADIES OUT seeks to revel in their common threads of love, coming out, and acceptance."





For those loyal **Quest** readers who have grown weary of their cinematic entertainment this holiday season rather too filled with Tidings of Good Cheer, look no further than director/screenwriter Richard LeMay's latest feature, **Naked as We Came**, a dysfunctional family drama rendered with a decidedly melancholic palette.

The film opens with a voice-over referencing a woman who has lost everything following a long hidden political scandal; this presumably designed to offer moviegoers an explanation for the familial rift which is to follow.

Our tragic heroine is Lilly (Lue McWilliams) now in the final stages of terminal cancer. Having checked herself out of the hospital, she has come home to die. Lilly's only companion is Ted (Benjamin Weaver), a hunky, bestselling novelist whose presence and purpose in the household proves rather vague to both Glenn as well as to Lilly's two longestranged children whom Ted, inexplicably, has summoned.

Whatever their fears for their mother's condition, what they find upon arrival is a gorgeous well-ordered home boasting light, loads of well tended plants and some truly kickass classical music. Poor Lilly can only look the worse for wear within these luxurious surroundings.

Once they've arrived it becomes strikingly clear why Lilly isn't all that thrilled to see her children much less sanctioned their summons.

The eldest is Laura (Karmine Alers). If Glenn was tasked with describing her character only one word would be necessary:

angry. Laura is constantly angry. She's angry because her brother is 15 minutes late in picking her up. She is angry to receive Ted's summons, treating it as little more than an inconvenience, one which needs to be resolved with all due haste. She might be dying but much to Laura's chagrin, Lilly still knows how to piss her off. Laura is angry at Ted's presence in the family home and in response she tells Lilly she looks like shit and later rails against Ted, first demanding to know if Lilly was sleeping with the young man before insisting Ted was nothing but an opportunist.

Then Laura tells Lilly that she wants Lilly to come home with her...

Compared to angry Laura, how could Ryan Vigilant's cute as a button Elliot not emerge as the nice one? Much younger than his sister, Elliot is portrayed as someone who has found it much easier to fall into step with his sister than by taking responsibility for his own choices.

Giving the narrative a bit of a nudge, Ted urges Lilly to take advantage of the opportunity she been given with her children of a second chance to become the mother, if only briefly, she now wishes she could have been. Sadly LeMay's screenplay only rarely manages to scratch beneath the surface to explore the causes for Laura's anger, Eliot's resentment.

Wishing to impart some hard-earned wisdom to Eliot, Lilly reflects on signing up him for swimming lessons but how having seen swimmers better than himself, Eliot gave up; that if he couldn't win, he didn't want to play. Yet Eliot remembers it all rather differently



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

Where **Naked as We Came** succeeds best is crafting an atmosphere of familiar tension and disappointment, although like so many indie films these days, cinematographer Vitaly Bokser finds it necessary to pan the landscape again and again. "So many trees, so many clouds," mused Glenn. Still, the rambling house is a perfect setting: stunningly spacious yet cold and barren.

Why, again, has Lilly chosen to come home to die?

The characters, too, seem perfectly suited to the surroundings: attractive yet lacking substance since LeMay eschews proper back stories for the characters in favor of awkward, drawn out family dinners, much shouting and a curious marijuana-infused picnic. Sadly, the political scandal which serves as a narrative framework proves a non-starter.

Lilly, glamorously turbaned a la Norma Desmond, has already made her peace with her condition; no follower of Dylan Thomas is she. Yet acceptance of her fate hardly makes for compelling drama, nor does it help that she is hindered with dialogue like "we all leave the same way we came in ... naked and alone."

Speaking of naked – or rather shirtless – both Ryan Vigilant and Benjamin Weaver acquit themselves nicely. A photo of the shirtless Vigilant proves a prominent feature of the film's marketing campaign and is likely to accompany this review.

Beautifully filmed and boasting a dynamic score, **Naked as We Came** struck much more of a chord with Glenn's friends than indeed with Glenn yet is surely well worth a rental, if not a must-have DVD purchase.

Just the facts...

Naked as We Came clocks in at 84 minutes

Naked as We Came is due out on DVD in January

Director Richard LeMay's other credits include **200 American** and **Whirlwind**

All about Naked as We Came

@ <http://nakedaswecamethemovie.com>

and for just a moment their relationship gains clarity.

Glenn wished for more scenes like this, scenes which would have brought much needed depth to the four characters, scenes which would have enabled Glenn to actually become involved with their individual stories, to care about these four characters.

Instead, LeMay's screenplay veers off in another direction entirely.

After a particularly difficult dysfunctional dinner, poor Lilly is whisked off to bed whilst Ted, Eliot and Laura all head off to the pool. To her credit, Laura senses she's the odd girl out and makes a hasty retreat, allowing the two toothsome lads a chance to get to know each other better – at least biblically. Following a hot tub confessional, Ted and Eliot hit the sheets; well of course they do. The resulting lovemaking is astonishingly artistic, absurdly restrained and worst of all, in the very best taste.

Still, the light of day brings with it more shouting (Laura), more hand-gnashing and recriminations (Eliot) even if Lilly gives her tacit approval.

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JASON DOTTLEY'S RETURN TO LOVE STORY

Star of TV's *Sordid Lives* On Life and Love After Divorce

By Mick Sandoval

When *Sordid Lives* star Jason Dottley married his long-term partner, playwright-filmmaker Del Shores, in 2003, the pair imagined theirs would be a love to last a lifetime.

Together, the 'first couple of West Hollywood' (as they were often dubbed by fans of the show) fought hard for marriage equality, becoming posterboys of the movement. That was, until last year, when Del Shores announced via Facebook that they were splitting. In his post, Shores wrote, "This was not what I wanted, but I must now accept what Jason wants."

Disappointed fans waited to hear Dottley's reason for leaving, however, their wait would be a long one. The early 30s Mississippi native chose to remain silent. Even Shores admitted in an interview with the *Dallas Voice* that he didn't know why Dottley departed. "Let me put it this way," he explained to reporter Rich Lopez, "I come up with reasons I don't cast certain (actors), but the bottom line is, I don't want (them) to play the role. The bottom line was Jason said, 'I don't want to be married to you anymore.' And there was no negotiation on any level."

After a year of personal contemplation, Dottley says he is ready to break his silence. More than that, he is eager to experience love again. He sings about it in "Love Story", a song he wrote that releases next month.

The slice of 80's pop, layered with emotionally compelling lyrics, is the first of a three-part experience Dottley is calling *The Love Story Project* that will also include a music video and a Love-U-Mentary film.

You made your marriage with Del Shores public. Why did you choose to keep your divorce private for so long?

I chose to keep my pain and my journey to myself, to write about it, to learn from it. Discussing it with total strangers while I was lost in the trek myself was not on the agenda for me.

How long has it been since the divorce became final?

April, 2013.

You were married nine years. Walking down the aisle, did you intend for it to be forever?

Of course I did.

When did the blooms first start falling from the rose?

That sounds so pretty. About two years before we separated.

Were you fighting or simply drifting in different directions?

We evolved into people who didn't complement and inspire each other any more. We stopped healing, growing. It wasn't like I threw the towel in the first time it got ugly. It was two years of collapsing before the foundation had to be scrapped entirely. Then we fought. Divorce doesn't bring the best out of you.

When did you know it was over?

At some point, a fire inside of you for someone burns out. It's a cold, lonely feeling. You just know.

What is your relationship with Del like now?

We are peaceful and out of each other's lives.

Are you prepared to see him with a new man?

I saw pics of Del with a guy that I heard he's dating. He looked so happy. It eased my guilt for leaving. As for him seeing me with a new man, well, once I'm ready to share that part of my life openly again, he'll see and he'll be fine.

Is it true that Del recast you in *Sordid Lives*?

Can you imagine for one minute how awkward that set would be? I'm not friends with anyone in that cast because of my divorce. If he has recast the role, congrats to the new guy, who I hear is the original Ty from the movie. My life has moved on from *Sordid Lives*, so it's not something that I feel I lost. It's cherished, and I'm fine to leave my work as Ty complete as-is. And, I am definitely the better Ty. (Laughs) Yeah, I said it. Del knows it too.

Has it been hard to contemplate love after divorce?

If you go out looking for love, you might as well stay home. Love will find you.

What is one thing you will do in your next relationship as a result of what you learned from your last?

I will communicate better. I will compromise more and I will always make sure he knows that he's my everything.

Will you walk down the aisle again?

You bet your ass.

Will the next time be forever?

Who can say? I believe we are intended to have a series of love affairs.

You don't believe in one soul mate?

I absolutely believe in soul mates. Nothing about a soul mate says that you are meant to be together forever, or even together at all. My three best friends are all my soul mates, but I'm not romantically interested in them.

Do you believe in monogamy?

100%. I do not share. I'll guest star occasionally, though.

Why did you decide to launch *The Love Story Project*?

"The Love Story Project" is my attempt to shine a light on gay love. The project aims to help people see gay lovers as people and not ideas. I encourage everyone to visit the website, share your story and become a part of it yourself!

Are you encouraged by the response the project has received so far?

I am! It has pushed me further than I ever thought I could take this project.

What are you looking for in your next love project?

Someone who is ambitious, fearless, and inspiring. I've already found him but I ain't giving details. I've learned the hard way to keep my heart private.



Visit www.JasonsLoveStoryProject.com for more information of Jason Dottley and his Love Story Project.



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editor@quest-online.com www.quest-online.com

Publisher: Mark Mariucci (ZA)

Contributors: Paul Masterson, Glenn Bishop, Dear Ruthie, Michael Johnston, Brent H

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On Second Thought...

2013/2014: New Year's Reflections

by Paul Masterson

2013 – It was a very good year...for the most part.

LGBT people throughout the country have a lot to be proud about. 2013 was truly a rainbow banner year marked by major political victories in states and the Supreme Court. Starting off the New Year, Maryland allowed same-sex marriage as of January 1, 2013. Although the Obama administration had been more diplomatic in dealing with LGBT issues in the first term, in his 2013 state of the union address, the President took the opportunity to directly recognize the LGBT cause. Mentioning the historic civil rights landmarks of Seneca Falls, Selma, and "Stonewall" in an alliterative linking he raised the LGBT struggle for equality to that of woman's suffrage and African-American rights. In June, in a 5-4 decision, the US Supreme Court declared the Defense of Marriage Act unconstitutional. It also struck down California's Proposition 8 that banned same-sex marriage in that state. Meanwhile, in a proverbial domino effect, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Minnesota, New Jersey, New Mexico, Rhode Island, and Utah followed suit and Michigan edged towards recognition. Granted Utah is under appeal but stays have been rejected by the courts and same-sex marriages continue. Now, according to an NPR report, almost 40% of all Americans live in a state with marriage equality.

Media helped the cause, presenting more LGBT characters, both animated and living. GLAAD lists 31 regulars and 19 reoccurring characters on major network TV. Unlike in days past, when LGBT roles were largely negative stereotypes, today, albeit still somewhat stereotypical, they range from silly to sympathetic like Downton Abbey's Thomas Barrow.

Locally, Milwaukee PrideFest, again, provided local and international visitors one of the nation's top Pride events. The Pride-Parade drew record attendance. The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center hired Colleen Carpenter as its new executive director. Her views, revealed in my December QUEST interview, give further hope and assurance that positive progress for the Center and the community as a whole will continue to be made. It should also be noted that the Center's monthly TGIF event was last held at the Center itself rather than in some sundry straight bar as had previously been its ironic wont. Hopefully, this marks a permanent change or at least one that includes other LGBT establishments. After decades of the Guerilla Gay Bar movement and some odd penchant for gay organizations to hold receptions and TGIFs in trendy straight clubs and eateries, perhaps 2014 will see a return to those groups supporting LGBT owned businesses.

Speaking of sad ironies, after eight and a half years, the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center was forced from its gayborhood location on South 2nd Street due to a rent hike. It carries on, homeless, for the time being. With an ever lessening LGBT presence, Historic Walker's Point is slowly becoming another Third Ward with gentrification forcing out the very people who launched the area's revitalization decades ago. Meanwhile, Wisconsin's marriage equality status is mired in a constitution challenge against its domestic partnership registry by none other than Wisconsin Family Action's Julianne Appling. Her case has been repeatedly defeated and repeatedly appealed. The next court decision is scheduled for Spring 2014. A firm believer that being gay is a matter of choice, Appling says in a 2012 Huffington Post interview gays have left the lifestyle "in droves" sometimes with "help." That reminds me, this year, gay conversion therapy was banned in New Jersey and California. Also, leading gay conversion therapy group "Exodus International" closed in June with an apology to those they have "hurt."

Бойкот ~ Boicottaggio

Internationally, LGBT people faced a mix of challenges, de-

feats, and legalized discrimination. On the positive side, draconian anti-LGBT laws passed in Russia and an anti-LGBT remark by the CEO of an Italian pasta producer resulted in worldwide response. Although the rather pointless dumping of rail quality vodka in a symbolic gesture of just how far angry American gays will go to stand up for the rights of their foreign brothers and sisters, an instantly effective international boycott of Barilla pasta resulted in the company promising to introduce diversity into its advertising. Although there will be no official boycott of the Sochi Winter Games, in solidarity with Russia's LGBT people, President Obama and numerous other Western leaders will not attend. Numerous LGBT athletes will compete for the USA and other nations.

Elsewhere, Uganda, with the help of the US Christian right, passed its Anti-Homosexuality Bill. Colloquially, it's called the Kill the Gays Bill. India reinstated criminalization of homosexuality.

The Vatican's new top man, Pope Francis made eyebrow raising headlines when he shrugged off a question regarding gays with a much quoted "who am I to judge?" Even the respectable *Advocate Magazine* jumped on the papal bandwagon. Celebrating this seeming turn-about, it named Francis its Person of the Year. Its December cover put his smiling face with a "NO H8" logo photo-shopped on his cheek. The accompanying article noted his "stark change" in rhetoric. Still, actions speak louder

than words. So far the pope, who vehemently opposed marriage equality in his native Argentina, has most recently instructed the bishop of Malta to preach against the locally pending recognition of same-sex relationships especially in regards to the adoption of children. In September he excommunicated an Australian priest who supports the ordination of women. Call me a doubting Thomas, but I sense the lamb in ecclesiastical clothing may be a wolf after all.

On a positive note, on Christmas Day, England's Dr. Alan Turing, the Enigma codebreaker whose efforts helped the Allies achieve victory over Nazi Germany, received a royal pardon. Turing, considered the father of modern computer science, had been convicted for homosexual activity in 1952. He faced the choice of imprisonment or chemical castration. He chose the latter. He killed himself two years later.

2014

There were so many more events in 2013 worth mentioning but suffice it say, the positives outweighed the negatives, at least domestically. In 2014 the fight for marriage equality will hopefully maintain its momentum. Surrounded by states with marriage equality, Wisconsin, too, may someday rank among those that have recognized our inalienable right to the pursuit of happiness. Oh, and maybe Aaron Rodgers will come out. Happy New Year~!

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Photographer: William Sharkey



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Welcome to Ruthie's Bitchin' Kitchen



The holidays are done. I hope your halls have been decked, your bells have been jingled and your chestnuts have been roasted. If not, toot your own New Years horn and promise to make 2014 your best year yet.

Speaking of great years, I've had a wonderful 2013, and I look forward to the next 12 months, too! Thanks to everyone who came to Off the Wall Theater to see "The Creature from the Black, Black Lagoon." I adored playing Kay the "leggy redhead" in this madcap musical, and I hope you all enjoyed it as well. After back to back shows (I appeared in Charles Busch's "The Divine Sister" a few months before "The Creature" opened), I truly need a bit of break, but I look forward to hitting the boards again real soon. In the mean time, you can catch me at Hamburger Mary's every Thursday, some Wednesdays and every other Sunday for HamBingo. That's where we raise money for local charities. Come check it out!

We'll also be celebrating the donation year for Ruthie's Kennel Club, awarding checks to our three "adopted" charities and announcing which animal-related charities we'll work with in 2014. Come help us celebrate! Watch Ruthie's Kennel Club on Facebook or check out www.RuthiesKennelClub.org for further announcements and info on this end-of-the-year party. It's open to the public and sure to be a good time.

Now, let's step into the Bitchin' Kitchen, shall we? I was experimenting in the kitchen the other day and came up with these two baked treats. One is savory and one is sweet, but they both call for only two ingredients. You don't have to be a master baker (I said "baker," people!) to whip up these delights. Serve one with dinner and one for dessert! They're great and so dam easy! Try them and see...then, eat good and shut up!

CHEESY-STUFFED CRESCENTS

I thought I'd experiment with two of my favorite things...butter crescents and creamy garden vegetable spreadable cheese. The results were these no-fuss crescents, perfect alongside any meal. They also make yummy snacks when you're craving something on the savory side.

1 tube (8 oz) crescent roll dough
1 container (8 oz) garden-vegetable spreadable cheese

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Separate dough into triangles. Using the back of a spoon, carefully spread roughly 1/2 tablespoon cheese over each triangle and roll up according to package directions, and set on baking sheet. Bake crescents according to package directions or until golden brown.

(Note: Ruthie tested this recipe with Wisconsin Kaukauna Garden Vegetable Spreadable Cheese.)

Ruthie's Culinary Clues

Want to get fancy? Brush a little beaten egg or melted butter over the crescents; top with some sesame seeds before popping them in the oven. You can also top them with a little grated Parmesan cheese before or after baking. The leftover spreadable cheese is heavenly on sandwiches!

CHOCOLATE-HAZELNUT CRESCENTS

I simply can't get enough of Nutella. I'm not kidding. If they made a Nutella lubricant, I'd buy it. Here's a two-ingredient snack that anyone can bake up, regardless of experience in the

kitchen! The first time I made these, I knew they were a keeper. Perfect for brunch, these are so chocolaty and sinful, they'll become an instant classic in your trailer!

1 tube (8 oz) crescent roll dough
1 jar (13 oz) hazelnut spread

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Separate dough into triangles. Using the back of a spoon, carefully spread roughly 1/2 tablespoon hazelnut spread over each triangle and roll up according to package directions, and set on baking sheet. Bake filled crescents according to package directions or until golden brown.

(Notes: Ruthie tested this recipe with Nutella brand hazelnut spread. Do not use garlic-flavored crescent-roll dough for this recipe.)

Ruthie's Culinary Clues

For extra flair, brush the unbaked crescents with melted butter, and top with a few slivered almonds; bake as directed. You can also sprinkle some chopped pecans over the hazelnut spread before rolling up the crescents. After removing these from the oven, top the indulgent bites with a little powdered sugar.

Have a recipe for Ruthie?

Share it with her at

dearmsruthie@yahoo.com

If she publishes your dish, you'll get a free Bitchin' Kitchen T-shirt!

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Cordially Yours

by Michael Johnston

the

Welcome to 2014! Can You believe it? A wise woman once said "After 50, breakfast is every 15 minutes!" No truer words...

Well here we are - I hope you all had a most marvelous Holiday! Personally, I took a Holiday before the Holidays to my new favorite vacation spot - Palm Springs! Yes, I know everyone else has known the secret forever and I'm finally catching up, but I'm doing my best! My mission was to attend the legal nuptials of Tom Reed & Jon Martin - but I extended the weekend as far as I could!

What a wedding, what a weekend! Jack Balzer & Greg Gowdy hosted me at their sumptuous Canyon Sands winter home, making me feel like visiting Royalty! Doesn't everyone sleep in a tiara? Thursday included a tour of Star's homes past and present of Palm Springs - Bob Hope, Bing Crosby, Dorothy Lamour, Kirk Douglas, Kitty Carlisle Hart, Betty Grable, Sinatra, Liberace, Elvis, Barry Manilow, James Brolin, Eleanor Parker, the Johnson Wax Family of Wisconsin, and the list goes on. From there a tasty repast at Manhattan - a great deli and spot to people watch. If it's Thursday and Palm Springs you must go to the Street Sale - everything is there from art, to jewelry, to clothing, fresh produce and again people - get the picture? A sip or two at The Street Bar, where if it wasn't for

wreath sale for charity - you wouldn't even realize it was indeed December!

The Christmas Tree Lighting was that evening with their handsome, newly-single, Gay mayor and Broadway Legend Miss Carol Channing all in white - like a Snow Queen! Then a nibble at Bongo Johnny's and across the way a visit with Jason and Christopher at SpurLine Video Lounge, the SpurLine has great videos ALA Side Tracks of Chicago. A new spiritual home for me!

Friday was wedding rehearsal day! It started with a bountiful brunch at Pinocchio's with my host family of Blazer/Gowdy and Milwaukee favorites in The Springs for the Event: Andy Schlaider & Brian Buchberger and Mike Bader who at 85 was giving us all a run for our money in the energy department. Boy can he shop! (He also throws a heck of a Christmas party - compliments to Chef Sal of The Trysting Place), No Champagne for me, must keep a clear head and wits for the rehearsal. After dining el fresco in December, how decadent, it was off to the Reed Martin Villa for learning my lines and placement. The villa they engaged was right across the street from Frank Sinatra's Twin Palms Estate, talk about a tony neighborhood, to quote Shirley MacLaine - "If my friends could see me now!"

After almost 30 years, this love story was going

on to a new chapter. Jon's & Tom's family and extended family and dear friends had gathered to know what was expected of them the following day - people from D.C., Cleveland, Chicago among other destinations - Brew City very own Tony Rhodes, that devilish Mike Bento from our Nation's capital, Anita & Mark Amramoff, formerly of Wisconsin, formerly of Ralph Marlin, currently of San Diego, Kathleen Ryan, remembered for her great contributions at Miller Brewing would be grandly officiating. What a great framework for something so special.

I had to pass on the Rehearsal Dinner hosted by Kathleen and Pam Martin, Jon's sister, at The Matchbox, due to a prior invitation. That invitation was to Casa If and the magical Holiday Party of Richard Steele & Robert Parrish - known affectionately as R&R. They do the best parties and I have always cherished being on their guest list, now that they reside in California, the commute can be daunting! Everything was in Christmas splendor as I anticipated - and what fun friends they are blessed with, some you may remember from here: Scott Coleman & Jeff Gadberry, Vance & Jeff, Bruce Dahnke, David & Sergio, Ron Hughes the Realtor to the Stars, Donald Trump if you will of the Desert, he is with Windermere Real Estate to get your very own Desert Oasis call 760-835-1874 and many well-tanned, well relaxed Holiday Celebrants.

Saturday brought the Wedding, or as we were jokingly dubbing it as "The Royal Wedding" - not teasing the engaged couple, but rather us the invited guests - we all felt so special just being there! To start the day - Jack (Mr. Palm Springs) took me

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to the Palm Springs Cemetery – just for a visit, I assure you. Here is where we saw the current “homes” Old Blue Eyes, Frank Sinatra, two of the Gabors, Zsa Zsa is still alive, and God only knows where Eva is, Busby Berkley, Betty Hutton, and Sonny Bono who are all laid to rest here – talk about a Who’s Who!

From one end of life, to another many funerals and one grand wedding! Costume change and off to the Villa Reed Martin for a most special ceremony. The setting: pool side, at sunset, fresh flowers, candles glowing, and guests gathering, and who was the opening act? Yes sir-ee – a very nervous, flustered, ALA Aunt Clara from “Bewitched” Cordially yours. I got the honor of presenting the boutonnieres to the Grooms. The flowers were in tribute to their dearly departed mothers. Jon’s mother, Florence, loved lilies of the valley and Tom’s mother, Virginia, enjoyed red carnations and together they made a stunning addition to their lapels. A splash a color, just like the gents sporting them, I then pinned the gentlemen without any bloodshed and the ceremony commenced. Kathleen Ryan over saw the ceremony and touched many hearts with her profound words and emotions. Mike Bento served as ring barrier; I think the Grooms were afraid to trust me with anything from Tiffany & Company! Tony Rhodes did a most eloquent toast to the newly wedded couple. Well as you can imagine Champagne corks were popping madly – did you hear them? David the bartender kept us from becoming parched. A gourmet buffet of hot hors d’oeuvres complimenting the bubbly and spirits of choice was unveiled – who knew friends getting married could create such an appetite? From there the main course – you name it was grandly show-cased – lobster, shrimp, crab cakes, tenderloin, duck – truly scrumptious! The American song book was wafting through the air – Frank, Tony, Dame Shirley Bassey, it took all my control not to sing along! Following the tradition, a wedding cake, taller than me! In the wedding palate of white and red, and most satisfying! I hope one day and one day soon - - marriage will be an option for all that



want to enter into it, and we won't have the need to go elsewhere. Don't get me wrong destination weddings can be fun -- but look at all the revenue the great state of Wisconsin missed out on? Hotels, rental cars, meals, drinks, entertainment, wardrobe, flowers, invitations, caterers, wedding planners, wedding singers, jewelers, and the list goes on. I also fear that a lot of the old gang may indeed pick up, pack up and move to these far more desirable and accepting locales. Elopements are one thing, but relocations -- I know a lot of friends who have had to travel to enter the world of wedded bliss: Tony & Jeff, Michael & Tim, Sal & David, Craig & Michael, Brian & Andy and these are just a few of the couples coming to my warped mind -- wake up Wisconsin before it's too late! I loved every glorious moment of this glorious day, just a thrill being "the Blossom of the Desert"! Answering the musical question "How do You Keep the Music Playing" -- Jon's & Tom's theme song even though they were suffering with a cold snap of 50 degrees, we muddled through and have beautiful memories!

From a Wedding to a Parade, well never let it be said a one passed me by! The Palm Springs Christmas Parade with Grand Marshall -- "Three's Company" very own Suzanne Somers. The Parrish-Steele's took on the parade from LuLu's (see every great city has a great LuLu's) with dear friend Jim Lapadus, a gifted Hollywood Costume designer; who has the best dish & his partner Anthony -- Luci Arnaz joined them to catch the parade as well! Remember we are in Palm Springs!

The SpurLine burned a place in my heart and a return visit. I love my show tunes! And I swear Andy & Brian knew every word to every song! The next day was Sunday; this Holiday is going way too fast! If it is Sunday, that is Brunch day! Off to Escena, a Country Club Bistro for just that. Talk about a million dollar view! Daniel our server made sure our Champagne flutes were never empty! Cheers! This brunch gave me a chance to get Richard & Robert (Parrish-Steele) and Jack & Greg up on all the Cream City gossip -- brunch "gossip & gravy".

From there a bit of shopping -- and who did I meet but Thairin Smothers a Producer from "RuPaul Drag Race". Of course I pumped him for as much info as I could get. He is most impressed with the Entertainers who take part -- they never let the cat out of the bag and therefore making this one of Cable TV's most popular show. This season Ru will be sporting a lot of up-dos!

I met the dashing San Diego television anchorman -- Ross Becker, if I'm ever in his market again, I'll know what I'll be doing at 11 p.m. Ross has the claim to fame of conducting an O.J. Simpson exclusive interview. Talk about a fascinating experience for the resume. Can you imagine being related to him? Time for a quick nap to refresh before hitting the town for finale night, Sundays at The Purple Room is the place to be seen. Just like her television program Judy Garland appears on Sunday evenings. "The Judy Show" starring Michael Holmes was totally enchanting and then

add a Christmas touch and everyone within earshot had a "Merry Little Christmas". What an entertainer, he sings live, looks flawless and added Pearl Bailey for a set as well as Bette Davis! While doing his Bette bit he included Tallulah Bankhead, Dahling, and Kate "the great" Hepburn! What an accomplishment!

Mark Van Laanen formerly of Trios, Door County now owns Trios in Palm Springs as well as The Purple Room. It was great seeing him and enjoying his empire. The Purple Door goes way back to the nights of The Rat Pack in the 50's and 60's. The famous names that played that stage -- in a word wow! All too quickly my time in the California sun was over. Why do Mondays always come? Back to reality for me, a return trip that was harder than stepping out of the looking glass for Alice. I won't belabor the point -- but thank you my heroes Andy, Brian, and Mike so glad to know chivalry is not dead!

While I was away things kept hopping around here as usual. And look at what we have to take part in in this New Year -- "War Horse" gallops to town Tuesday, January 7 -- Sunday, January 12 Uihlein Hall of The Marcus Center for the Performing Arts. This musical is the winner of five Tony Awards and is a heart-warming tale of loyalty and friendship, including the astounding life-size puppets created by South Africa's Handspring Puppet Company. Come and experience this Milwaukee debut and bring Kleenex! "Woody Sez The life and Music of Woody Guthrie" is sung proudly at The Stackner Cabaret of The Milwaukee Rep Friday, January 3 -- Sunday, March 9 "This Land Is Your land" so enjoy it and this music of the Folk and Lore variety. Tuesday, January 7 -- Sunday, February 9 Quadracci Powerhouse "End of the Rainbow" -- the woman who made rainbows iconic, the iconic Miss Judy Garland is saluted in the last year of her remarkable life and career. To find out what becomes a legend most -- attend and quiet please there's a lady on stage...

The Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM) offers "Uncommon Folk: Traditions in American Art Friday, January 31 -- Sunday, May 4. Celebrate art, celebrate America!

Music Under The Domes this month kicks off 2014 every Thursday from 6:30 -- 9 pm with their popular Music Under Glass Concert Series -- January 2 Semi Twang, January 9 The Ebert & Alper Show -- "Neil Diamond and Nostalgia Show", January 16 You can walk the line for the "Johnny Cash Tribute" -- Liam Ford Band, January 23 Almighty Vinyl (formerly Stoneship Eden), January 30 Sigmund Snopek & David Woods -- Visit a Galaxy far, far away, and February 6 The R Country Gals.

To prevent cabin fever, take in The Florentine Opera Company's "Opera's Greatest Hits" Friday, January 31 and/or Saturday, February 1 The Wayne & Kristine Lueders Florentine Opera Center. To reserve your seats, please call 1-800-32 OPERA.

HIT 35, played Thanksgiving weekend. The Holiday Invitational Tournament, the longest running

LGBT Bowling Tournament is a revered tradition to be enjoyed. I had the pleasure of continuing the honor of hostess-ing the HIT Welcome Show" once again at The Room of Boom, thank you David, Lance, and Shawn for making it all happen. The Show consisted of Corky Morgan shared his mellow pipes, the outstanding Goldie Adams had them all up on their feet, the outrageous Maple Veneer gave them all what they wanted, as well as the hysterical HIT Board of Directors, and the ever entertaining Candy Stick left them all wanting for more! What fun! We postpartied at La Cage with Dale and Jorge, Michael & Kris, the ultra-glam Anastasia Devereux, Craig formerly of Switch, Roger RamJet and a thankful bunch on a Thanksgiving night all just enjoying.

The HIT Farewell Brunch at Fluid was a blast! All the old HIT Welcome Shows playing on DVD and a bountiful buffet -- Bill Wardlow never disappoints and the fun loving Puddy quenched our thirst until John got done with his organ and relieved Mr. Puddy. I loved the Wreath Sale for HIT and The Holton Street Clinic -- great community engagement!

On the topic of farewells, condolences go out to David (Kotke) Rogers on the loss of his beloved husband Ron Rabehl. B.B. you now have a "Special" Angel watching over you. Milwaukee has lost one of our most generous patronesses of all good things, with the passing of Betty Quadracci. We were so fortunate to have her presence and mark on our Community, may she rest in peace.

Food Time, I know I mentioned a variety of eateries I experienced on the West Coast -- and please I recommend each and every one of them highly! Locally, we have our share of ideal selections to sup at. My all-time favorite and tis the Season for splurging calories and dollars is Sanford, The French Chef Julia Child proclaimed Sanford her favorite in Wisconsin. I can't think of a better compliment! Sanford is totally understated, the food: unique and flavorful, the service five star! Sanford is located at: 1547 North Jackson Street Milwaukee 414-276-9608

Another suggestion, and by far more affordable, is The Ambassador Hotel's The Envoy Restaurant. Their Sunday Brunch -- Small Plate Dining is exceptional! My last two Brunch indulgences have been with SSBL/HIT Celeb Stuey and we both thoroughly savored every mouthful. Andrew the man who runs The Ambassador is a doll and makes you feel as though you were at The Ritz Carlton! If memory serves me they offer their Small Plate Brunch on New Year's Day; and remember feed a hang-over... or is it down a hang-over? This Art-Deco Palace is found at: 2308 West Wisconsin Avenue Milwaukee 888-481-6918.

A perfect stocking stuffer would be a gift certificate form either or both!

Please remember even though it is a new year, the adage still rings true, it's the glamor, not the grammar as I remain Still Cordially Yours
-- Happy 2014!



HOLIDAY SNAPS

by William Sharkey



Above & Left: DIX during an underwear party and also that Ugly Sweater Party that has been making the circuit. Below and right: Boom Hosts a leather party and Kruz has their Xmas Party.



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Well it is January, and last month was full of it! Hell it was so cold I thought my nipple rings were going to freeze to my truck every time I went to go somewhere. Well enough about me bitching let's talk about you my glorious readers. How was new years for you all? Do you even remember it? Do you remember where you threw up and who you took home to screw? Anyway, I guess you all embarrassed yourselves enough so I don't need to harp on you anymore. Let's get onto the piercing of the month. Let's talk about something that we haven't touched on in a while. The tongue piercing!

The tongue piercing in recent years has really become one of the most common piercings ever to hit western culture. It started gaining a lot of its popularity during the punk scenes of the 1960s and 1970s. From here it has grown into something that seems at least, every single girl from the suburbs has! The tongue piercing is usually done in the center of the tongue, although this piercing can be done in the sides of the tongue as well, but keep in mind that just because this is a very common piercing it is actually one of the

most technically difficult piercing for a piercer to perform. There are many large blood vessels that if struck can wreak havoc on the body and cause major bleeding which would need a doctor to fix! The tongue is relatively painless and heals extremely quickly, usually in about 3-6 weeks.

Now let's get to the part you all want to know, what you can use your tongue piercing for! The tongue piercing can be a very sensual thing, well unless you get it stuck on your partner's jewelry. (Not that I have ever had that happen to me.) It can be highly erotic just to see and even more to feel. For obvious reasons the tongue piercing is best put to use during oral sex, although some people have reservations about oral sex when jewelry is involved. Some people say that the steel doesn't feel comfortable against their skin; well we have a solution to that gripe. Jewelry companies have made products called French ticklers for a long time. What they are is little pieces of silicon molded into interesting shapes like spiky balls, atoms, and ribbed domes. These ticklers take the hard cold edge off the barbell and replace it with a soft squishy

feeling. So from now on you have no reason to refuse head from someone with a tongue piercing. (Of course I don't think any of my readers would refuse head from a fat blind man with leprosy, so I guess that last line doesn't mean much.) Well that's about it when it comes to tongue piercing so let's get on to something else.

Well, I've got enough room for one piece of reader mail.

Dear Brent,

Here is my question. . . How do you do piercings? I don't mean the actual act of it, but more so how did you get into the job and how can you force yourself to hurt people for a living. —Abe

Well Abe, you ask a very hard question to answer, so let's start with your first question. I got exposed to body piercing when I was very young through national geographic magazines and tribal themed television shows. I was hooked at that point and learned everything I could about tribal cultures. I didn't know it back then but I know now that I needed piercing and tattooing in my life from the first moment I saw it. From there, once I turned 18 I walked into Avant-Garde and got my tongue pierced, at the time I said it would be the only piercing I would ever get. (God was I wrong) From there I started hanging out at the shop, eventually I started working at the shop for free just so that I could have an excuse to be there and learn something new. Then one day the owner Jim asked me if I wanted to work at the shop and actually get paid to do it, of course I jumped at the chance and now that chance has led me into a partial ownership of Avant-Garde. As for your second question all I can really say is that you have to have a certain mentality to do this job. It's not really about hurting people, but you do have to have the will to be comfortable around pain. That's about all I can say, thanks for the letter Abe.

Well I think I have now run out of room for this month, until next month try to stay warm and if that doesn't work, then drink a fifth of vodka and imagine that you are warm! Please also don't forget you can reach me anytime by e-mail at Avantgarde@voyager.net. Just put Skin & Steel in the subject line, and remember you can e-mail me about anything. Thanks and have a great month.

KRUZ



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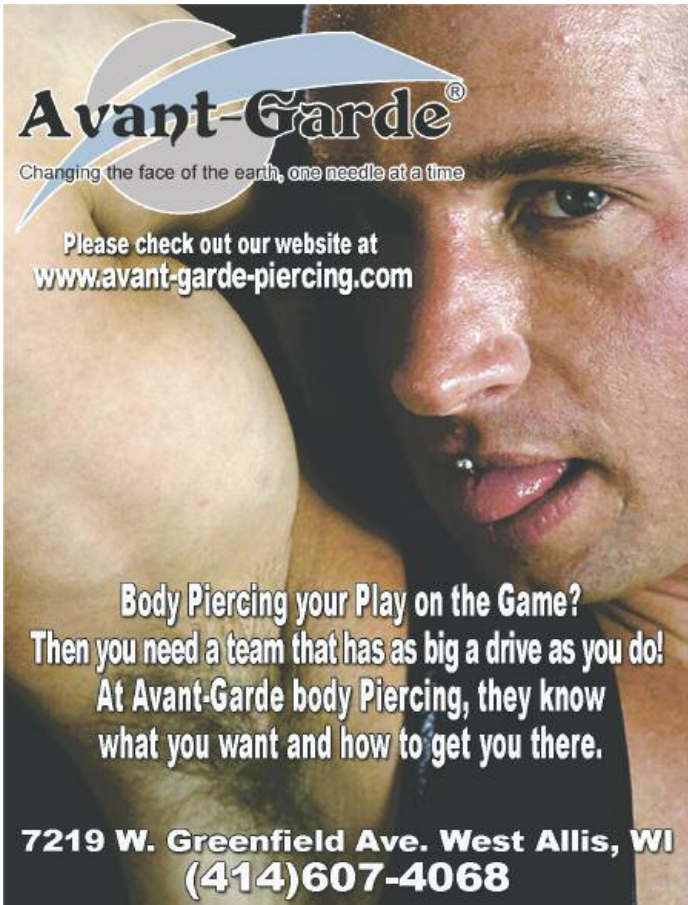


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