

QUEST

MAGAZINE Volume 21, Issue 3, March 2014



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REFLECTING, REKINDLING, RENEWING MILWAUKEE BWMT HOSTS NATIONAL CONVENTION

by Paul Masterson

Over the years, racially mixed marriages have gradually become more or less accepted – and certainly more common. According to a recent report on NPR, interracial marriages increased by 28% in the last decade. Still a recent cereal commercial featuring an interracial couple with a mixed race child set off a firestorm of racist push-back. And then there's the LGBT community...

In the 1970's, in those heady post-Stonewall days of liberation, interracial LGBT relationships were still an unfamiliar realm. Despite gay liberation, social change had its limitations. Interracial dating was a matter of attraction for some. For others it was a means to remain under the radar, especially those still closeted. Clandestine dating outside of one's own racial milieu provided an extra layer of protection. An interracial couple meeting discreetly would be unlikely to encounter friends or family. These factors lead to the creation of a social organization. For those trespassing across the racial lines of demarcation, there was the National Association of Black and White Men Together, Inc (NABWMT).

According to its mission statement, NABWMT is a gay, multiracial, multicultural organization committed to fostering supportive environments to overcome racial and cultural barriers. Its goal is to realize human equality. Its educational, political, cultural, and social activities target racism, sexism, homophobia, HIV/AIDS discrimination as well as other inequity. Its 34th Annual Conference takes place July 8-12, 2014 in Milwaukee.

QUEST spoke with Milwaukee resident Mark Behar, NABWMT's national co-chairman, to learn more about the organization's history, its current national and local community role, and its upcoming conference..

QUEST: Can you give us a quick overview of NABWMT as an organization?

Mark Behar: Black and White Men Together is a collective nationwide network of chapters. There are two other groups included in NABWMT. These are Men of All Colors Together (MACT) and People of All Colors Together (PACT). The differentiation is in keeping with the cultural dynamics of their respective regions.

QUEST: And its history?

MB: The National Association was founded in 1980. Milwaukee's chapter followed in 1981. It's one of the city's and Wisconsin's oldest LGBT organizations. Over the years there have been as many as 30 chapters. Today there are 10. We're represented in most major metropolitan areas of the country: Los Angeles, Seattle, Atlanta, Miami, and oth-



ers, as well as Milwaukee, of course. Other chapters are in development or renewal.

Over the years, many notable individuals participated in our national conferences, Phil Wilson is one of the main people dealing with HIV/AIDS issue among men of color. Others found nurturing and encouragement through our organization. The association reenforced them in their educational and career paths. BWMT was one of first groups that publicly engaged Byron Russel, Martin Luther King's right hand man and James Baldwin to acknowledge their sexual identity. Right now we're working on a Wikipedia entry with all the historical facts and figures for the national organization. People will soon be able to find our complete history there.

QUEST: What was the original purpose in creating an organization with such a specific focus?

MB: Our purpose was, and still is, to support interracial coupling in the broadest definition and to incorporate the idea of safe spaces to develop relationships. Whether bowling or a trip to the movies, the idea was to be able to go out without being harassed and to simply create a circle of friends. Back in the 1980's this was difficult. Even gay bars had quotas that discriminated against people of color. The quota system existed throughout the country, not just Milwaukee. Initially BWMT's purpose was to enhance the ability of people to get together and socialize. It was a political statement - declaring we were not willing to be intimidated. Even now when go out, it's rare to see diversity. It's unfortunate but racial separation still exists.

QUEST: Has the evolution of LGBT rights and acceptance changed the NABWMT mission?

MB: The mission of providing a nurturing support through our family of

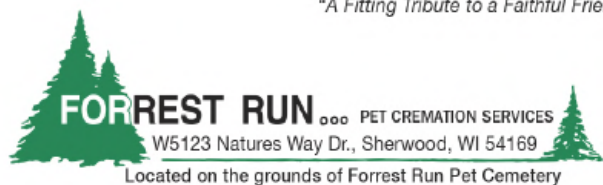
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choice has remained static. That's inflexible. Back in the 80's we were the only LGBT group that dealt with racism. However, times have changed and we are working on a revised mission statement. New issues like open gay athletes, pan-African homophobia, marriage equality, are topics we need to address in our mission. We now have a Health and HIV Committee, an Archive Committee among others that help bolster the basic mission statement.

Nationally we have created an enduring system of contacts. Our membership has a quality of a family. It offers more than the usual venues of contact. People may find each other for relationships but the primary goal is to deal with our social issues.

QUEST: Since the election of Barack Obama, America's inner racism has been exposed. Has that racism manifested itself in our LGBT community as well? Now, in 2014, are we more or less open to interracial relationships?

MB: Obama has made the conversation easier. He is a big rudder that steers the conversations. His support of LGBT rights and his pointing out of homophobia is unique. Clearly, there's an effect of these public comments and Facebook and media that help people like Michael Sam to come out. It's almost a tidal wave. Public opinion is carried along by that. We're clearly able to talk about it now. Still, in ways things haven't changed.

Harold Brier, our old chief of police, harassed our community. That created a political impetus that made people angry and set the fire that changed things. Perhaps the Uganda and Nigerian situations are dreadful but that may make people realize how horrible it is and respond. The American evangelicals who support it may recognize their actions have caused suffering and that might create a backlash.

QUEST: Milwaukee has the unfortunate reputation of being among America's most segregated cities. There's a large African-American population yet our gay bars and

organizations are predominantly white. What role does the local BWMT play in this dynamic?

MB: Going to the bars or public events like the LGBT Center's annual meeting, or Cream City Foundation's events, how racially mixed are they? They are essentially white LGBT events. If there are people of color, they self-segregate because they feel uncomfortable.

Some groups are diverse, like Diverse & Resilient, and ARCW. But why is there not greater participation in sports or other groups? There is no realization of the value of integration in our community. BWMT makes an effort to have people from different communities and racial background with us at any time. But we don't see that sort of conscious inclusion here, aside from token representation. For the most part things are uniformly white.

Political activism in the 80's involved marches, being arrested, leaflets and protests, but there are different ways of being politically active. Just meeting with people in an open social venue like a restaurant, or a museum. Those are political statements. You rarely see racially and aged mixed groups. Last week we were in Los Angeles with several dinner events. Even there in West Hollywood few places we went to were racially mixed.

We're not very political as activists. Still, as a group we create a profile. For example, we have dining out nights and, as a group, go to dinner at a particular restaurant. There could be a dozen or more of us so we're hard to overlook. Everyone's head turns. A large male, interracial group isn't a common sight in most places. So, in our way, we are publicly declaring our relationships not only as gay men but as gay men in interracial gay relationships.

QUEST: Milwaukee is hosting the 34th Annual NABWMT Convention in July. Its motto is Reflecting, Rekindling, Renewing. What does that mean?

MB: We were thinking of a theme that could be used for programming. The concept is one

of reflecting on the past. Its positive benefit rekindles our spirit of activism and thereby renews relationships among ourselves and our mission.

QUEST: What's on the agenda?

MB: We have a number of special guest speakers. One is from Uganda. Because the situation is so critical there he'll present a session on what Americans can do to support Ugandans. Other speaker focus on health, like the disparity of health care among people of color and HIV/AIDS. Others are from the local LGBT organizations like Veterans for Diversity. Many of our members are Vietnam War veterans. Many gay African American men joined the military to get education and get out of their neighborhoods. FORGE will present about transgender issues. Healthy relationships is another theme and that will be lead by the LGBT Community Center.

An Art Invitational event will be held with BWMT representatives and others presenting various performing and visual arts. A talent night is planned as well as a panel discussion with Project Q. We'll also have Enlightenment Sessions discussion groups. These will first break out separately into black and white and Latino groups, then join in a conversation together.

The event falls in the middle of Bastille Days so we're encouraging our guests to attend and check out the city's amenities.

QUEST: It sounds like a very extensive and engaging program. Are the "Enlightenment Sessions" and other events open to the public?

MB: Everything is open to the public. We have special registration rates for anyone attending. There's a conference rate and then a day rate. We hope our convention will help further build our community. We hope it will help become us more unified and, as our motto says, "renewed."

More information contact www.nabwmt.org



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Serving the Fox Valley



RUTHIE'S BITCHIN' KITCHEN DEBUTS ON YOUTUBE

by Paul Masterson

TV cooking shows have come a long way since Julia Child launched *The French Chef* back in 1963. First filmed in black and white, viewers learned the fine points of continental haute cuisine brought to them by the unflappable and endearing Julia. Today, half a century later, there are multiple cable and digital TV networks dedicated solely to the culinary arts. From Korean, to Mexican, to down-home, to vegan or even colonial American fare, there's a show for almost any palate.

There are even reality cooking shows like *Hells Kitchen* where there's more profanity than profiteroles. And now there's *Bitchin' Kitchen*.

Hosted by none other than Wisconsin's droll drag diva, Dear Ruthie, author of QUEST's monthly Bitchin' Kitchen cooking column, Milwaukee's high-haired first lady of laughs now brings her

trailer park cuisine to the web. Suffice it to say, it's not your grandmother's trailer park cuisine...actually, maybe it is.

Filmed at the VFW next to the Rusty Nail Trailer Park, Ruthie's first segment features two versatile casseroles. Both include canned cream soups as a base - and nothing screams versatility like cream of anything in a can. While Ruthie mixes it up, her next door neighbor, the chain-smoking, hard drinking kitchen sidekick Cynthia (think a

poor man's Patsy from *Ab Fab*) bats back the repartee. She's occasionally asked to give things a stir while Ruthie douses another dish with a freshly opened can of soup. It's all a fun, engaging Talk-Show experience, drawing the audience into the kitchen...pity they never perfected smell-o-vision.

Like her eminent predecessor Julia Child, Ruthie wants her web view-



Quest Volume 21 Issue #3 March 2014
PO Box 1961 Green Bay, 54305 920-655-0611
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Publisher: Mark Mariucci (ZA)

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Printing/Bindery: Journal Community Publishers

Photography: Mark Mariucci, Will Sharkey, Paul Masterson, Tony Ritschards

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ers to learn how to cook the dishes she creates on camera. Unlike Julia Child, Ruthie's recipes are always comfort foods. As Ruthie says, "easy, doable, and not expensive"...and yes, we're still talking about food. But seriously, the recipes are geared to be "doable" even if you don't know how to cook. And, holding to today's foodie fixation, Ruthie insists on local ingredients – that's local as in available at Aldi's or Piggly-Wiggly.

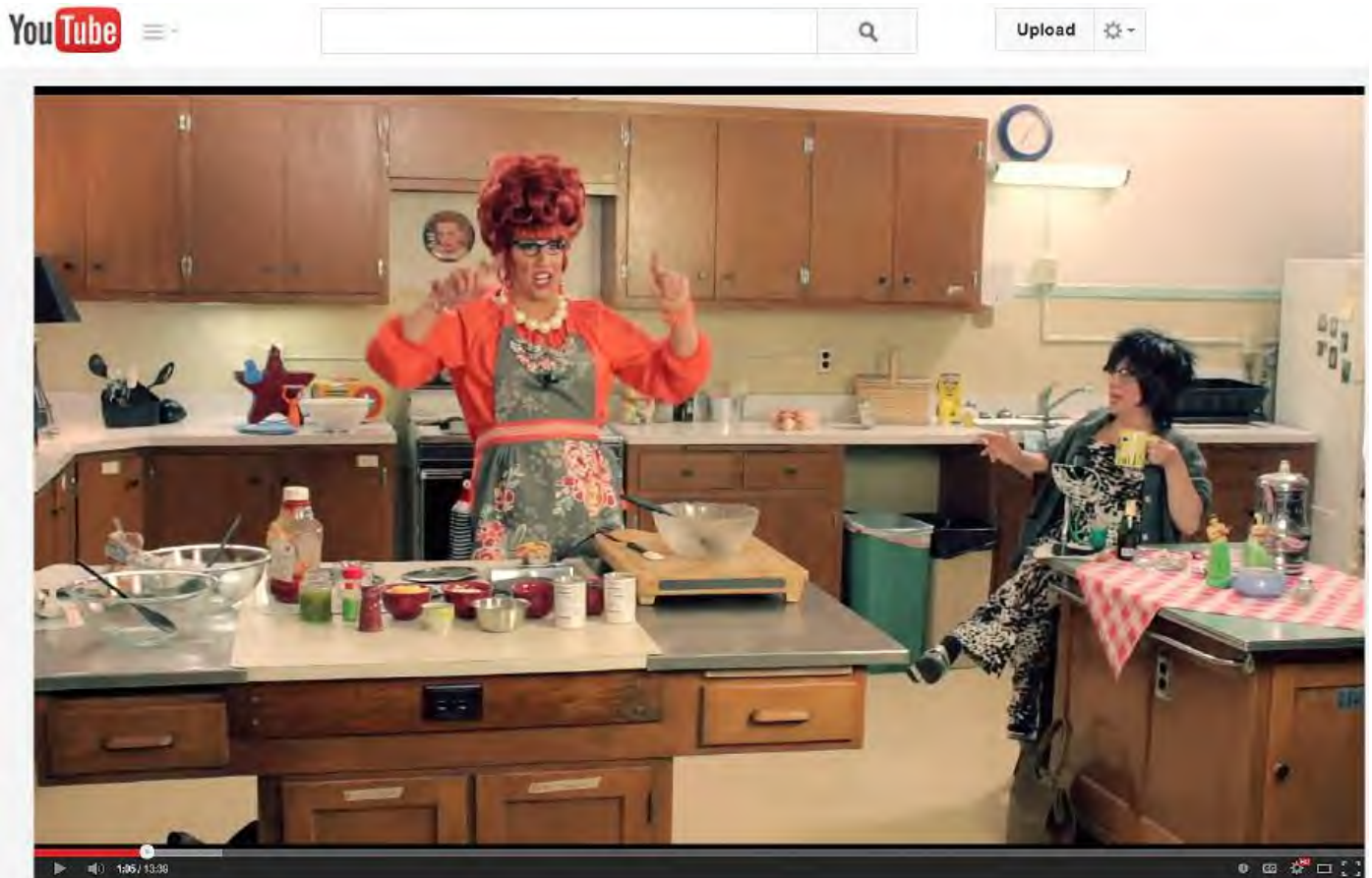
According to Ruthie, at least five more gastronomic adventures are in the works. They'll feature desserts, entrees, even a breakfast delicacy using McDonald's hamburgers. Two minute tip segments... like for a no-cook appe-

tizer...are simmering as well. Asked if anything will contain marshmallows, Ruthie replied, "sure, at some point, but nothing is on the horizon. But, we do have a recipe with Nutella." And who doesn't love Nutella? (which reminds me of the strapping Irish lad I met in Zimbabwe back in the day. I used to bring him jars and jars of Nutella and he just devoured them. We smeared it on literally *everything*...and realized it's best to just put it on toast.) Meanwhile, all the recipes, as well as adult beverage recipes by Cynthia, can be found on the web at www.ruthiesbitchinkitchen.com

The web series concept is the result of a collaboration created by Lynda Cieslik of

Cue the Dragon Productions. Producer director Christian Kocinski is responsible for conceiving, script, and costumes. The show's theme is an original song, appropriately titled *Fire in the Kitchen*, by the Jeremiah Johnson Band.

Ruthie encourages her fans to follow *Bitchin' Kitchen* on Facebook. Recipes are posted daily. They can also get involved with her Kickstarter campaign where anyone can donate to support the show. There are a batch of gifts for supporters including t-shirts, bumper stickers, a guest spot on the show or barbecue with Cynthia and Ruthie for the lucky winner and friends.



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NEW ON DVD By Glenn Bishop

Free Fall (Freier Fall)

Surely one of the hottest new Gay DVDs to catch Glenn's attention in some time, Stephan Lacant's **Free Fall (Freier Fall)** is being touted as "Germany's answer to **Brokeback Mountain**."

Well, partner, those are some mighty big boots to fill!

How thrilling still to remember, nearly ten years past, seeing Ang Lee's spectacular adaptation of Annie Proulx's acclaimed short story at Milwaukee's fabulous Oriental Theatre. As we increasingly turn to hand-held devices to watch films, it is worth noting that a film like **Brokeback Mountain** begs for a screening on "the big screen."

Even if "the big screen" is in fact Glenn's pride and joy: a 44" Samsung flat screen TV.

Intriguing as it proved to be, Glenn is uncertain whose idea it was to plan a double feature of **Brokeback Mountain** and **Free Fall**. **Brokeback's** running time makes any double feature a rather daunting proposition, not to mention that it being well cold to attempt any authentic campfire vittles.

At the beginning of **Free Fall**, Marc (Hanno Koffler) is much as you'd expect of someone with a position at a police training academy; he's self-assured, proud and indeed a man of few words.

Still domesticity comes at a price. Not only does Marc live with his attractive, very pregnant girlfriend Bettina (Katharina Schüttler), he bears the additional burden of the sort of familial expectations which naturally come when one's father and one's grandfather are both boasting police backgrounds.

Bettina is a lovely character, friendly, warm and most of all really quite shrewd.

She understands Marc far better than he likely expects. And so, when Marc begins his illicit affair with Kay (Max Riemelt), Bettina rather quickly senses changes in Marc.

Initially the two young men had looked to be simply rivals, each seeking to set the proper pecking order. And at the outset, Kay would seem to have had the upper hand. He bests Marc on the track and later is happy to challenge Marc to flaunt the rules with a bit of pot smoking and an after-hours dip in the police academy's pool.

Then, on one random afternoon whilst jogging, the hormones of these two virile young men take over. The encounter begins as mere roughhousing albeit less playful than previously. What develops is brief, angry and cinematically at least, scorching hot.

Who knew jogging could be so sexy?

Director Stephan Lacant's screenplay (with Karsten Dahlem) progresses in predictable fashion as Marc's domestic scenes with Bettina increasingly alternate with his sexual encounters with Kay. For his part, Marc seems to genuinely love Bettina and is equally thrilled with the prospect of becoming a father. Yet as his relationship with Kay continues to heat up, it takes an increasing toll on Marc.

The turning point in **Free Fall** comes with the birth of his son, which proves for Marc to be a wake-up call.

Will Marc choose the suffocating security of



Buy it, Rent it, or forget it...

Although certain narrative choices in Stephan Lacant's screenplay bring to mind Ang Lee's extraordinary **Brokeback Mountain**, Glenn felt allusions to just as strong to another (in)famous gay film: 1982's **Making Love**.

Those loyal **Quest**-readers of a certain age will surely remember Arthur Hiller's **Making Love**. Written by the then openly bisexual Barry Sandler, **Making Love** was to be the **Brokeback Mountain** of its time: a mainstream Hollywood film with a daring gay theme. Popular television stars Kate Jackson, pre-**Charlie's Angels** and Michael Ontkean took on the lead roles as two young professionals, he a doctor and she a television executive; surely theirs had all the makings of an ideal, picture-perfect marriage.

Similarly, Marc and Bettina, at least initially, by all accounts would seem to be a happy match. Early scenes offer a softer side of Marc, his happiness later as a new father is really quite extraordinary.

Yet in both films, the idea of happy heterosexual domesticity is quickly shattered in all too predictable a fashion. Director Lacant's portrayal of Marc's relationship with Kay lurching from one rough & tumble sexual encounter to the next. Kay's attraction to Marc is evident right from the start yet he is quickly relegated to the role of heartless temptress the minute he learns Marc isn't in fact exactly footloose and fancy free.

Nor is it surprising that Marc is drawn to Kay, an attractive man free from the burden of familiar responsibility Marc increasingly finds suffocating.

Lacant's drama, always compelling viewing thanks to an exciting cast, eschews a simple love story for an exploration of sexual desire while **Brokeback Mountain**, set during the deeply repressed early 1960s, emerges as an authentic gay love story.

Just the facts...

Free Fall clocks in at 100 minutes and is in German with English subtitles

Free Fall is available on DVD with an SRP of \$24.95

Hanno Koffler (Marc) played Malte in the popular 2004 film, **Summer Storm**.

Max Riemelt proved a genuinely engaging, likeable Aryan "Everyman" in the excellent **Before the Fall**

a ready-made nuclear family with parental units and in-laws all frighteningly within spittin' distance? Or perhaps our strapping sexually-repressed protagonist will choose instead to throw all caution to the wind, face certain ostracizing as he drives off into the sunset with a man who has awakened in him such astonishing desire as having left his world topsy-turvy?

on our cover ...

After **Ravens** closed in Appleton, the Fox River Valley was left with only two gay bars and without a place to dance. Opening a big club today is not an easy task, but the **ReMixx** has done just that. A first impression may remind you of days gone by and a bar that was called **Pivot Club** just outside Appleton.

ReMixx is big inside and great for dancing or watching a show. Conveniently located on highway 76 between Oshkosh and Appleton (just outside Neenah) there's plenty of parking in the adjacent lot. Pictured below are the owners: Mickie who you might remember from the **Loft** in Green Bay,

Jim who has been in the club scene as a promoter and club owner for many years and Deb who also owns **Deb's Spare Time**, a bar in Oshkosh.

ReMixx opened New Year's Eve and had struggled to stay busy with our polar vortex weather keeping people at home, but things have picked up, especially when there is a show.

Quest has pictures later in this book from a show on March 1 that featured talent from Chicago including a queen from **RuPaul's Drag Race**. The place was packed and had quite a party going on. Milwaukee's own Harmony Breeze hosted and sure knows how to work a crowd!



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Volume 13 #3 March 2014

**PHOTO PAGES
IN THIS ISSUE:**



Goldie Andams hosts a memorial for her partner Andrew Kovaleski @ Woody's



DJ Cody Spins Lust Thursday's at LaCage with the Men of Infinite Entertainment

Photos by Will Sharkey for Quest



Harmony Breeze hosts the monthly show at ReMixx in the Fox Valley

Welcome to Ruthie's Bitchin' Kitchen



Lights! Camera! Action! I'm ready for my frigin' close up, boys! That's right, kids! I've gone Hollywood...sort of.

After a lot of blood, sweat, tears and pasta, my new web series, "Ruthie's Bitchin' Kitchen" is up and running. Our pilot episode can be seen on the show's web site, Ruthies-BitchinKitchen.com. Or, simply "Like" Ruthie's Bitchin' Kitchen on Facebook. We've got more episodes coming, recipes on the web site and more, so be sure to check it out.

Last month, I was also lucky enough to get a part in the new short film "Queen of the Castle," written and directed by Milwaukee's Joseph (Joe) Trione. A certified nursing assistant by day, Joe had an interest in film at an early age. Today, Joe's cranking out hilariously quirky films, so I asked Joe to step into the Bitchin' Kitchen to learn more about his life, his films and his latest project set to debut on YouTube in March.

Dear Ruthie: Hi, sugar! Welcome to my bitchin' kitchen. Grab a cup of coffee, and let's dive in. Tell me, how is it that a fella like you became interested in making horror-film sendoffs.

Joe Trione: I was fortunate to have parents who introduced me to their favorite movies. I remember seeing "A Nightmare on Elm Street" and "Halloween" on VHS while sitting in between my parents on the couch. Friday nights were the best because the family went to a "mom-and-pop" video store, and I would spend at least an hour looking at the videos in the horror selection.

DR: When did you start making movies?

JT: My parents got me a camcorder in 2000. I would use friends and family to make these crappy little short films. It wasn't until I was thirteen and fell in love with Italian horror director Dario Argento that I became serious when it came to film making. I wanted my films to look like actual movies and not something I shot with friends on a rainy day.

DR: Do your films always focus on campy-horror?

JT: I find that camp works because it appeals to so many people. The audience being engaged is the goal. As long as the viewer feels something, whether laughter or disgust, I'm satisfied.

DR: Your work is reminiscent of that of John Waters. Tell me about his influence on you.

JT: Waters' name is often used when a filmmaker tries to make a "bad" movie on purpose and completely misses the point. Waters' movies, while not polished or always coherent, were not made by lazy people looking for a quick buck. There is heart and soul, which is where the real inspiration comes from. I'm not trying to top or emulate anything he has done in the past. Sure, I use drag queens and I have a fair amount of "gross out" gags in my film, but "Queen of the Castle" is something I've put a lot of time and effort into in the hopes that it will entertain. There is no money to be made from the project. I just want it to be seen.

DR: What's your favorite part of making short films?

JT: Getting creative minds together and watching the outlandish ideas come together. I love when those involved step forward with an idea that ends up bettering the film. There was a lot of great talent involved in this latest project.

DR: Let's talk about "Queen of the Castle." What is the premise of the film?

JT: The movie takes a look at one of the most depraved families to hit the screen. (Local

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drag queen) Trixie Mattel plays the mother of four daughters (played by Dixie Kuppe, Jaymes Mansfield, Vajay J Snappinturtle and Veruca Voorhees) who will do anything to win her affection. The film also stars Dita Von Tepper, and, of course, you, Dear Ruthie.

DR: Jaymes Mansfield is one of your best friends and also appears in this film. Is it hard to direct your friends?

JT: I use the term "direct" loosely. I'm always giving ideas, and I came up with the initial concept, but this is a group effort. There's no dictatorship because we all want the same thing in the end and that's to make a good movie.

Jaymes' other partner in crime, Ernesto Hernandez-Reyes, did the cinematography for "Queen of The Castle," and he's always willing to put up with my unconventional di-

recting. I'm thankful that he's willing to take the time to help out.

DR: You directed "Queen of the Castle" and you appear in it. You wrote it, too, correct?

JT: Everything you see in the finished product is improv. I usually write an outline and pass it along to Jaymes so he can tell me if it sucks. With this film, he knew I wanted to throw in everything, including the kitchen sink, and it worked. I love what's come out of this.

DR: You edited the film as well. What is that process like?

JT: The worst part of making this film was cutting dialogue. Between Trixie and Vajay J alone I'll have at least fifteen minutes of extended takes. There is some comedic gold from the girls and, unfortunately, a lot of it has to be left on the cutting room floor. Dixie Kuppe had us dying during the shoot from laughter.

Editing is the worst part of the process because you watch the footage to the point of nausea. With it being all improv there are several times while editing where you'll have lines that don't match and you end up having to cut more footage than you planned. The film may have taken a day to shoot, but it can take weeks to edit to thirty minutes.

DR: What was your favorite part of making this movie?

JT: Playing the ugly sister and being constantly ridiculed by my friends. I was called everything from "dog" to "blood fart." There's also something about having to wipe the ass of an adult baby that just sticks with you.

DR: Do you have any plans for your next film?

JT: I'm actually planning an '80s slasher film in the vein of "Slumber Party Massacre." I'm hoping to get everyone back for it and have them play every '80s cliché possible.

DR: When will "Queen of the Castle" be available to view?

JT: I'm hoping to get "Queen of the Castle" up on both YouTube and Vimeo in mid to late March.

Thanks, Joe, I can't wait to see it this month! And, thanks for joining me in the Bitchin' Kitchen. I'm sure "Queen of the Castle" is going to be a huge hit!

To learn more about this hilarious local film, simply "Like" the "Queen of the Castle" fan page on Facebook. There you'll find photos, links to the movie and more. I'll be back next month with recipes and whatnot, but until then eat good and shut up!

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Goldie Adams turned her personal loss into a wonderful memorial tribute to her late partner Andrew Kovaleski held at Woody's

Photos by Will Sharkey

Did you know you can see all our photos including ones we do not have room for online. www.quest-online.com





Lust Thursday is held weekly at LaCage & includes Cody Domino on the mixer (or a guest DJ), male dancers & a great drink special - at La Cage, Milwaukee

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Cordially Yours

by Michael Johnston

In tribute to Pete Seegers – "It's blowing in the wind, hopefully a warm March breeze that is! After the winter we've survived, anything will be welcomed!

I've been busy with indoor activities as an alternative. The best gallery show I've seen of late is the works of Janet Roberts. "Illuminating Past Lives" on display now through Sunday, March 30 at the Alfons Gallery at The St. Joseph Center 1501 South Layton Boulevard Milwaukee. Gallery hours: Wednesday, Thursday, Friday and Sunday Noon – 3 p.m. Roberts' works are in oil/collage, as homage to our forbearers of the 1930's, 40's, and 50's. Nostalgia at its best, a salute to our Mothers and Grandmothers of yesterday, feel free to Google Janet and look at her compelling work! Sweet memories...

Samara Garden and Home 5211 West North Avenue is offering Musical Expressions on Sunday afternoons. The next one, March 2 at 1:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. take in these glorious concerts on pianos that are art pieces all on their own. www.samaraandgarden.com 414-444-8100. While you're enjoying the music, the shopping is to die for, at this treasure trove of a consignment center! I have been so fortunate to find some fabulous

finds here! Stewart, owner/curator has exquisite taste and you're bound to find something to enhance your home and life.

Need something a little retro, but within our lifetime to enjoy, how about celebrating the 30th anniversary of "Flash Dance" – what a feeling? This pop culture phenomenon is now a live stage show – "Flash Dance – The Musical" and waltzes into Uihlein Hall of The Marcus Center for the Performing Arts 929 North Water Street. This next installment of Broadway Across America will incite your memory and get you dancing in your seats to such memorable numbers as: "Maniac", "Gloria", "Man Hunt", "I Love Rock & Roll", and of course the title tune – "Flash Dance – What a Feeling". Pursue your dream of watching Alex pursue her dream of becoming a professional dancer, and discover dreams do come true. Feel free to visit the web sites -- www.marcuscenter.org or www.broadwayacrossamerica.com/milwaukee The dancing begins Tuesday, March 4 – Sunday, March 9. Though I can't share with you the tentative selections for the 2014/2015 Broadway Across America program gracing The Marcus Center -- suffice it to say You will want to subscribe to all their five star shows!

Shank Hall will host a Record Release Party Concert on Saturday March 8, the music of The Mike Benign Compulsion. A very fun, cool, Indy band that is making its mark, you've probably heard their music on 88.9. Remember fifty years ago another band was taking us by storm, history may repeat itself. I can't wait to get a copy of their debut album -- always a fan of album art, this one is even more special with a Hanson Dodge Studio photo of Milwaukee's favorite bon vivant Joe Pabst on the cover! PBR me ASAP!

The Skylight Music Theatre will make your night sing! This time out – "Philip Glass' Hydrogen Jukebox" Friday, March 14 – Sunday, March 30 The Cabot Theatre of The Broadway Complex. The music of Philip Glass, the poetry of Allen Ginsberg making for an avant-garde reflection of the U.S.A. from the 1950's through the 1980's. Covering social issues, such as the sexual revolution, drugs, and Eastern philosophy – a history lesson of pop culture – to be sure, caution if you're not careful you may learn something!

If this sounds a little too forward for your taste, how about Fats Waller's "Ain't Mis Be Havin' this timeless classic is stampeding into The Stackner Cabaret of The Milwaukee Rep. Friday, March 14 – Sunday, May 18 take in and enjoy this Tony Award winner that salutes the Harlem Renaissance. The selections from this joyful production include: "Loungin' at the Waldorf", "I Can't Give You Anything But Love", and by all means the title song! To make your reservation, please call: 414-224-9490. The Rep has been

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doing a remarkable job of mounting musicals this season! I'm still hearing the applause from "Ragtime" and "End of the Rainbow" what a smashing season! The Rep have two new Board Members that will install that the quality will continue – with Cecelia Gilbert and Randall Mc Kennie now on board, a great addition.

I would like to cordially invite each and every one of you to Tall Keith's One Heartland/Camp Heartland Fundraiser. It takes place on Saturday, March 15 – The Ides of March 4 – 8 p.m. at Hot Water/The Where House, where South Water Street and East National Avenue meet, kiddy komer from Kruz. Paul and Adam open their doors, ever so generously every year, Tall Keith and his beloved Posse who forever it seems has gathered their collective talents to provide a bacchanal not to be missed! Food, drink specials, Silent Auction, a Show, yes did I mention a Show, at 6 p.m. – all proceeds to benefit Children affected/Effectuated by HIV/AIDS in sending them to Summer Camp! Who can say no to a child? The Dazzling Divas or is it Divas who dazzle that will be performing are: Goldie Adams, from The Florentine Opera Jillian Bruss, Sarah Lewis Jones, and Anne Van Deusen, from the world of the Theater Dear Ruthie, Laura Monagle, Wendi Bazar-Besatie, Maple Veneer, our Windy City fellow Jonathan, and Cordially Yours as The Beaver. This very important Tea Dance/Cocktail Party has really evolved into quite

the soiree, and I'm deeply thrilled to be a small part of it! Hoping to see You all there! The venue is enormous and The Public is most welcome – as long as you make a Contribution to the cause...

My Friends of The Florentine Opera Company offer up "Julius Caesar" by George Frideric Handel Friday, March 28 and Sunday, March 30 – Uihlein Hall of The Marcus Center. Time once again to barge up the Nile and pay a call on Caesar, Cleopatra, Cornelia, and don't forget the asp! In the shadows of the Ides of March how apropos! Please don't forget The Camerata Celebration Sunday, March 23 The Room of Boom 7 p.m. "A Toga Party" – Costumes, Togas – encouraged – think "Animal House"! A complimentary party, promoting The Florentine Opera, their current production of "Julius Caesar", a delicious buffet provided by Miss Katie's Diner – thank you Peter Pitch, the joyous sound of The Florentine Interns, a Q&A with the Stars of the show, and a cash bar – a perfect recipe for a perfect fun day, Sunday! Happy 80th Season, Florentine!

The Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM) currently has "Uncommon Folk! Traditions in American Art" on exhibit, raves from all who have taken in this grass roots, primitive display.

Love Notes – Congratz Rick & Brad on your recent engagement! Long may you continue to love! What a hot couple!

I just love the DVD of "Cassandra McShepard

Live: An Evening at BLU". This sensual songstress will leave you anything but BLU! By day, she is an engaging panelist (and has the best wardrobe and accessories in local TV) on WITI TV6's "Real Milwaukee" at 9 a.m. Michael Patrick McKinley, the power behind the voice, is doing a capital job of promoting Milwaukee's current First Lady of Cabaret – Brava! Cassandra did a flawless job emceeing and singing at last year's ARCW's "Make A Promise Dinner.

Do you have a copy of "Food Lovers' Guide to Wisconsin – The Best Restaurants, Markets & Local Culinary Offerings"? If not it's a must for all households! It's THEE Encyclopedia of dining out in the Dairyland! So fun to page through this Bible of bounty to figure out where to graze and take care of that constant craving. Martin Hintz, with the valued (and attractive) assistance of Pam Percy has done a bang up job of formulated this valued feast guide – Bon Appetite!

I must acknowledge my gratitude to Dan Mueller for including me on the guest list to ARCW's (the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin) "Red Ribbon Patron Luncheon". Dan, Director of Development for the Agency did a flawless job as emcee, always a pleasure to hear the good words and wisdom of Mike Gifford, the President and Chief Executive Officer of ARCW, as well as my pals, Mary Hartwig-sporting a snappy new 'do and Tall Tony Belot. Oriol Gutierrez, Editor-In-Chief of POZ Magazine

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and a man living with HIV for 22 years was the Guest Speaker – what an inspiration! Will Radler, the rose specialist, bar none, was acknowledged for his significant endowment to the Agency. For those of you, who may not know – Mr. Radler contributed the largest single gift ever to ARCW – one million dollars to help the crucial mental health treatment of ARCW. Being enriched by this luncheon were The Cream City Foundation's Paul Fairchild, Real Estate Star Jim Scheif, Aurora Health Care's Mike Brophy and Jerry Janis, Artist Polly Daeger, The Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Mary Beth Budisch and Will Janisch what a great warm feeling on a bitter cold winter's day. Mark your calendars Make A Promise 2014 will be taking place on Saturday, April 26 back at The Convention Center.

David Hyde Pierce the star of "Frasier" and acclaimed Theater actor will be conducting the Master Class this summer at Ten Chimneys. He follows past teachers: Lynn Redgrave, Joel Grey, Olympia Dukakis, and Alan Alda. Culture does come to the hinterlands.

Had a great time taking in Joyce Bevan's Cocktail Show at The Legion Hall, she is still singing and playing her piano like nobody's business! Joyce was a favorite at The M&M Club for years! WITI TV 6 News did a marvelous story on her and her career a couple of years ago. Joyce has found the fountain of youth, she hasn't aged a second since last I saw her and that was 2006 when The M's closed.



Photo of Joyce and Michael courtesy of Roger Krawiecki

So sad to report the passing of Rudi Rogelio-Hake AKA Rudi D'Angelo the Heavens are getting brighter with all the Stars going way too soon! Richard Hagen, Mark Hagen's father has passed on, as well as Bonnie DeLeeuw's dear, sweet mother Lorrie - - Remember them all...

Looking for a fun place to eat? Have you been to The National – Café, Coffee, Take-A-Way? 839 West National Avenue offering an array of delicious sandwiches, soups, bakery, brunches,

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It's spring – St. Patrick's Day time, the hope of warmth and sunshine! Go fly a kite and have a wonderful season of it, as I remind you it's the glamor, not the grammar – and will remain Still Cordially Yours,.

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Well here we are preparing our green duds for Good old St Patrick's Day. Just remember, what goes in green usually comes out green, so don't blame your trick for the evening on that! Well March has come and hopefully spring is soon to come, as I don't think I'm the only one who is sick and tired of cold and snow! Well onto my rant and rave about well, nothing really.

This month I figured I should talk more about the common question that we get in the shop. The most common is "Is it gonna hurt?" Well there is only one response you can have to a question like that. "Miss that will be five dollars to answer any stupid questions you have." You have to realize that you are putting a hole in your body. There is going to be some discomfort with that. However the amount of pain you actually feel during the piercing is over so quickly that you rarely even realize that the piercing has

been done.

Another stupid thing that people do constantly is not listening to the piercer. To be very honest last week I had a lady come in to get her navel pierced and I told her to lie down. Well she laid down alright. . . on her stomach. I was very tempted at that point to ask her if she had children, for if she did, I am sure that we are all massively screwed come the future. We can tell a customer to look straight ahead at us and all they do is turn their head and lean on stuff. Have you ever wanted to smack the hell out of someone?? Stop in the shop sometime and I am sure you will meet someone who needs to get hit. (But beware, if you want to hit me I charge. And I may be easy but I sure as hell ain't cheap!)

And as I sit here in my office staring at the blizzard outside, I can't help but wonder what the hell is going to happen when I am too old to wipe my own ass.

And seeing some of the people of today coming in the shop I have but one simple request. When I am so old that I can't wipe my own ass, just take me out into the field and put me out of my misery like old yeller.

Well now that I have ranted and raved for a little while how about some reader mail.

Brent,

I was wondering how do you learn to become a piercer?

—Dan

Well Dan you have to first make sure you are interested in the career. And secondly you have to find someone who is willing to teach you how to perform the art. Also and this may be the hardest part, making sure that the person who teaches you knows what the hell they are talking about.

Brent,

I want to get my dick pierced, but I am really emberassed cause I have a really small pecker. Can I still get my dick pierced?

—Little Prick

Well Prick, you can definitely still get you dick pierced. And trust me there is no embarrassment issue at our store, we have seen it all, including dicks I had to go chopping through hair to get to. So don't worry about it.

And so this just about wraps up my column for this month. I hope you have a great St. Patrick's Day and most of all I hope you remember at least most of it. Don't forget to drop me an e-mail at Avantgarde@voyager.net.

KRUZ



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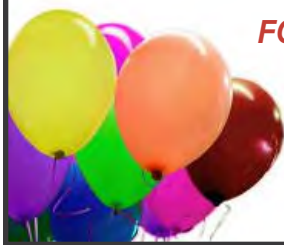


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