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An Interview by Paul Masterson

In the Pantheon of Milwaukee drag goddesses, Karen Valentine takes her place in the upper most rank. Her decades' long commitment to the LGBT community is marked by her dedication to a broad spectrum of causes and organizations. Her story begins in the early days of the HIV/AIDS crisis and continues today.

QUEST spoke with Karen Valentine about her colorful past and her long history of giving back.

Paul Masterson: Let's start with a little biographical sketch. When did Karen Valentine make her debut?

Karen Valentine: I came out at 18 in 1979. It was like Pandora opening her box. I went through several lovers and broke up with the last one in spring 1985. I joined the Saturday Softball Beer League and the Holiday Invitational Tournament (HIT) bowling league to find a new one. And, it was also the beginning of the AIDS crisis so it was a way to not be alone. But, I'm not athletic so then I helped launch the first gay chorus, Fest City Singers before it was even called that, with Rhona (of M&M fame). I was also a founding member of Cream City Chorus in 1987. We put on a show for Rhona's birthday, February 1, probably in '87, at M&M's to benefit the chorus. I thought it would be fun and camp. It was the first time I did drag with a gown and wig. I performed Vikki Carr's Let It Please Be Him. After that I was always included in Rhona's birthday review. I got dubbed Karen Valentine and became known as KV. I embraced both monikers. And thus Karen Valentine was born.

PM: Those were the days, weren't they?

KV: Yes, it was a different time... the M&M girls...Rhona, DeDe, Patsy Parks, Doris D'Lago, "Princess" Charlotte Lorrraine, Holly Brown, BJ Daniels, and Ginger

Spice. I knew Dear Ruthie from her column. We were already friends socially and I extended an invitation for her to do her first drag show at M&Ms. We played the little girls from Little Rock. It went over big and we followed with solo numbers. From there her career went on both as a writer for Wisconsin Light and as a drag performer.

PM: And what about you?

KV: I made friends with the legendary drag queen, Doris D'Lago. She made my costumes from scratch, helped me with my make-up and always included me in her shows. My stylist, "hairdresser to the stars," I'd call him, was Joe Kender. He said putting Karen together was like playing with a big Barbie doll. Sadly for me, he moved to Portland, Oregon. Currently, credit goes to Goldie Adams for my hair and make-up. She makes me stage ready. I compare myself to a car at the Indy 500. The crew does the work and I just run the race.

PM: Drag has changed with the times. Has KV matured as well?

KV: Today there's a difference between being a drag performer and being a gay man. There was a time when the only person who did drag as a lifestyle was Holly Brown. She was one of my favorites. She played at *219* and then took her evening of magic to *La Cage*. She sang live and did great impersonations. The others only did drag on occasion. We lost a lot of wonderful performers to AIDS. There were so many.

I'm old school I want to be glamorous, a perfect show girl. I want everybody to love me. I want the room. I thrive on overwhelming approval. To me, KV is a salute and homage to women. Lesbians pontificate about drag insulting women but to me it's pretty. It's performance art.

Karen Valentine lives on the stage. I don't want to take the magic away and dilute the mystique of it all. I don't want people to think KV will show up when they invite Michael Johnston to brunch. I have never done anything to alter my appearance

aside from costuming and the make-up brush. I respect people who cut off their dicks but I've had too much fun with mine. But, in today's world it's more of a blur. In the past, the excitement was seeing the transformation from boy to girl. Now the transformation isn't as startling. Some remind me of Julie Newmar doing *My Living Doll*. They're robotic. It's beyond skin.

I don't use the "f" bomb or "cs" references, either. Karen is above that. There was a complaint once about the double entendres I used at the PrideParade. I don't use profanity. So what should I do to answer that! As my mother would say, "When in doubt, do nothing." I did nothing and that was the end of it.

PM: Drag also has always had an interesting connection with the leather community. Do you share that affinity?

KV: Someone once showed up at a leather event in drag and when questioned, said "I thought they said feathers". I'm still fascinated with the connection of drag to the leather world. Gear is gear. I am appreciative of the invitation extended to me by my leather brothers. I've co-hosted *Harbor Room's* anniversary for years, at least 8 times. They've always treated me like royalty there. I also emcee the PrideFest Leather Fetish Fashion Show.

PM: You have a reputation as a fund raiser. When did that begin?

KV: Joe Pabst once told me "anyone can be a philanthropist. Whatever you give, you give of yourself." I guess that's what life is all about: making the world a little better. It's true.

The chorus sang at the Gay Softball World Series in 1985 held at Mitchell Park. It was a big to-do. Someone parachuted onto the field, they had a grand piano, we sang the US and Canadian national anthems. It was the birth of gay music in Milwaukee. Back in '85 there were 25 bars. We'd go from bar to bar and do a chorus promotion and collect contributions. Once being a member of a group involved in fund raising I understood the idea. And, it was the AIDS crisis. What comes in time of crisis? Fund

raisers. I've been doing them ever since.

PM: Like?

KV: I did HIT for many years. It used to be the escape for those who could not go home for Thanksgiving and that's why HIT was scheduled over that holiday weekend. I didn't have the coordination to bowl but I would emcee their parties and help them raise money.

On the last Wednesday of every month I hostess the Pink Hat Party fund raiser at *This is It.* In February it will be for the Healing Center's "Hope Shining Blue" program. Most people don't even know it exists. It benefits male on male sexual abuse. People never want to discuss that but it's a bigger program than one would think.

I've emceed the Big Gay 5 K Run and Walk. I've been very honored that CCF has underwritten me to emcee the Pride-Parade as well.

And, by the way, I've been asked to host a show for *One Heartland* (an organization dedicated to sending HIV/AIDS affected children to summer camp) with Maple Veneer, Ruthie and Goldie Adams. It's a wonderful party and it's coming up March 19 at Hot Water.

For my 50th birthday I did a fundraiser for the Johnson & Pabst Fund but Joe Pabst declined the donation and instead advised me to give it to a new fund for the arts at Cream City Foundation. I was the chief donor to that fund.

PM: And, speaking of Cream City Foundation, you manage the Valentine Fund there.

KV: Yes, it was a unique opportunity. A friend of mine allowed me this wonderful gift to create the Valentine Fund. He entrusted me with the power to support the things in the community that are important to me, the arts. I was honored and flattered. He underwrites the fund and I personally add to it through my workplace giving. Other colleagues at work contribute to it as well. I sat on the money for three years deciding what to do with it. "When in doubt, sit on it," as I say. The first thing I did was when Peter Holbrook took over CCF. I called the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) and suggested an art therapy program. They thought it was a wonderful idea. It provides an 8 week summer program with an incredible artist/therapist. It's now going into its second year. I would love to see the pieces they make included at the Make-A-Promise Auction or be a design for an AIDS Walk t-shirt.

The fund also underwrote an event for the Camerata, the Florentine Opera's LGBT affinity group. This season I'm supporting the Renaissance Theatre's play, *Censored on Final Approach* about female pilots in WW2, Milwaukee Ballet's *Dorian Gray* and the Florentine's production of Jake Heggie's *Three Decembers*. It's a new opera with a gay subplot.

PM: You're also a writer, a chronicle and historian of sorts. How did that begin?

KV: I connected with artist Patrick Farrell and that inspired my first column in *In Step.* It was a gay RSVP column in the style of a famous society column, a *Who's Who* about gay Milwaukee beyond the bars. I've been writing it for QUEST for years. I comfort myself with the thought that I have continuously written a monthly column covering gay life in Milwaukee since 1998.

PM: What will be KV's legacy?

KV: Mother Theresa said, you can't stop hunger but you can feed a person. I have a conscience. I'm a provocateur. I have hope. I come with an open and clear heart and try to make the world a better place. My role has always been as a fund raiser and an educator. I love emceeing and talking, I do any fund raiser I'm invited to. It's what my art form is destined to do. The community has been very kind to embrace me as one of its respected members and appreciates me doing what I do. I have no Vegas aspirations. As one of the oldest performers on the Milwaukee stage today. I use KV as a character to raise money and awareness and to give back. That's my mission and my legacy. As I like to say, life is the best party I've even been invited

See Karen Valentine in all her glory at Club Charlies, twice a month 2-7pm, for Sunday Funday Show Tunes with KV and Brian Reinkober. Don't miss her on Valentine's Day, Sunday 14th. (KV's birthday, btw)!



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Shit will get fishy.



418 E. WELLS STREET - MILWAUKEE

Powder her Face

A review by Paul Masterson

Now in his third season, artistic director Vishwa Subbaraman continues to prove the Skylight Music Theatre's versatility, offering the mainstays of musical theater, classic operas and operettas and, more importantly, modern pieces that might otherwise escape our notice. And so he continues the current season dedicated to divas and heroines with a rare production of Thomas Adès' 1995 opera, *Powder Her Face*. It adds yet another pearl to the illustrious string of new works that featured the Ginsburg/Glass collaboration, *Hydrogen Jukebox* and Sucharitkul's *Snow Dragon*.

Powder her Face tells the unfortunate tale of Margaret Campbell, Duchess of Argyll. The duchess, catapulted to celebrity status in the 1930s, finds herself in a loveless marriage with her philandering duke. She pursues to resolve her loneliness and desire for intimacy through dozens of sexual encounters with an array of lovers. Ironically, the reputedly most photographed woman of her time is undone by the discovery of sexually explicit selfies of the time taken with that new-fangled instant camera, the Polaroid. Her fall from grace culminates in 1963 with a very public divorce trial in which she is found solely culpable. Condemned by the tabloids and public that once deified her, Margaret lived out her days mockingly known as the "Dirty Duchess."

Directed by Robin Guarino with Subbaram as musical director, the curtain rises with an erotic tango theme braced by a somber dissonance. Liliana Duque Pinero's scenic design consists of just one set, the duchess' fashionable residence hotel room. Dominating stage left is a vintage gramophone, its massive horn, with its pink tinted interior, gapes like a beckoning vagina. In a series of flashbacks, beginning in the 1930s, the opera follows Margaret's rise and fall. The cast of four features Cassandra Black as the duchess. Kaleigh Rae Gamache', Joseph Beutel and Ken Robinson sing a range of supporting roles. All offer a sovereign rendering of an exceedingly difficult and complex musical score that certainly tests the limits of their vocal abilities. But Black, in particular, delivers not only exceptional music but also an outstanding acting performance as she



moves us through the throes of the duchess' emotional life. She evokes our compassion not our pity. The sex scenes are extremely graphic yet somehow, rather than sensational, they merely state the work's desperate notion of random acts committed in the name of unfulfilled love.

Musically, there are moments of Cole Porter and Prokofiev with notes of Weill, Stravinsky and Berg in a challenging, often atonal score written for both traditional and unconventional instruments. The 15 member orchestra succeeds with driving conviction. The score's darkness, under-

pinned by multiple bass clarinets and saxophones, is complimented by Carrie Cavins' shadowy and dreamlike lighting design.

In all, it is a stunning experience.

The 100 minute long production runs without intermission. Each performance is preceded by a pre-talk with the directors. For historical insights and an appreciation of the work as well as the production itself, attending the pre-talk is highly recommended.

For ticket information, go to www.skylightmusictheatre.org



MGVA Announces Spring Season

Milwaukee Gay Volleyball Association's (MGVA) upcoming 11-week indoor season begins Sunday, March 6. Registration is now open and remains accessible until midnight, Sunday, Feb. 21. Registration is first-come, first-served. MGVA advise participants to register as soon as possible before court space fills up! Indoor matches are played at the Beulah Brinton Community Center, 2555 S. Bay St. in Bay View.

Cost is \$40/player (or \$30 with a current student ID). Teams of 6 or more may pay a discounted team fee of \$250. Registration may be completed online at http://milwaukeegayvolleyball.com, by mail or in person at an MGVA event

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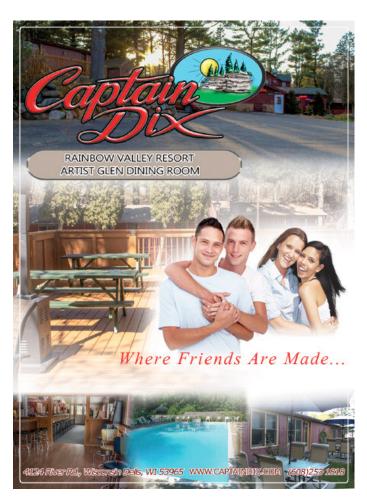
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Milwaukee Pride, Inc Announces New Executive Director

Effective January 20, Milwaukee Pride, Inc announced its newly hired executive director, Eric Heinritz. As part of the restructuring of the 28 year old Milwaukee PrideFest, the organization became a 501©3 entity called Milwaukee Pride, Inc. Its board of directors announced the hire as a change to forward its non-profit mission and impact. The executive director's role includes leading fundraising, programming, finance, governance as well as community engagement initiatives to foster organizational growth. His tasks also support

event production and managing day-today business operations.

For nearly three decades, Milwaukee PrideFest, Inc and Milwaukee Pride, Inc remained all-volunteer organizations. However, with its change of mission from an annual weekend event to a year-round community resource, the need for a full-time paid position became critical. Michail Takach, Milwaukee Pride Communications Director explained the strategy saying, "Every non-profit approaches a

crossroads where they must choose between accepting the 'as is' or fighting for the future. With the executive director position, we are making a



strategic and responsible investment in our long-term plan."

Heinritz was formerly employed by Summerfest producer, Milwaukee World Festival, Inc, where he served in various leadership roles from 2001 to 2014. In that capacity he began working with PrideFest's production team in 2001. He joined

the Milwaukee Pride board of directors in 2014. Heinritz later became its vice president and lead its Finance and Governance Committees.



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418 E. WELLS STREET - MILWAUKEE

The Iron Diaries – Fitness & Health

"WTF Is Eating Clean and How the Heck Do I Start?"

Unless you live under a rock, I guarantee you have a loud-mouth friend or came across a magazine head-line ranting & raving about "eating clean". I get asked about it everyday from friends, family, people I meet at the gym, clients, and everyone in between.

So lets dive in...

Eating clean is not a specific diet or meal plan - it simply is what it sounds like. "Clean eating" is a term used to describe the act of "cleaning-up" your diet, or eliminating foods you know you shouldn't be eating. I've found that an overwhelming majority of people looking to lose weight, gain muscle, or improve their performance have a general understanding of what they should/shouldn't eat - its the doing-it that is tough.

Basically it means cutting out the crap you know isn't healthy and replacing with wholesome, quality foods instead. When you're "eating clean" you've cut out foods like pizza, cheeseburgers, fries, ice-cream, cookies, cereal, sodas, fruit drinks, candy, and other highly refined pre-processed food (oh yeah... the booze, too - we will dive deeper into this another time).

For a lot of people it can be very tough to transition into eating clean because of a whole laundry list of reasons: work, travel, schedules, appointments, get togethers, and all the other excuses in between. But it is far from impossible.

Sadly, most people have been raised and live on shitty food. Along with a busy lifestyle, fast food and the con-

stant eating out at restaurants, cleaning up your diet may seem like next to impossible - but go ahead and reread that bolded statement a couple lines up. You think that new workout plan gave you awesome results, you havent seen anything until you start eating clean.

Here are 8 Easy Tips to Eating Clean:

- 1. Plan to eat 5-6 small meals throughout the day.
- 2. Shop the perimeter of the grocery store (all you need will be found on the perimeter of the grocery store seriously check it out next time you shop).
- 3. Cook all your food for the week on Sundays or an other day of the week that is convenient for you.
- Get some vented storage containers to store your meals in
- 5. Get a soft-pack cooler to carry your food with you to work.
- When eating out, make healthy choices (this can be challenging at first, like everything else, it will eventually become a habit).
- 7. Drink at least a gallon of water each day.
- 8. After 10-14 clean days, give yourself one meal to "cheat" and eat whatever you want.

Take Home Message

Looking and feeling your best absolutely requires "eating clean". I always tell people you will look like what you eat, so choose accordingly. Eat the things you know you should, and stay away from the things you know you shouldn't. Add in one hell of a fitness program on top of your new clean eating & you will be amazed at the progress you make.



Darron Lattomus

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Drag Darling Sherry Vine Launches Queer Network, gaySVTVworld

The Internet is getting a whole lot gayer! International drag darling Sherry Vine and former Here-TV executive Josh Rosenzweig are combining their style, humor and sensibility into a onestop, digital destination for all of the world's LGBTQ entertainment needs. **gaySVTVworld** premieres February 14 with original shows, specials, music videos, short films and more: all free at **YouTube.com/MissSherryVine**.

"The world needs gaySVTVworld because they are hungry for original programming from top queer talent," says Sherry Vine. "We got 'em all: Haus Of Mimosa, Pickles, David Serrano, Chris Semers ... and this is only the beginning."

"gaySVTVworld is created by and for LGBTQ audiences," adds Josh Rosenzweig. "Nobody is going to tell our stories like we will. While our visibility has increased enormously over the last decade with the launch of several LGBT television networks, it is essential that the community have an online space to call our own. A destination where we can go to find like-minded artists and feel the power of the collective."

While gaySVTVworld draws inspiration from a traditional television model, it also presents a modern digital age spin with all shows underseven minutes long. "We're offering short content so people can view several episodes in the same amount of time as one traditional TV show," explains Vine. "Maybe you only have five free minutes on your way to work or during a lunch break. That's enough time to catch a hilarious episode of Fashion Puhleez on your smart phone!"

The network will kick off its first season with a slate of eight programs, releasing daily, beginning with Sunday's Sherry and the Greek, an original talk series starring Vine and Chris Semers, discussing a variety of fun topics and performing skits, characters, and musical numbers.

On Monday, queer notables share their pop culture picks on EduGAYtion. Then Tuesday, The Rachel Zoe Show meets Project Runway in Fashion Puhleez, with lead players in the beauty industry discussing fashion, club couture and styling.

House of Mimosa presents The Anita & Gina Marie Show, a comedic show that chronicles the daily antics of two women as they cause mayhem throughout Astoria, Queens (singing out - or rather, airing out - all their dirty laundry) gets viewers over hump day. Then its Throwback Thursdays with Pickles, a look back at a public access show that offers a glimpse into the gay, downtown art and nightlife scene of New York in the nineties.

Celebrate the end of the work-week with The Flames of Hell's Kitchen, a telanovela about the life of Sherry Vine, her manager Gloria, assistant Busted and sexy Latino boyfriend, Diego. In the first season, Sherry wins big, loses everything, slips back into a life of drugs, and faces an intervention. The show stars David Serrano, Busted, Patty McKeever and Al McKeever.

Finally, on Saturday, it's movie night as gaySVTVworld presents The SVTV Short Film Fest, an online festival dedicated to spotlighting the very best LGBTQ filmmakers from around the world. Each week is a new short film along with interviews from the filmmakers and special bonus features.

In addition, What's In Your Purse?, a hilarious

two-minute segment featuring Vine cornering nightlife celebrities and forcing them to reveal the contents of their bags, will run throughout the week.

"We knew launching a network was an ambitious endeavor but there are so many things we

didn't think of," admits Vine. "Josh and I and our amazing team have literally been working every day on gaySVTVworld for almost a year now."

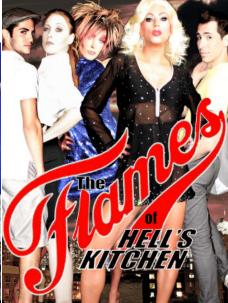
"So much of that time has been spent on brainstorming ideas, reaching out to people we wanted to work with and deciding on a slate we felt confident about," continues Rosenzweig. "We have several shows that are in various stages of development. Our intention is to continue to keep rolling out new programs, music videos and comedy sketches."

Sherry Vine's hilarious video parodies have made her a YouTube sensation, being viewed over 14,000,000 times! She got her start in downtown NYC but today tours the world with her live singing and comedy shows. Vine has appeared on the off-Broadway stage, in numerous films including Stonewall and Wigstock and she starred in two seasons of Here TV's variety show, She's Living For This, produced and directed by Josh Rosenzweig.

Josh Rosenzweig served as SVP of Here TV for ten years where he produced over two hundred hours of television programming including She's Living For This and Heart of Broadway: An Inside Look at Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. He was also the host of the hit TV talk show

Just Josh. Rosenzweig has directed many music videos, award-winning films and over forty productions for the theater. He has been nominated for two Daytime Emmy Awards.





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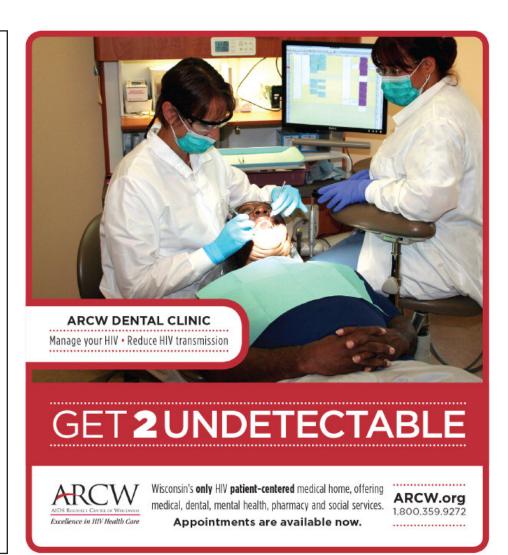
Paul Masterson

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Imagine, if you dare loyal Quest readers, a film about the Stonewall Riots which focuses on a handsome white youth; just another gay kid who has traversed the great panoramic American landscape, destination New York City. What luck, then, that his coach pulls into the bus station with just enough time for our enterprising lad to freshen up before heading down to that gayest of all gay bars: the Stónewall Inn. Once there he

birth of the Gay Revolution. Now, you might be thinking that Glenn is offering a synopsis of the extraordinarily controversial Stonewall (2015), new on DVD from openly gay filmmaker Roland Emmerich who is admittedly, better known for such summer blockbuster disasters as 2012 and Independence Day.

manages to nab an empty

barstool from which he might

witness (if not actually incite)

the riots which serve as the

In point of fact, Glenn is actually offering the synopsis of eärlier

NEW ON DVD "Stonewall" (2015)

By Glenn Bishop

Finch.

Using Martin Duberman's essential history Stonewall as source material, Finch and screenwriter Rikki Beadle-Blair conjure up in Stonewall (1995) a heady mash up of historic fact and fiction, all neatly and quite cleverly packaged by a narrative framework during which Guillermo Diaz's singular La Miranda insists moviegoers are getting her story and hers alone: There are as many Stonewall stories as there are queens in New York City," admits La Miranda, a streetwise Puerto Rican drag queen. "This is my legend, honey. OK? My Stonewall leg-

Now, twenty years later, Roland Emmerich has created his own Stonewall legend and what's remarkable about Emmerich's remake is how misguided it all proves to be.

The essential problem, not to Closed Captioning mention the source of much of the film's subsequent controversy, has to do with Emmerich focusing his story on white straight-acting the Danny (Jeremy Irvine, War Horse). Unlike Frederick Weller's charismatic Matty Dean who arrives at the Stonewall Inn with little fanfare in the earlier film, Jon Robin Baitz's screenplay places Danny center stage in the



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

Other than Jonny Beauchamp's extraordinarily compelling performance as Ray, there's very little to recommend Roland Emmerich's Stonewall. There's virtually no sense of period, the riots themselves treated as if merely the culmination of Danny's coming out and finally, shamefully little effort made to incorporate meaningfully into the narrative individuals like Craig L. Rodwell, Sylvia Rivera and Frank Kameny.

But worst of all proves to be Jeremy Irvine's totally charmless Danny.

Claiming a "whitewash," LGBTQ activists went so far as to boycott the film's Chicago opening indicting Emmerich's Stonewall for having no people of color in leading roles, and no transgender main characters. For his part, Emmerich argued, "I didn't make this movie only for gay people; I made it also for straight people, I kind of found out, in the testing process, that actually, for straight people, [Danny] is a very easy in. Danny's very straight-acting.

With box office receipts totaling a mere \$174,289. Stonewall clearly appealed to very few.

Just the facts...

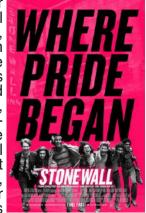
Stonewall is in English and has a running time of 129 minutes Stonewall is available on DVD with a SRP of \$19.98 Meager extras include Theatrical trailer,

quences, Danny's humble story emerges. The son of taciturn father possessing very specific ideas of masculinity, Danny is holding a torch for fellow teammate Joe (Karl Glusman). Joe is happy to be the recipient of a quick blowjob in his immaculate period automobile front seat but is absolutely dismissive when Danny says how much he likes him. They aren't 'faggots' after

For his part, Danny doesn't look all that thrilled with the prospect of servicing his quarterback.

Then, as is often the case in stories such as this, Danny and Joe, who are foolish enough to park at

the popular high school trysting spot, are căught in flagrante. The news spreads and quickly Danny's father, who just happens to also be the football coach, is just not having it, especially after Joe throws



Volume 15 #2 Febraury 2016



It is great to see others give something back to this wonderful talented person.



Happy February and happy month of love! Back at it, once again and happy to be so!

Santa was really good to me this past year and brought me a new job! I have a new gig, bartending, once again on Fridays! Thrilled to be able to help you all launch your weekends in 2016! This Is It have my services (starting: Friday, February 12^{th}) from 5-8:30 pm every Friday – so come in and enjoy 3-4-1s-1 alk about a free for all!

So the tradition continues, come and see me as the newest addition to the oldest Gay bar in Milwaukee! Something tells me June is smiling from up above. Cheers!

Also Ryan Adam, Stud Muffin/former Bartender at KRUZ got his wish to be a Milwaukee County Sheriff! How arresting! A whole new definition to up against the wall and spread 'em ...

On the topic of careers, Milwaukee's own K.C. Rae/ Kurt has taken over ownership of Grande Flowers 1433 East Capitol Drive Shorewood 414-332-3070. K.C. has been in the blooming business forever and has brightened everyone's day with his bunches of beautiful flowers. Don't forget, Sunday, February 14 is Valentine's Day, the international day of love! Celebrate!

Another spot to consider getting you Amore posies from would be Jaimer's Floral 414-243-0197 www.jaimersFloral.com on facebook: Jaimer's Floral.

To complement the blossoms you may buy, how about bonbons this Valentine's weekend? A sure way to your lover's heart. Kilwins Milwaukee – has a way to satisfy everyone's hunger. Rick Clark and B.J. Gruling give you that extra special something. Located at Bayshore Mall – 5756 North Bayshore





Drive - phone is: 414-967-4803. Indulge!

Enhancing that special someone's life with flowers is a great start to a great weekend of love, celebrate with cocktails (hint, hint), dining out (we'll take care of that one in Food Time), sweets for your sweet, even handcuffs – and there is always Theater!

During this winter freeze – it could be referred to as a Three Dog Night and that is exactly who is coming to the Brew City to warm us all up! Friday, February 5 – The Pabst Theater 144 East Wells Street 414-286-3205 is where you can relive the warming harmony of one of Pop music's best bands.

Thursdays launch the weekend in this new century so kick it off at This Is It's "Anti Valentine Party" Thursday, February 11. Tall Thomas the relatively NU Manager of the eastside legendary lounge reports that Trannika Rex from the Windy City's hot nite spot Berlin will come up and heat your weekend of love — 8pm — close!

The Florentine Opera Company rises to the occasion with "Vienna... City of my Dreams" a delightful revue starring the new Quartet of the Florentine Opera Studio Artists Friday, February 12 – Sunday, February 14. The site of all this passion will be the newly renovated Wilson Theater at Vogel Hall of The Marcus Center for the Performing Arts. Please keep in mind, the Florentine is staging a simply brilliant new Opera – "Three Decembers" by Jake Heggie. This lustrous Chamber Opera reveals three decades in the lives of a Broadway Diva, her adult son – who just happens

to be Gay and his partner and her distraught daughter, "The Glass Menagerie" of Opera? Opera Today sites this opus as "A modern masterpiece". Not to be missed! The Wilson Theater hosts this must-see March 11,13,16,18 and 20. Because of the important message this Opera has to share, Joe Pabst has generously seen to its underwriting.

Michael Pink's Milwaukee Ballet unveils "Dorian Gray: A Dance Drama in Two Acts". How sad it is you shall grow old, but this picture will always remain young. If only it were the other way? To find out the consequences to this plight, be at The Pabst Theatre February 12 – 14. This daring dance is be brought to the stage, in part, from gifts made by The Cream City Foundation, Will Radler and The Valentine Fund.

Renaissance Theaterworks 158 N Broadway, the Broadway Theatre Center – 414-273-0800 Proudly presents "Agnes of God" through St. Valentine's Day the 14th. Who doesn't love a good Nun story?

Are You at a loss on how to celebrate the day of days – Valentine's Day? Brian Reinkober and Karen Valentine will be spinning a special love edition of Sunday Fund Day Show Tunes Club Charlies 320 East Menomonee Street 2 – 7 pm. Come and fall in love!

Madison Brooks everyone's love returns to Fluid 819 South Second Street to conduct "Drag Queen BINGO!" Sunday, February 14 Valentine's Day 4 pm, Play and win chocolates!

Cap off Valentine's Day – Sunday the 14th at Hy-

brid Lounge – where Van Buren and Brady meet for "Bubbles & Beauties" – Nova D'Vine's Valentine and Birthday Show at 7 pm. A very glamorous Sunday tradition that has enjoyed a great first season, Happy Birthday Ms. Nova!

Celebrating 18 years of producing outstanding live Theater, In Tandem Theatre Company lights the stage with "Lamp For My Family" by Michael Neville. Friday, February 19 – Sunday, March 13. The tale of a large and colorful Irish family, however, all of them are deceased and waiting to talk the sole family member living ear off. The voices come from the lamps; one actor plays more than twenty characters. Talk about a family reunion and then some ...

Wisconsin LGBTQA Leadership Conference – Building Community Advancing the Movement, takes place Friday, February 19 – Sunday, February 21 The Hyatt Regency Milwaukee, a partnership of FAIR Wisconsin and Diverse & Resilient.

Broadway Across America – helps close out this short month with the all-time favorite Kander & Ebb's "Cabaret". Tuesday, February 23 – Sunday, February 28 at the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts. Once again Uihlein Hall is transformed into the infamous Kit Kat Klub where once again we are reunited with the evil Emcee and "The Toast of Mayfair" Miss Sally Bowlles. Let them shine again with the stories from "I Am A Camera". This is "Cabaret's" Golden Anniversary – 50 years ago, 1966 they shocked the Big Apple. 50 years later let them shock the Cream City – they might curdle our

February Bucket List

Tuesday, February 2 Ground Hog Day

Friday, February 5

"Three Dog Night Live In Concert"
Pabst Theater 144 E Wells Street 414-286-3205

Monday, February 8

Chinese New Year – The Year of the Monkey

Tuesday, February 9 Fat Tuesday Mardi Gras

Wednesday, February 10 Ash Wednesday

Thursday, February 11

"Anti-Valentine's Party starring Trannika Rex" This Is It 418 E Wells Street 8pm - Close

Now - Sunday, February 14

"Agnes of God" Renaissance Theaterworks
Broadway Theatre Center
158 North Broadway 414-273-0800

Friday, February 12 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

This Is It 418 East Wells Street 5 – 8:30 pm my new bartending gig

Friday, February 12 – Sunday, February 14 "Vienna... City of my Dreams" The Florentine Opera Company – Studio Artists Wilson Theater at Vogel Hall Marcus Center 929 North Water Street 414-273-1371

Friday, February 12 – Sunday, February 14 "Dorian Grav: A Dance Drama in Two Acts"

Milwaukee Ballet Pabst Theatre
144 East Wells Street 414-286-3663

Sunday, February 14 Valentine's Day

"Sunday Fun Day Show Tunes" Club Charlies 2:00 – 7:00 pm 320 East Menomonee Street

"Drag Queen BINGO! With Madison Brooks" Fluid 4:00 pm 819 South Second Street

"Nova D'Vine's Bubbles & Beauty Valentine & Birthday Show" Hybrid Lounge 707 East Brady Street 7:00 pm

Monday, February 15

President's Day and George Washington's Birthday

Friday, February 19 – Sunday, March 13

"Lamp For My Family" In Tandem Theatre Company 628 North 10th Street 414-271-1371

Friday, February 19 – Sunday, February 21 Wisconsin LGBTQA Leadership Conference Hyatt Regency Milwaukee Building Community 333 East Kilbourn Avenue 414-276-1234

Tuesday, February 23 – Sunday, February 28 "Cabaret"

Marcus Center for the Performing Arts

Broadway Across America 929 North Water Street 414-273-7206

Wednesday, February 24 – Sunday, March 20

"Slowgirl" Milwaukee Chamber Theatre Broadway Theatre Center 158 North Broadway 414-273-0800

Wednesday, February 24

Pink Hat Party at This Is It Hope Shining Blue – Funding Recovery Program for Male Sexual Assaults 418 East Wells Street 8 – 11:00 pm

Thursday, February 25

"STOMP"

Milwaukee Theatre 500 West Kilbourn Avenue 800-745-3000

Monday, February 29

Leap Year Day, an Extra 24 hours!

milk! It has never been so divinely decadent! So put down the knitting, the book and the broom – and I'll see You at the "Cabaret" and p.s. "Do Tell Mama", and bring her along!

"Slowgirl" by Greg Pierce takes over the Milwaukee Chamber Theatre Wednesday, February 24 – Sunday, March 20. This story is about a fleeing teenager that ends up at her uncle's jungle retreat in Costa Rica. This time of the year – isn't it inviting? The reclusive uncle and jaded niece bond over self-imposed exile, and you the fortunate audience will learn about these compelling characters as they learn about themselves.

I'll be returning the last Wednesday in February, the 24th to hostess "The Pink Hat Party" at This Is It! The last Wednesday of every month, we gather 8 – 11 pm to raise money and awareness to a worthwhile community program, project and/or charity. The fund this month is Hope Shining Blue – part of The Healing Center – they have a special program for men who have been sexually assaulted. The last taboo... come on down, invest in this program by buying a couple of raffle tickets, always great prizes!

Does this cold weather get you STOMP-ing mad? Come to the Milwaukee Theatre 500 West Kilbourn Avenue Thursday, February 25 7:30 pm and see/hear the amazing STOMP 1-800-745-3000 for tickets.

Now that the Football Season is behind us, and

what a season it was - - I will be doing "Sunday Fun Day Showtunes" at Club Charlies with Brian Reinkober more often. Nicole and Benjy are behind the bar, Matt and/or Tara will be serving, Craig - Craig is being Craig our genial host and from 2 -7 pm we will entertain you. Two Sundays a month please check Charlies website or watch on Face Book for our next engagement. Next Show Tunes Valentine's Day (Sunday, February 14 – 2 – 7 pm) Although You have time before this event, now is the time to gather family and friends and plan vour table for Make A Promise. Can You believe it's the 30th one - how far we have come! This luxurious event starts with cocktails, silent auction, dinner, show and awards - all benefitting ARCW (the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin). Saturday, April 9 The Wisconsin Center. Nick Giebel is working very hard to make this a most memorable night! Check in with him at ARCW with all inquiries 414-273-1991.

I would be remiss at this time if I didn't send out positive vibes to Miss Jackie Roberts. Dubbed the "First Lady of La Cage", he is currently fighting the battle of and for his life. Allow me my best wishes, prayers and good thoughts that he can be the Medical Books Star – and shine as brightly as he has on every stage in this town. Bravo to our Community! I love seeing our Entertainers, Clubs, Bars, Friends, Fans and Local-ites show their love, support, talent, time and good will - - amazing and

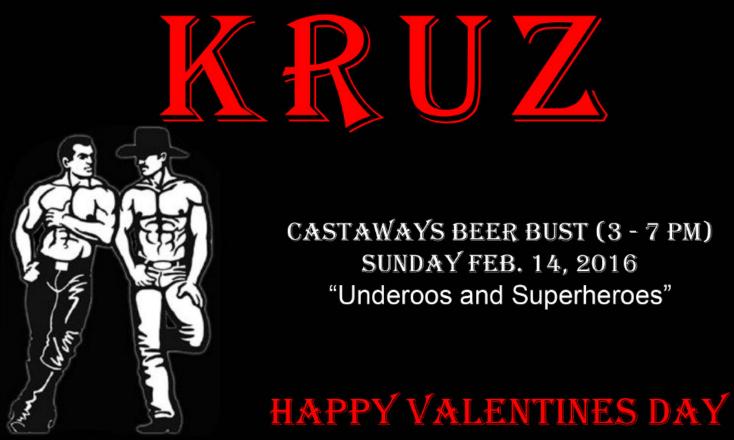
impressive – just like Miss Roberts himself. Strenath!

Rest In Peace Angelo Mortellaro of Angelo's on Van Buren (1686 North Van Buren Street). Ang – kept Cabaret and Piano Bars alive in our community! Never a cover charge – and what fun, entertainment and stiff cocktails I par took there! Norma Angeli, Ginni Smith, Jerry Grillo, Robert – so many wonderful patrons and performers and in most cases they were both! So much so – there is a documentary out there to view and enjoy from a marvelous UWM Grad.

Angelo may be at rest, but the lounge he loved will rise again this spring as Nate from the neighboring Hybrid Lounge keeps it going as a tribute to the founder and namesake.

As promised earlier Food Time, where to celebrate the month of love? Why don't you splurge and lunch or sup at The Capitol Grille 310 West Wisconsin Avenue. You have your tax return, reinvest it! And deliciously so! Troy my favorite server – aims to please and never comes up short. If you're going for a special meal – one you don't want to be disappointed in – do The Capitol Grille!

So as promised lots of theater & things to escape the winter blues, and so ends another effort. Happy Valentine's Day Month – my personal favorite – escape the cold in love! Remember it's the glamor, not the grammar as I remain Still Cordially Yours – your very own Valentine!



354 E National Ave (414) 272-KRUZ OPEN DAILY 3:00 PM – CLOSE





Feeling lonely? No plans for Valentines Day? Sick of the gloomy winter weather? Tell Cupid and Mother Nature to take a hike and curl up with me for a bit! I'll keep you company, sugar!

Nothing chases away the blues like good, old fashioned comfort food, and I've got a few ideas for you. Just look at the two recipes I'm sharing below.

These satisfying bites come together easily with everyday items you can pickup at any grocery store. Best of all, they're simply delicious and sure to shoo away whatever is bothering you. So what are you waiting for?

Whether you're a sweet or savory snacker, I've got the ideal fix for you below. Let's step into the Bitchin' Kitchen, whip up a treat, eat good and shut up!

WAFFLE FRY NACHOS



Love fries? Love nachos? Shut the hell up! So do I! Toss together this cheesy, yummy sensation for a casual appetizer or movie-night munchy or simply add a green salad for a no-fuss dinner.

1 (1.38 pound) bag frozen waffle fries
Shredded cheddar or taco-flavored cheese
Toppings: Salsa, cooked taco meat, cooked chicken, sliced
jalapenos, sliced olives, chopped onion, sour cream
and/or guacamole as desired

On a baking sheet bake frozen waffle fries as directed until crispy. Top with cheese and various toppings and set back in the oven until cheese is melted and toppings are heated through. Serve warm. Refrigerate leftovers.

Ruthie's Culinary Clues

The toppings listed are just suggestions, honey. Top the fries with whatever nacho fixings you like best. Try leftover cooked pork from last night's supper, refried beans or even cooked rice! I like to make these with several different types of cheese. Try them with tater tots instead of the waffle fries for some cheesy "Tot-chos!"

Keep up with Ruthie on Facebook at Dear Ruthie, follow her on Twitter at @DearRuthie and watch her cooking show at www.RuthiesBitchinKitchen.com.

CHOCOLATE-PEANUT CLUSTERS



Never made candy before? Give these a try. Simply melt the chocolate in a slow cooker, toss in some nuts and you're nearly done! What could be easier? I like to keep these little chocolate bites on hand for sweet treats I can nibble on all day long...much to the dismay of my hips.

2 (1 pound) blocks milk or dark chocolate, chopped
2 tablespoons peanut butter
1 (16 ounce) canister dry roasted peanuts
1 (10.3 ounce) canister unsalted mixed nuts

Set the chocolate and peanut butter in a slow cooker. Cover and cook on high for 1 hour or until melted and well combined. Stir well. Stir in the nuts until well combined. Drop by tablespoon onto parchment-paper lined baking sheets. Set in refrigerator for 2 hours or until firm. Store clusters in an air tight container.

Ruthie's Culinary Clues

Watch the chocolate carefully in the slow cooker. Don't let it come to a simmer/boil. Unsalted nuts work best with the melted chocolate but feel free to use salted if that's what you have on hand. Look for blocks of chocolate in the baking aisle at the grocery store. Instead of dropping the mixture by tablespoons, spread the mixture onto parchment-lined baking sheets instead. Refrigerate, and break into sections for Chocolate-Peanut Bark.



February is finally here, Wait why was I excited about February? Ah well not like it matters, But since I have the space let's kick off this month with another healthy dose of Shameless pugs for Pridefest, hosted by PrideMKE and the Pride Parade. Both are starting their gear up to 2016 so you may want to check out their websites at www.pridefest.com and ww

So I decided to break with tradition this February, and instead of writing about genital piercings we are going to talk about a few facial piercings. So let's get to it!

There are so many things you can get pierced on your face it is hard for me to figure out where to start. I guess we will start at the top and work our way down. First you have the eyebrow piercing, fashionable yet wonderfully understated. Eyebrows are a great way to show off a great jaw line or showing off your jaw while you put it to good use! (Dammnit hands stop writing dirty! I get all excited and have to stop writing then!) Next you have the ear piercings, from the lobes to the cartilage and everything in between, these are a great way to express yourself while making sure you still have a job when you walk into work with them. You also then have the nostril piercing;

Avant-Gard Changing the face of the earth, one needle at a time Please check out our website at www.avant-garde-piercing.com WE ARE CURRENTLY HIRING! Looking for full time piercers as well **Body Piercing your Play on the Game?** Then you need a team that has as big a drive as you do! At Avant-Garde body Piercing, they know what you want and how to get you there. 7219 W. Greenfield Ave. West Allis, WI (414)607-4068

these have become very popular as they make a person look delightfully trashy while still allowing them to cling to "high morals." (Yea, high morals, maybe there heels are high in the air! See I did it again!)

After the nostril you start getting in the mouth, I know all of you are happy to hear me talk about something you can really get inside of! (God f@*cking Dammnit! I am really going to beat myself up over this column!) Anyway, lip piercings have become very fashionable in this day in age, why I haven't a clue but I think it has something to do with those cute punk kids standing in the corner. Also when talking about piercings around the mouth you have to talk about the tongue piercing. (I bet you read this whole column just waiting for this!) The tongue piercing has roots that go way back, but it has become very popular and remains that way to this day. The tongue piercing has, for a long time, been associated with oral sex and making it better. For me I won't lie, sometimes it gets in the way and other times it makes me. . . . (You will have to get me very drunk to get the rest of that sentence out of me!) Either way there are all sorts of fun attachments you can put on it to get different sensations like smooth, hard, even spikes! (Owww, sorry I just think that would hurt. But of course we can't forget about our kinky counterparts. Gottah love them for doing what they do. Dammnit I messed my pants again think about what they do!) Other than that I think that about wraps it up for facial piercings. Let's move along to some reader mail.

Dear Brent,

My lover says that I am too fat to get a navel piercing. What should I tell her?

Suzi

Well Suzi first off thanks for writing in, and secondly I would tell her to get her sh*t and go! My personal belief is that if someone you care about is calling you fat and saying that you're not good enough for something then they are not good enough for you. As far as actually being too fat to get your navel pierced, that is a giant load of horsy poop! I have pierced women of all sizes and to be very honest is does not matter. As long as you take care of it and keep it clean you will be fine. Thanks a lot for writing in.

Don't forget, if you have a question or problem related to body piercing just write me at

<u>avantgarde@voyager.net</u>, I will answer your questions as soon as I possibly can.

Also don't forget about the Pride Parade & Pridefest, Check out their websites at www.prideparademke.com and at www.pridefest.com and find them on Facebook as well! Until next time have a great February and a Happy Valentine's Day!!

WISCONSIN LGBT BAR GUIDE

LACROSSE/MADISON (608)

Impulse 132 W. Grand Ave Beloit, (608)361-0000 My Place 3201 South Ave LaCrosse (608)788-9073 Players 300 4th St, La Crosse (608)784-4200 Chances R 417 Jay St, La Crosse (608)782-5105

Club 5 Bar/Restaurant 5 Applegate Ct Madison, (608)277-9700

Plan B 924 Williamson Street, Madison Shamrock 117 W Main Madison (608)255-5029

SOTTO 303 N Henry St Madison

WOOF'S 114 King Street, Madison (608)204-6222 www.madwoofs.com Captain Dix (Rainbow Valley Resort) 4124 River Road WI Dells (866)553-1818

NORTHEASTERN WI (920)

Hideout Bar (Gay friendly) 2828 N Ballard Rd, Appleton 920-830-2137 Rascals Bar & Grill 702 E. Wisconsin, Appleton (920)954-9262 Round A Bout 1264 Main St Green Bay, WI 54302 920-544-9544 Napalese 1351 Cedar Green Bay (920)432-9646 No Limits 500 N. Baird St Green Bay (920)-544-4963 THE SHELTER 730 N. Quincy St. Green Bay 920-432-2662 XS Niteclub 1106 Main Street, Green Bay The Remixx 8386 State Rd 76 Neenah 54956 (920)725-6483 Debs Spare Time 1303 Harrison St Oshkosh (920)235-6577

Blue Lite 1029 N 8th, Sheboygan (920)457-1636 **NORTHERN WISCONSIN (715)**

The Lounge 2823 London Rd., Eau Claire, (715) 952-3456 Scooters 411 Galloway Eau Claire (715)835-9959 JT's Bar and Grill 1506 N. 3rd Superior (715)-394-2580 The Flame 1612 Tower Ave Superior, WI (715)395-0101 The Main 1217 Tower Ave Superior, WI (715)392-1756 OZ 320 Washington St, Wausau www.totheoz.com (715)842-3225

MILWAUKEE (414)

Art Bar 722 Burleigh, (414)372-7880 DIX 739 S 1st Street

Fluid 819 South 2nd (414)643-5843

Harbor Room 117 E Greenfield (414)672-7988

Hybrid 707 E Brady St (414)810-1809

KRUZ 354 E.National (414)272-KRUZ

LaCage (lower & main floor) Montage (Upper) 801S 2nd, (414)383-8330 Riverwest Public House (LGBTQ friendly) 815 E Locust St. 53212

Studio 200 (mixed) 200 E Washington St

This Is It 418 E Wells (414)278-9192

Two (mixed) 718 E. Burleigh St.

Walker's Pint 818 S 2nd St (414)643-7468

Woody's 1579 S 2nd (414) 672-0806

SOUTHEASTERN WI (262)

ICON 6305 120th (Off I-94) Kenosha (262)857-3240 www.club-icon.com









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