

# QUEST

MAGAZINE

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Winter 2017



**Inside:**  
A Tribute to  
Jackie Roberts  
Interview with  
Bim Florek  
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## AN INTERVIEW WITH BIM FLOREK, COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

By Paul Masterson

Bim Florek is a familiar face in Milwaukee's LGBT community. In fact, he stands out in a crowd and would be impossible to miss. He's usually in the thick of things and, depending on the occasion, has a penchant for extravagant dress and has often been mistaken for Milwaukee's famous son and gay blade, Liberace. He's literally wears many hats, and for that matter, capes and uniforms. In any garb, he has the reputation of lighting up a room with his smile and ever-engaging personality.

QUEST had the pleasure of chatting with Florek about his multi-faceted career, his motivations and his thoughts on his current office as president of Milwaukee GAMMA..

**QUEST: Before we talk about the present, can you tell us a little about your past?**

**Bim Florek:** There's so much to tell but here are some highlights. I opened *Bim Ltd. Hair Dressers* in 1975. I always added "to the stars" because I was a hair stylist for Cream City's rich and famous as well as the stars at the PAC. I once breakfasted with President Jimmy Carter at the White House and sung the National Anthem for President Gerald Ford at an event in Las Vegas. In the late 80s I was Music and Artistic Director of Fest City Singers. My first show was called *Abracadazza* and we per-

just turned 18 and a day or two later he died. I did that for 11 years. In the 1990s I was chair of the Milwaukee AIDS Project Arts Action Committee. We did a lot of fund raising. One time we brought Carol Channing to 219, the wonderful dance bar that used to be on South 2nd Street.

I also volunteer for other Milwaukee entities like the Skylight Music Theatre. I've been active since 1961 almost from its start - the theatre opened in 1958.

I joined Milwaukee GAMMA in 2012 and at its next annual meeting I was elected president.

**QUEST: So, in 2012, you joined GAMMA, Milwaukee's oldest social group, and almost immediately became its president. How did that happen?**

**BF:** The previous president and, in fact, most of the board, had been in place for many years and they were looking for fresh faces. I was nominated for president. It seemed like a natural fit for me. I have to be active in the groups I'm part of and it just happened GAMMA needed a president.

**QUEST: You, and your board, have implemented some new projects and activities. Can you tell us about some of them?**

**Florek:** GAMMA had a lot of activities already, like our December Holiday Party, the 4<sup>th</sup> July Picnic, monthly sheepshead and cribbage nights, hiking, cooking club, and dining out as well as others. But, as it happened, the Milwaukee Rep and the Skylight Music Theatre, introduced LGBT "OUT" nights and that provided another activity. We now attend all of those with usually a dozen or more members. We were already long involved with PrideFest through our volleyball team but then we joined in the Health & Wellness Area to promote the group. In 2015 we had a marching contingent in the Pride Parade for the first time and even got local coverage in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

**QUEST: You were in a rainbow decorated Soviet general's uniform and riding in a vintage convertible as I recall.**

**BF:** I made an impression, apparently. The theme was "Puttin' it to Putin" as a response to his repression of LGBTs in Russia. It's an odd and ominous state of affairs today that our president-elect is his best friend. This past year we marched again and



Bim with  
President Gerald Ford

formed in the back room of the old Ball Game.

I've been the stage manager for the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin's AIDS Walk for 27 years, as well as volunteering at its Make-A-Promise Gala Auction and Dinner, as well as other events. Early in the AIDS crisis, in the mid-80s, I was a grief counselor working with the dying in St. Mary's Hospice. My first patient was a man who



the theme was *Out at the Theatre*.

**QUEST:** When you made your debut as *Liberace*.

**BF:** Yes, he's become my alter ego. It's the sequins. I always like a hint of glitter. Actually, now that you mention it, my old business logo was a candelabra. And, when I conducted Fest City Singers I wore a sparkly tux.



**QUEST:** So how does one live up an older organization? Most tend to get bogged down doing the same things with the same people and the group fades away.

**BF:** In 2014 we introduced a new GAMMA logo. That helped give us a fresh brand not only to attract new members but to reinvigorate those who were long term members. It incorporates the pink triangle and the rainbow. Together they form an arch symbolizing the Hoan Bridge. The image represents not only a Milwaukee architectural icon but also our mission as a social, recreational and cultural bridge that connects our members with both our LGBT and non-LGBT communities.

**QUEST:** Did it work?

**BF:** Absolutely! The logo popped and gave us new energy. We also changed the way we do events. We have a lot of parties. They had gotten a little tired. Some were potlucks and others had snacks

supplied by the host. But often it was the same people hosting and it was unfair to expect them to always provide all the amenities. The potlucks also lost their cachet. People weren't interested in cooking that proverbial "dish to pass". So the board voted on an incentive to host and attend our parties. Now one of our members prepares the food with GAMMA buying the groceries. It's been extremely successful in attracting more hosts who now only have to provide the venue. Members help with the set up and clean up. The guests bring their own beverages. It's proven a wonderful solution. Now everyone can just come and enjoy. The cook is a bit busy, of course.

Something else is "GAMMA Gives", our philanthropic program. Like *Out at the Theatre*, Pride-Fest's Health & Wellness and attending the LGBT Community Center's TGIF, it's another way to be involved with the greater community. In 2015 we collected Christmas gifts for Pathfinders and last year our beneficiary was Penfield Children's Center. We collected dozen of toys, school supplies and clothing as well as cash donations. This year we're also embarking on a scholarship program. The recipient will be an LGBT student.

**QUEST:** So what's the future for GAMMA?

**BF:** GAMMA began as a means of connecting people. When it was established in 1978 many members were closeted. Some were married with children. GAMMA provided a social outlet to foster self-acceptance and comfort with gay identity. Times have changed but GAMMA continues to do that, to connect people. We still rely on our GAMMA friends to provide companionship, to keep active and, on occasion, for help and moral support.

We always encourage our members to suggest new activities so they can share more time and experience things together. For example, in recent years we've organized trips to Renaissance Faire and plan on throwing painting parties in the future.

Speaking of new things, we're nearing our 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary and we realized we don't have a documented history. There are a few old event flyers in the UWM LGBT Archive but aside from that, we only have memories. So, we're embarking on a mission to collect material and oral histories from our members. Believe me, there are amazing stories of long term relationships, a couple are over 60 years, horror stories and silly anecdotes that need to be recorded and preserved. We'd also like to find



former GAMMA members who might have anything related to GAMMA to contact us.

**QUEST:** And how can they do that?

**BF:** They can reach GAMMA on Facebook at [gammamke](#) or email me. Of course, anyone can contact me there if they want to join, too.

**QUEST:** So what about you?

**BF:** I believe in looking at the bright side of life, like the Monty Python song. We can all have a sad side and we all have problems. We can cry inside but who cares? But, for me another song I love, "Smile though your heart is breaking" is a philosophy of life. In order to be happy and survive, to exist and go on, we should...we *must* live on the bright side. We all need to be part of the parade.



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## 2016 IN REVIEW – A NOT SO VERY GOOD YEAR.

By Paul Masterson

Apparently, there was a Frank Sinatra fan at *This is It*. One night before Christmas we had stopped in for a drink after attending *The Nutcracker*. Someone, apparently in an end of year maudlin moment, played the ballad on the juke box. But, sadly, 2016 wasn't a very good year. It was mixed, at best.

Things started off well enough. The US Navy announced the naming of a ship after gay rights activist Harvey Milk. SCOTUS Justice Scalia's death in February offered optimism his replacement would help solidify LGBT gains made under President Obama. Then there was national backlash to North Carolina's homo- and transphobic HB2 that implied a growing positive attitude towards LGBT rights. And, a gay man became Secretary of the Army. A mainstream film, *Moonlight*, focused on a once taboo subject, the harsh world of gay life in the hood.

Locally, Cream City Foundation's newly launched scholarship program gave over \$45,000 to 31 students at all levels of higher education. There was a grand M&M Club reunion in May celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its closure after 30 years as Milwaukee's premier bar, restaurant and community center. It was attended by hundreds. Many of our LGBT groups celebrated landmark anniversaries as well. Saturday Softball Beer League played its 40<sup>th</sup> season. Milwaukee Pride produced its 30<sup>th</sup> festival and, again, had record attendance. It also announced the hire of its first paid executive director.

Women's Voices Milwaukee celebrated its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary. A photo survey of city gay bars was published. And, some local talent garnered world attention: drag queen Trixie Mattel rose to international stardom; a tough lesbian senior, Miriam Ben Shalom thwarted a carjacking; and a Kenosha transgender high school student, Ash Whitaker ran for prom king. He was, however, banned from using the boys' bathroom and sued his school district under Title IX for discrimination. His case is currently moving through the courts.

The Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce continued to expand. It now boasts over 470 members. It made headlines in the waning weeks of 2016 with the announcement of its latest member,

the National Football League's Green Bay Packers. Over the course of the past year it held numerous business focused social events including its 2<sup>nd</sup> Wedding Expo (the 3<sup>rd</sup> is scheduled for April 2017). The Chamber's director, Jason Ray is currently running for chairman of the state's Democratic Party.

Also, Diverse and Resilient's co-location plans with the LGBT Community Center were put on the back burner when progress on the strategy failed to move forward. Meanwhile, inspired perhaps by the outcome of the presidential election, vandals targeted D&R's Holton Street location and smashed its glass entry door, and, several days later, a plate glass window.

Meanwhile, a Rainbow painted pedestrian crosswalk was proposed for the lower eastside near *This Is It*.

As in any year, there were obituaries. Local deaths included *This is It* owner and straight ally Joe Brehm, LGBT community activist and a Pride-Parade founder Sheldon Schur as well as artist Patrick Farrell, among others.

For the first time in the city's history, a massive Rainbow flag flew at city hall. Sadly, the occasion was a memorial. It was for the year's traumatic event that took place over Milwaukee's Pride weekend. On the Sunday morning of the Pride Parade, June 12<sup>th</sup> we awoke to the news of the 49 LGBTs murdered in the Orlando, Florida massacre at the Pulse Night Club. The Rainbow Flag served as a funerary pall and remained draped on the building's south entrance façade through the end of Pride month.

And meanwhile, the presidential campaign was underway. The cast of Republican candidates was a who's who of homophobes. We blithely thought "It can't happen here." Then there was the election and it did.

Now our resolution for 2017 must be to reinvigorate our struggle to gain equality for all LGBTQ+ people but also to retain the hard fought rights we've achieved since Stonewall. We'll soon see if the incredible LGBT progress made under President Barack Obama can be sustained. As Margot Channing might say, "Fasten your seat belts, boys, it's going to be a bumpy year."

## WISCONSIN AUTHOR RELEASES NEW LGBT SHORT STORY COLLECTION

*Briefs* (Lethe Press), the debut short story collection by Madison local, Alan Semrow, was released November 1, 2016. The collection, filled with dark humor, covers a variety of social topics, centering primarily on LGBT themes. The collection contains over 50 flash fiction pieces, concluding with "Beach House," a tumultuous gay epic romance story.

The book description is as follows:

The lives of Semrow's characters in this debut collection are like the charged particles in the atmosphere before the storm; these stories, while brief, are torrid and turbulent, as relationships crash apart, people find themselves damp with more than tears, and the silver linings of the storm clouds remain tantalizing, out of reach.


The book can be purchased at the Lethe Press

website or Amazon.com.

Signed copies of Semrow's book will also be available at A Room of Ones Own bookstore in Madison, WI and on the independent bookstore's website. Semrow is scheduled to have a book discussion and signing at the bookstore in March 2017.

Semrow, who's work has been featured in over 30 publications has a degree in English from the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point. Apart from writing fiction and nonfiction, he is a professional copywriter. He is also the Fiction Editor for Black Heart Magazine and was a Guest Fiction Editor for the Summer Issue of Five Quarterly. You can visit his blog at [alansemrowriter.wordpress.com](http://alansemrowriter.wordpress.com).

Semrow resides in Madison, Wisconsin.



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Photo courtesy of Joel Duffrin

### Jackie Roberts, In Memoriam

Milwaukee lost a legend on January 5. Jackie Roberts died while in hospice care after over a year's battle with cancer.

Jackie's rise to icon status began back in her days at the Milwaukee High School of the Arts. In the early 90s she began exploring the city's club scene and quickly became known as an inspiring

drag entertainer. Her mantra was that of the true trouper, saying "if you're not bleeding, sweating or crying, you are not trying hard enough!" She performed throughout the state at various venues like Milwaukee's Tropical Nightclub, Club 219, Hamburger Mary's, PrideFest and Madison's Club 5 among others. However, she made LaCage her home and remained its star for two decades.



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There she was truly the Queen of LaCage, leading its famous revue, *LaCage Presents*. She won many titles over her decades on the stages including Miss Gay Lakeshore Wisconsin USofA 2006, 1<sup>st</sup> Alternate to Miss Gay Wisconsin 2007 and Miss Gay Wisconsin USofA 2010 to name just a few. She played all roles in the pageant scene. Whether back up dancer, judge or contestant, Miss Roberts was known for her inspiring support, humility and graciousness. She touched everyone she met, some as a drag mother and others as a best sister, and to many as both.

In 2013 she received a Lifetime Achievement Award and asked, "Does this mean I'm done?" But she was far from done and continued her appearances, famously performing in that classic white dress as her idol, Marilyn Monroe. In fact, her apartment was adorned with three Marilyn images (she also was proud of her closets marked with male and female icons for her wardrobe. The female door was larger). She also had a favorite quote by the blonde bombshell that fit her own philosophy of life perfectly, "Sometimes things fall apart so that things can fall together."

In June of 2014 wanting a change in her life she moved to Kansas City and found a job. She returned to Milwaukee late in 2015 to the welcoming embrace of her many friends and fans after she was diagnosed with cancer. With the support of her family and friends close by, the battle began.

She chronicled her year long struggle on social media, confronting the disease and all its pain and frustration with determination. At times she was hopeful. After the initial surgery in December 2015, she was soon out and about. She cheered herself on when she got health insurance. Her friend Nova D'Vine had also tried to help with her medical expenses, opening a GoFundMe page on her behalf. Then came chemotherapy and meds. In October she posted a trip to the zoo with her mother. But soon thereafter she was hospitalized again. Still she bravely tried to keep up with all the messages of support sent by her friends. On December 13<sup>th</sup> she listed her status as "feeling grateful" for all the kindness and support her community gave her to help get her through the horrors of her illness. But, just days later she posted, "NO ONE SHOULD BE IN THIS MUCH PAIN IN A HOSPITAL!!!" Still, on December 25 she wished everyone a Merry Christmas. Her last post of 2016, on December 29, was a *Shared Memory* with Lena Chavez.

Then on January 5<sup>th</sup> she was gone. The shock of her passing reverberated throughout the community. The outpouring of grief and sadness was a testament to her decades-long legacy as both entertainer and friend to so many. Her love for life and humanity are the common threads of all those who left their heartbroken condolences.

But that was exactly who Jackie Roberts was. Once interviewed about the drag show at the Brady Street Festival, she said, "it's about bringing the community together, even if it's only for one day. If people can put aside their differences, open up their hearts, open their minds, then that's all the reason to do it."

Her joy in life should not be forgotten with her last exit from this earthly stage. As Jackie Roberts would say, "My Story Isn't Over Yet..."

#### Jackie Roberts Memorial Services

Nova D'Vine and Jackie Roberts' family have arranged the following memorial services. All are invited to attend both. Jackie requested to be cremated.

The obituary and memorial information appears in the Journal Sentinel on January 22, 2017

Visitation takes place on Saturday, January 28<sup>th</sup> from 10am until the Memorial Service at 12 pm  
Location:

West Grandville Presbyterian Church  
6935 N 107<sup>th</sup> St. Milwaukee, WI 53224

Additionally, a second memorial "Jackie Roberts Life Celebration Memorial" takes place Sunday, January 29<sup>th</sup> at 1pm until ?

Location:

LaCage Niteclub  
801 S 2<sup>nd</sup> St. Milwaukee, WI 53204

By Jackie's request there will not be a show. Friends will gather and to share all of the wonderful stories about our love and adoration for our wonderful friend.

Nova D'Vine wrote "Jackie Roberts had entertaining in her soul. She was one of the most courageous people I have ever met. She was driven to make people happy, sometimes in a crowd and sometimes one on one. She was thoughtful, kind and one of the best friends you could ever hope to have."

If you would like to make a final tribute to Jackie please make a donation to CourageMke in Jackie Roberts name at

[www.couragemke.org](http://www.couragemke.org)

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## "Jason Bend: Queen & Country" also "Kiss Me Kill Me"

By  
Glenn  
Bishop



Organizing a proper cinema night, post the oh-so hectic fall Film Festival season, was always going to be a daunting proposition for Glenn. Best efforts notwithstanding, Glenn fell rather short of the mark with the result that many loyal **Quest** readers noticed something missing in the last issue of **Quest**: Glenn's monthly DVD review. Evidently rather worried, a few lovely folks took to social media while others took the more direct approach and attempted to contact **Quest** directly.

Glenn was quite touched upon learning of such concerns.

Once back together, the gentlemen who comprise the monthly cinema circle, never a shy, bashful group even in the best of times, laid their cards on the table. The group insisted, at minimum, on films both fun and in English; no one was in the mood to "read" another European psychological drama and certainly no one wished for a "tortured homosexual dying at the end" story.

Their relief was palpable when Glenn selected **Jayson Bend: Queen & Country**, Matt

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

**Jayson Bend: Queen & Country** proved a great success with Glenn as well as all (yes, yes, all very unanimous) of the gentlemen of the cinema circle.

Davis Brooks' Jayson Bend is an excellent gay spy from the James Bond mold. Fit and handsome, Brook's Jayson possesses a sly, seductive smile, two extraordinarily expressive eyebrows plus a wonderfully appealing cheekiness. Jayson's Swiss counterpart Alec DeCoque (Tom Read Wilson) might start out cold to Jayson's charms but a romantic soul such as Glenn just knew that it would be just a matter of time.

Even at a mere 49 minutes, **Jayson Bend: Queen & Country** is an absolute charmer. Plus one of the two short films, **Boys on the Rooftop** is sexy and satisfying and makes the DVD well worth the purchase price.

As much fun as **Kiss Me Kill Me** often is and despite director Casper Andreas' best intentions, **Kiss Me Kill Me** never emerges the contemporary film noir/murder mystery it aspires to be. Glenn's certainly doesn't fault Matthew Ludwinski's gloriously blond femme fatale, Craigery or Van Hansis's Dusty, an engaging and sympathetic ingénue. But where is the requisite tough, cynical detective?

The gentlemen of the cinema circle particularly enjoyed seeing QAF's Brian again, after so many years. In addition, **Kiss Me Kill Me** offers a host of familiar faces including **Gayby**'s Jonathan Lisecki, and **Queer Eye**'s Jai Rodriguez plus **Eastsiders** co-star Kit Williamson and adorable Van Hansis from the daytime soap, **As the World Turns**.

## Just the facts...

**Jayson Bend: Queen & Country** is in English and has a running time of 49 minutes out on DVD with a SRP of \$24.99 **Kiss Me Kill Me** is in English and has a running time of 100 minutes due out on DVD (1/24/2017) with a SRP of \$29.99

DVD extras on **Jayson Bend** include Close Captioning plus two short films from acclaimed Mexican director Julián Hernández. One is an early work from 1993 (**Actos Impuros**) and the other is a brand-new (and staggeringly sexy) treat called **Boys on the Rooftop**.

Carter's scathingly brilliant parody of the wildly successful **James Bond** franchise. As long as the cocktails held out, **Kiss Me Kill Me**, the latest release from popular filmmaker Casper Andreas (**Going Down in LA-LA Land**, **Slutty Summer**) would follow.

Still Glenn confessed some reservations. Glenn's first (and only) Bond film experience was **Skyfall**, upon hearing that Judi Dench played the titular role of **M**. Much like the

lovely lady herself, Glenn wasn't "best pleased" to learn **M** was meant to die by film's end.

Another of Glenn's concerns; **Jayson Bend: Queen & Country** has a scant 49 minute running time. For sake of comparison, **Skyfall**'s running time clocked in at a staggering 143 minutes.

Glenn need not have worried; a leisurely stroll through the character list assures all that Andrew Faure's screenplay is firmly tongue-in-cheek. In place of **M.**, there's **L** (poor Louise Templeton is given the daunting task of making moviegoers forget Dench's iconic **M.**). Likewise, Miss Money Penny has here morphed into Mr. DickyDollar.

And what of Jayson Bend? Jayson is a gay agent for Royal Intelligence Ministry, aka R.I.M., designated 009. How deliciously Freudian such a designation sounds, thought Glenn, particularly given poor Daniel Craig's mere 007.

Considering the 49 minute run time, there's no opportunity for dawdling in Andrew Faure's screenplay. After all, the world is in peril and Bend (Davis Brooks) must team up with his Swiss counterpart Alec De-

Coque (Tom Read Wilson). But will Bend and Alec, against the odds, manage to stop the launch of the satellite that will make an admirably villainous Raymond Perdood (Paul Norton), the most powerful man in the world?

And so, on to **Kiss Me Kill Me**...

Initially Glenn was rather puzzled at the enthusiastic response from the gentlemen of the cinema circle to **Kiss Me Kill Me** as the evening's second feature. Eventually the proverbial light bulb switched on: amongst the cast is one Gale M. Harold III aka Brian from **Queer as Folk** and in his first gay role since leaving **QAF**.

Harold is cast as Stephen, a rich and influential TV producer. Stephen is in fact at the very center of **Kiss Me Kill Me**. As the film opens, we are swept into Stephen's birthday party. The party guests are all much of a muchness, all and sundry dependent upon Stephen's largesse in some fashion.

Beautiful but bitter Amanda (Brianna Brown) bemoans her lack of dating success in West Hollywood (!?) or even of the chance of sperm from her choice

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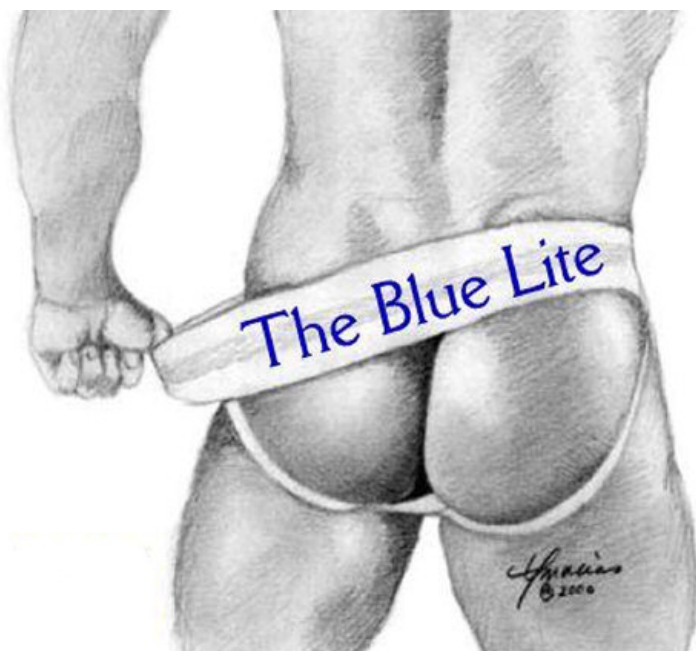
of baby-daddy. She's also Stephen's lawyer. Craig Robert Young plays Jeffrey, Stephen's therapist with an easy reptilian charm that made Glenn cringe. Glenn isn't sure who Lori (Allison Lane) and Danielle

(Jackie Monahan) are within the sphere of Stephen's hangers-on but two more negatively stereotypical lesbians are seldom to be found in Gay Cinema.

Then there is Dusty (Van Hansis), the current boyfriend. Cast as the host for Stephen's new reality show, Dusty has the job and the man and couldn't be happier. To no one's surprise, his happiness is to be rather short-lived; what with the arrival of Craigery (Matthew Ludwinski), Stephen's ex. When Dusty learns that Stephen has changed his mind and offered Craigery the role as host of his new series, Dusty can barely keep a suitable smile plastered on correctly and within moments storms off into the night, with Stephen in hot pursuit.

They end up at a convenience store, the Pink Dot. Dusty is angry; Stephen is in best collateral damage mode. Dusty demands Tequila. Enter an armed gunman wearing a clown mask. Sounds like far too many weekends, mused Glenn.

Suddenly it is morning; Dusty is just waking up in a hospital bed. He's been shot. Dusty soon learns Stephen is dead and he's prime suspect number one.



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## *Cordially Yours*

by Michael Johnston

Happy 2017 – it seems like ages – so glad to be back! Trusting you all had a Holiday season providing great memories!

What's that I hear – could it be "The Sound of Music"? The hills will be alive once again as the Van Trapp family trample through the snow and cold to warm our hearts once again. Tuesday, January 3 – Sunday, January 8 – The Marcus Center for the Performing Arts – Uihlein Hall 929 North Water Street.

To learn your scales all the way from Do a deer, call 414-273-7121 [info@marcuscenter.org](mailto:info@marcuscenter.org).

The Social World is still a whirl – Friday, January 13th – "A Carnevale Affair" part of The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center's RGF. (Really Grand Fridays – unique People & Places). Everyone will gather at 2221 North Terrace Avenue Milwaukee 53211 5:30 pm. To purchase your ticket: [www.mkelgbt.org/events/really-grand-fridays/](http://www.mkelgbt.org/events/really-grand-fridays/). I've made most them and they are not to be missed! Bravo Brandon Herr, Event Coordinator is primo!

The Mitchell Park Domes 524 South Layton Boulevard Milwaukee 53215 414-257-5600 Updated all Domes are still up, open, and tour-able! They are always dressed and trimmed so innovatively by Burt Gross, resident artist. The Great Train Robbery Show is coming round the track Saturday, January 14 – Sunday, April 2. Saturdays also offer the weekly Winter's Farmer Market at The Domes - Annex. The Domes provide a perfect opportunity for you to purchase your produce and enjoy nature.

Heart Under Glass takes place at this magical venue – Tuesday, February 14 – St. Valentine's night 6 – 9 pm – wonder how marriage proposals ...

George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart's classic, comedic chestnut "You Can't Take it With You" awaits you at The Sunset Playhouse of Elm Grove 800 Elm Grove Road 53122 262-782-4430 Thursday, January 19 – Sunday, February 4. This is a family comedy about a comedy of family manners and matters. Totally timeless!

Renaissance Theaterworks will be kicking off 2017 with "Luna Gale" by Rebecca Gilman, Di-

rected by Mary MacDonald – Kerr. Friday, January 20 – Sunday, February 12. Community Partner Meta House, which is a special sanctuary for abused spouses and children. This production is described as a compelling and compassionate portrait of flawed people making impossible choices.

I have the honor of sitting on RTW's Board; I share this as full disclosure and encourage everyone to get involved as best they can to keep the arts flourishing!

Another piece of theater that has my interest this season is: "The Lion in Winter" by James Goldman as part of The Pride Theatre Company. This show will be taking place at The Alchemist Theatre 2569 South Kinnickinnic Avenue Milwaukee 53207 [www.thealchemisttheatre.com](http://www.thealchemisttheatre.com) Friday, January 20 – Saturday, February 4 \$25. Directed by and Starring Bill Jackson as Henry, II and Ms. Liz Norton as Eleanor of Aquitaine. Again please support local, independent theater!

Judy Garland will be remembered and revered at Fluid 819 South Second Street on Saturday, January 21. Miss Maple Veneer, the tallest drag queen in captivity, captivates you with her Birthday Show! All Judy! For a Star was Born January 21 – Maple herself! The festivities like Maple starts at the cocktail hour – 4 pm.

Wednesday, January 25 – the first Pink Hat Party for 2017 at This Is It! 418 East Wells Street. Come celebrate Hump Day and the charity receiving all our love 8 – 11 pm. To launch the New Year – The 16th Street Clinic, will not only receive much needed funds and awareness for the great works this free community clinic provides to our city... there will be free testing!

As you all know George has returned to Milwaukee and This Is It. New Happy Hour Deals for 2017: \$3 rail drinks and \$2 tap beer and tappers of Miller Lite \$1! My good friend Karen Valentine and Gino De Luca of Rare Steakhouse had a ball launching their Valentine Christmas Cabaret at the legendary lounge! \$200 was raised for The Valentine Fund – for the Arts & Culture of The Cream City Foundation. Rumors have a Valentine



Cabaret is in the works for February. Thursdays are fun playing BINGO at TITs with Chanel D'Vine and Ester Flonaze. What better way to launch into a long weekend? Everyone is a winner!

Speaking of BINGO! KV reported to me what a ball she had as Mrs. Claus celebrating the Holiday with Dear Ruthie at Hamburger Mary's. A new address (formerly known as La Perla), more space and very avid BINGO players like birthday girl Angel Faye French!

My friends of The Florentine Opera Company will warm your winter with: "Florentine by Request" Friday, January 27 and Saturday, January 28 \$20. The Florentine Opera Studios 923 East Burleigh Street 414-291-5700 # 224 for reservation and details. Again we are so fortunate to have Grand Opera in our community! Lend an ear and see if it is for You!

Skylight Music Theatre brings to the boards for the month of love (February- Valentine's Day and all) "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change" Friday, February 3 – Sunday, February 19.

I'll be hosting Be Out at Skylight Wednesday, February 8. Use the Code word BE OUT 40 and for \$40 you will get Level A tickets and a Pre-Show Reception in the elegant salon. I had a ball doing Theater Talks before "La Cage Aux Folles". What a thought provoking, yet fun musical – not unlike "Cabaret". Both have such meaningful messages.

Bravo Ray Jivoff and Norman Moses! To get the details for the next show and rest of the season, please call 414-291-7800 for reservations, 158 North Broadway in the Broadway Theatre Complex, the Historic Third Ward.

"Women of Troy" – new translation by Don Taylor is Dale Gutzman's Off The Wall Theatre 2017 opener. Starring Miss Marilyn White, Laura Monagle and Jimmy (Maple Veneer) Strange. Thursday, February 16, 17, 18, 19, 23, 24, 25 and 26. 127 East Wells Street Milwaukee 53202 414-484-8874.

Again please support our own home-grown theater. I so enjoyed OTWT's "Holiday Punch"! I had never seen one – what fun and wit. Very "That Was the Week that Was". I realize many of you won't get this reference; I invite you to research on YouTube...

And two farewells –

On a positive note congratulations to Dr. Peter Holbrook the President/CEO of the Cream City Foundation. He has been hand selected for a new prominent position in his former career of academia.

I'm always happy to see people progress; unfortunately it entails a move to Ohio! We lose a great Community spokesman and his equally talented husband, Tom Hoffman. You will be missed!

By now, you all know this, but I have to add my

input... Milwaukee lost one of our most favorite performers. It was fascinating seeing everyone gather for the greater good in supporting Jackie Roberts in his courageous battle. Seeing our Community united and willing a miracle – in itself is a miracle. Only someone as revered and respected as Jackie Roberts could evoke such solidarity. Oh the Shows the Heavens are enjoying as Jackie joins Ginger, Holly and all the Stars up above – continue to shine brightly!

Food time – I have been bowled over by the food, the service, the atmosphere and ambiance of Sup-

per in the historic Shorecrest Hotel on Prospect Avenue (1962 North Prospect Avenue) 414-509-6074. Richard my favorite server is quick with a one liner and quicker with a cocktail. The best part is it is never too crowded. Escape back into a time when quality and ease were the mark of a good repast. And you will agree with me after the first few bites! And they have FREE Parking!

And so ends the first attempt in the New Year! Remember it's the glamor, not the grammar – as I remain Still Cordially Yours, and wishing you all that is attainable in 2017!

### Bucket List January/February 2017

Jan. 14 – April 2 "The Great Train Robbery Show"  
The Mitchell Park Domes 524 South Layton Blvd

January 16  
Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day

Jan. 19 – Feb. 4 "You Can't Take it With You"  
The Sunset Playhouse 800 Elm Grove Rd

Jan. 20 – Feb. 12 "Luna Gale"  
Renaissance Theaterworks Broadway Theatre  
Complex 158 North Broadway

Jan. 20 – Feb. 4 "A Lion in Winter"  
Pride Theatre Company The Alchemist Theatre  
2569 South Kinnickinnic Avenue

January 20 Inauguration Day

January 21 "Forever, Judy –  
Maple Veneer's Birthday Party and Show"  
Fluid 819 South Second Street

January 25 "Pink Hat Party" – benefit for 16<sup>th</sup>  
Street Clinic This Is It 418 East Wells Street

January 27 – 28 "Florentine by Request"  
Florentine Opera Studio 926 East Burleigh Str

February 2 Ground Hog Day

February 3–19 "I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change"  
Skylight Music Theatre Broadway Theatre  
Complex 158 North Broadway

February 8 "Be Out" at The Skylight  
Skylight Music Theatre Broadway Theatre  
Complex 158 North Broadway

February 12 Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

February 14 Valentine's Day

February 14 "Heart Under Glass"  
The Mitchell Park Domes 524 South Layton Blvd

February 16 – 26 "Women of Troy"  
Off The Wall Theatre 127 East Wells Street

February 20 President's Day

February 28 Carnevale / Mardis Gras



Bottom: LGBT Center's thanksgiving Pot Luck







February is here!!! Time for valentines and hopefully warmer temps!

The Pride Parade is in full swing and I am sure they are putting together another great show this year. See what they are up to on their website [www.prideparademke.org](http://www.prideparademke.org) or on facebook @Milwaukee Pride Parade.

And of course we can't have Pride without Pridefest! The headliners have been announced and I'm sure you are all flocking to get your tickets together and figure out how you get there. For more information as always you can check out their website [www.pridefest.com](http://www.pridefest.com) or on facebook @Pridefest Milwaukee.

While I am on the topic of these organizations I just want to extend my personal thanks to all of the people involved with each organization. Both of these organizations are run 100% by volunteers and require huge time commitments from all of their members. Both Pridefest and the Pride Parade work year round to make sure that everything will be perfect for the coming year. So, next time you see a volunteer for either Pridefest or the Pride Parade (Or ANY volunteer organization for that matter) let them know how much you appreciate their hard work.

Okay let's get to it. This month I figured we should talk about a new piercing fad which seems to be taking the world by storm. They are called Dermal Anchors. Now I'm not going to call them piercings because in reality they are not the true definition of what they are is a "Trans-dermal Implant." I know that's a big word for a lot of my readers so we will bring it down a level or 10. What that really means is that there is a piece of metal permanently implanted under your skin and then different "Ends" can be screwed on to the base. That's

right I said permanent, once these piercings heal they need to be surgically removed by cutting the skin which holds them in. A not so fun and not so painless procedure I might add.

Dermal Anchors have a few additional concerns over a traditional piercing. For starters when they are removed, or if they migrate (reject), they will leave a larger and more noticeable scar than a traditional piercing. Additionally, Dermal Anchors go deeper into the body than a traditional piercing and thus the risk of bleeding and bruising to the site of the piercing is increased dramatically.

The care of Dermal Anchors also varies from that of traditional piercings. First and foremost the body needs time to heal and begin to grow new tissue to hold in the anchor, for this reason you should wear a small band-aid over the anchor to prevent it from falling out for the first 2 weeks. After that you should wear the band-aid for another 2 weeks when you sleep. If you toss and turn in your sleep you should continue to wear the band-aid every night when you go to bed. As for cleaning it use an anti-bacterial soap and gently clean around, and under the "head" of, the jewelry once to twice daily. The best time to do this is at the end of your shower after you have shampooed and body washed.

Looks like we have some space for reader mail. . .let's see here:

**Dear Brent,**

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

Well thanks for writing in John. As far as how I come up with the idea's that is easy. I just sit







## New Year's Eve at D.I.X.

Photos by Will Sharkey



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

Well that's really about all the brain power I can pour into this one without a serious Dose Of Jack Daniels. In the mean time have a great February and stay warm! Also don't forget to check out both the Milwaukee Pride Parade and Pridefest at [www.prideparademke.org](http://www.prideparademke.org) and [www.pridefest.com](http://www.pridefest.com) respectively.

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Plan B 924 Williamson Street, Madison  
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(920)725-6483  
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XS Niteclub 1106 Main Street, Green Bay  
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This Is It 418 E Wells (414)278-9192  
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Woodys, Thurs. 19th, 9-11

D.I.X, Thurs. 26th, 9-11

Icon, 27th, 9:30-12:30  
(Kenosha)

Kruz, Friday 7-9 Feb. 3

Fluid, Mon 9:30-11:30, Feb. 6

LGBT Center, Tue 5:30-8, Feb. 7

LaCage, Wed. 10-12, Feb. 15

Woodys, Thurs 9-11, Feb. 16

DIX, Thur, 9-11, Feb. 23rd

Icon, Fri, 9:30-12:30, Feb. 24th.  
(Kenosha)

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