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# QUEST

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 Volume 25, #2  
 May 2018

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Michael JohnstonLOOK FOR US  
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By Paul Masterson

For anyone out and about in Milwaukee's LGBTQ community, certain personalities are well known. George Schneider is definitely one of them. QUEST spoke with Schneider about his past

rektor of operations and the next year I was promoted to director. I was also briefly on the PrideFest board in 2012. But by then I was working for This Is It and couldn't dedicate the time to stay on the board.

QUEST: And how did you get involved with This Is It?

GS: I started working at This is It in November 2010 when Joe Brehm asked me to help out as a bartender on Monday nights. That soon expanded to shifts throughout the week. Over the next two years my involvement grew. I became a manager a year later. A year after that, in October 2012, I became a partner. I've been the bar's owner since April 2016. Joe and I set up a partnership to transfer shares to the other should one of us depart to insure the

...  
**Interview with  
George Schneider**  
**Bar Owner & Community Activist**

activism, his current role as owner of Milwaukee's oldest gay bar, and his position as a newly elected member of the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center Board of Directors.

QUEST: Before we get to the present, can you tell us about your past history with Milwaukee's LGBTQ community?

George Schneider: It actually begins in 2001 when I volunteered to be on PrideFest's production team. I was 17 years old and the joke was I was the baby of the volunteer group. After that I was hooked. I later became Youth Area Director in 2004 and, in 2005, Pete Minns, the festival producer, asked me if I would want to step up to be his assistant. I agreed and was made assistant di-



George as featured on a cover of Outbound Magazine back in 2010

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## ... PrideFest kicks off a very special pride month...and then some!

By Julia Kind

With PrideFest just a few short weeks away, there's plenty of buzz about this year's headliners like Daya, Jussie Smollett, and to wrap up the weekend with that touch of nostalgia, the 1970s new wave rock band, the B-52s, (who can't remember grooving to the B-52s' hit, "Love Shack"!!!!). Plus the festival is extending its hours to include a launch in the Dance Pavilion on Thursday evening, June 7 with featured EDM trio Cash Cash. But although these nationally famous acts attract significant numbers of fans, the home-grown local talent offers that certain and undeniable Cream City vibe.

While there are too many to mention, here are just a couple of highlights! Celebrating its fifth year at PrideFest is the fabulous Revamped Dance Company. Under the artistic direction of choreographer Richard Brasfield, Revamped Dance Company, formally known as Remix, was founded in 2006. Brasfield and the newly revamped Revamped first appeared at PrideFest in 2014 when they performed on Milwaukee Gay Arts Center Stage. His crew is now an annual PF attraction and has moved to the larger PrideFest Dance

Pavilion stage. Revamped Dance Company's mission, as Brasfield explains, is "to build a strong and serious hip-hop community as an outlet for Milwaukee area people to devote their otherwise idle time to developing a dance style, learning how to hone their natural talents and foster their dance creativity." His goal is to showcase Milwaukee's "Raw hip hop" and integrate alternative dance styles into that genre. His first PrideFest appearance was proof of that – and proof of his broader mission, bringing not only a multi-discipline show but a multi-gender and multi-generational one. He's also determined to bring urban art more to the fore, "little by little."

On Friday, June 8, the Dance Pavilion features the queen of Milwaukee drag queens, Miss BJ Daniels and her Revue. This legendary Diva performed at PrideFest back in 1990, retired in 1995 and has since returned with a vengeance.

Another new event for this year's PrideFest is the 1st Annual Ride with Pride! Motorcycle Run on Saturday, June 9th.

And throughout the festival weekend on its various stages and venues, other local acts, DJs, drag queens and dancers will

kick off the city's summer of fests as only PrideFest knows how. And, don't forget, when you buy your PF tix, add the Plus One campaign donation to your ticket purchase. This year's beneficiary is Diverse & Resilient.

On Sunday, June 10, the great Pride Parade steps off at 2 pm for its annual show of the community force, marching up South 2nd Street. Last year's parade, despite being held in a sweltering heat, broke records for the number of marching units and this year, I'm told, we can expect the same.

And there's more! The big news for our LGBTQ sports fans (and, in fact, the rest of us and the city itself) is the Milwaukee Brewers very first LGBTQ Pride Night! It takes place on Thursday, June 21, in a game against the St Louis Cardinals. Thanks to fan support, Aurora Health Care, the Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce and, of course, the Milwaukee Brewers, for making this major league event possible. One can expect a pre-game blow-out tailgate party, too! Plus, event ticket purchasers get a Brewers Pride T-shirt with the club logo in fabulous rainbow colors!

And, if you survive June's Pride festivities, you can relax and enjoy the rest of the summer and wrap it up with the 40th SSBL Dairyland Classic in October!

bar's existence. Our bond was the fact that we both wanted This Is It to exist and, more so, to thrive.

QUEST: Now your bar is in its 50th year – and congratulations, by the way. When's the actual anniversary date? And, are there any big plans for the golden celebration?

GS: To be honest, there is ambiguity as to the opening's actual date in 1968 but no one is around who knows. Joe was just a kid at the time TITs opened and he didn't know either. We decided to hold the anniversary party when the weather is warm, so we're shooting for the first weekend, the

first weekend of August to be the official party. There'll be exciting details announced at a later date. Right now we're working on the scope of the celebration but it will be grand beyond our normal parties.

QUEST: Your most recent achievement is your election to the LGBT Community Center's board of directors. What prompted your interest in the Center and motivated you to run for a position on its board?

GS: Well, I have to be honest, it goes back to Joe. I've participated in, and donated to various LGBT organizations but

Joe showed me as a bar owner I have a platform to inspire others to get involved. He was the impetus to get involved with the Center. Over the last eight years at TITS we've hosted countless fund raisers and that allowed our relationship with the Center to grow. A friend, Britt Frank was involved with the board and she suggested I participate at a governance level. I sent a letter of intent and, at the Annual Meeting in April, I was elected to the board.

QUEST: I attended the Annual Meeting when you were elected and there were only 40 or so people there, half were

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staff, board members or volunteers. That means only 20 of the actual membership of over 600 showed up and that implies a disconnect among members. As a new board member, what do you think the Center needs to do to make itself relevant to the community?

GS: We need to reach out to the membership base, beyond just asking for money. We rely on grants and other funding but the highest ratio of income comes from membership. Reaching out beyond that, going back to the roots of the center and letting people know they are needed for their personal engagement are major goals. In many ways, if I can influence that, that's one of my prime objectives. I want to make every member feel they are important. Some of the moves the Center has already made will contribute to that. Some people think they have to have a specific need to take advantage of the Center's programs. My goal at TITS was always to show that you can participate at any level. That's huge for me. That's what Joe taught me.

QUEST: Board members since the 2008 debacle have mostly been professionals like doctors, lawyers, or corporate administrators. Is your board membership part of an official new strategy?

GS: I don't know if it's a strategy...perhaps. Whether or not it is, I'm glad I can represent

something other than the professionals' image of being distant from the people they serve. As a small business owner, especially as someone running an LGBT business, and one directly involved with such a wide spectrum of people, it softens that image. It's bridging the gap. I think it's a great move for the board to connect with the greater community.

QUEST: The Center is again looking for a new executive director. What qualities do you think the Center needs in a leader today that may have been lacking in the past?

GS: I know it has to be someone to protect the member's voice. As much as the policy needs may go in a certain direction, the members are the ones who are impacted and they need to be heard. The Center needs someone who is not trapped by tradition and has ideas about broader programming. And, quite frankly, it needs someone who is approachable. A strong administrator is necessary but someone who is out there and recognized as the face of the Center will help bring the community to the Center.

QUEST: The Center's location has always been an issue. Aside from accessibility, it's in the heart of the MSOE campus and a block from a straight entertainment area. Are there any plans to move to a more LGBTQ friendly neighborhood?

GS: There are currently a

lot of things on the table and our location is one of those. As was mentioned at the Annual Meeting, a lot will be directed by our new relationship with Diverse & Resilient and how that develops. But no decision has been made. There's time left on our lease at the current location. For the moment, we'll be staying put.

QUEST: Finally, we are a fractured LGBTQ community in a city considered the most segregated in the country. At the Annual Meeting, people of color were conspicuously underrepresented. How can the Center move forward to address issues of diversity?

GS: This might be hard to validate as a white guy commenting, but my first board meeting addressed this and the Board is overwhelmingly committed to developing better representation at all levels. It's important to me that my decisions encourage more diversity and I feel like the rest of the board is like minded. I feel good about that. If there is one extremely positive thing I can say, we are committed to making that change. It will take action and I'll make sure that as long as I sit at that table, I will be a voice for diversity. The biggest issue of those who spoke out at the Annual Meeting was obvious: they felt they were losing their voice. I can assure them that their voice will never be taken away. I plan on working hard at that.

our Charlotte Lorraine was born and raised in Racine – and we all remember her reverence for Nuns!

For music lovers, The Florentine Opera Company is offering one of my personal favorites "The Magic Flute". You must come see the Queen of the night, Fri, May 11 and Sun., May 13.

Out in elegant Elm Grove – you can go to our version of the "West End" at The Sunset Playhouse. Two fantastic revues to be enraptured in: "C'mon Get Happy: Judy Garland" Saturday, May 12 and Sunday, May 13, and "It's Too Darn Hot: Cole Porter" Thursday May 17 – Sunday, May 20. One of my favorite finds, definitely worth the ride!

Visually, The Milwaukee Art Museum (MAM) has an eyeful for you, now through Sunday, May 20 "Coming Away: Windsor Homer and England". The beauty of nature (the lakefront) and the beauty of the brush ...

The Skylight Music Theatre is closing their highly successful season with "Urinetown" Friday, May 18 – Sunday, June 10. Don't forget Be OUT at Skylight Night, Thursday, May 24. I'll be there to host this enjoyable event.

Michael Pink's Milwaukee Ballet has a sensational show to check out this month "Swan Lake" Thurs., May 31 – Sun., June 3. As we all know – everything is beautiful at the ballet...

IML – the International Mr. Leather – Chicago – Every Memorial Day Weekend, The Congress Hotel is where all will be congregating. It's their 40th Anniversary – 4 decades of

debauchery!

With Memorial Day Weekend – we anticipate the unofficial first weekend of summer! Tori Gate Festival will commemorate Japanese culture Saturday, June 2 and Sunday, June 3 9:00 am – 4:00 pm The Domes.

And soon it will be June – PrideFest, this year is four days long, starting Thursday, June 7 with The Big Gay 5 K, all the way throughout the weekend with The B-52s closing the 2018 Fest on Sunday, June 10, The Pride Parade, a total month of Pride. Add Broadway Royalty Audra McDonald who will be appearing with The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra on Wednesday, June 6 – and we have so much to look forward to! Hopefully the snow will stop falling, as of this deadline the weather can only be described as wacky!

Food time – I stumbled on a great, new, exciting eatery – Fresh Fin Poke' with three locations: East Side – 1806 East North Avenue 414-239-8677 Third Ward – 316 North Milwaukee Street 414-763-0473 Brookfield – Coming soon! Tucker Pope is the genius behind this healthy option of fine food. It is not the same old burger joint! At Fresh Fin Poke' an array of truly fresh sea food, chicken, vegetables, rice – Sushi meets the USA. I give it five stars!

And so ends another effort – wishing you a sweet season of spring! And reminding you – it's the glamor, not the grammar as I remain still Cordially yours,.

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Tues, May 1 – Sun, May 6 The Marcus Center for the Performing Arts.

This spring “Les Mes” returned – I was fortunate to take it in – flawless! Never have I heard the audience so thrilled- cheering and applauding with wild abandonment.

Karen Valentine reports she's hosting HamBINGO! Every Wednesday at Hamburger Mary's Milwaukee, the balls start rolling at 8:00 pm.

The Third Annual “Art in the Green” at Mitchell Park Horticultural Conservatory (The Domes) takes place Saturday, May 5 9:00 am – 5:00 pm and Sunday, May 6 9:00 am – 4:00 pm. This is a celebration of local artist and their creations – paintings, sculptures, jewelry and

joyable event put on by the Friends of the Domes. Art, music, food and The Domes – this is where I discovered Plank Road Arts – Jim Hunnicut & Kevin Yvisaker – and I love their works.

That Saturday evening May 5th 7:00 pm City of Festivals Men's Chorus will be hosting their Spring Concert: “Circle of Friends” – A night of Food and Song at Anew Healthcare 7405 Harwood Place Wauwatosa 53213. To RSVP 414-813-2642 or COFMen-schorus@gmail.com

Thorton Wilder's “Our Town” is gracing the Quadracci Powerhouse Theater of The Milwaukee Repertory Theater – now through Sunday, May 13. The Rep is singing out joyously with “Always... Patsy Cline” at The Stackner

kee Repertory Theater). Reviews are love letters, this show leaves the audience stunned and staggering and returning to see it again and again! You could say they're “Crazy” about this show! Catch this show before it lands; Sunday, May 20th is the last take-off.

In Tandem Theatre is springing up with “The Fantasticks” through Sunday, May 20th – this is the longest running Off Broadway show that has continuously played longer than I've been alive! The longest running musical of all time! Take it in and see why it's had such a rare, long run.

“Sister Act” is blessing us with a run at the Racine Theatre Guild Friday, May 11 – Sunday, May 27. Ironically



Michael Johnston BLU-tending at The Pfister with David Caruso, Molly Fay, Peter Kudlata – “Hope Shining Blue Benefit to heal sexually abuse victims.

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## Full Price, Matinee or wait 'til the Budgets

As you might well imagine, the gentlemen of a certain age who comprise the monthly cinema circle have seen more than their share of Gay coming-of-age, coming out films over the years yet everyone to a man has sung the praises of Love, Simon.

And indeed there is much for one to like and enjoy in Love, Simon. How wonderful that a film like Love, Simon, a simple coming out story with a dash of romance can emerge unscathed from the Hollywood system; it's genial charms still present, before settling in at multiplex cinemas across the panoramic American landscape.

Nick Robinson's Simon emerges as something of an All American every-teen, the kind of nice and thoughtful young man that expectant mothers hope and pray their sons will grow-up to become. Not that Simon is without flaws; Simon might have challenged Martin over the incriminating emails but he didn't, too worried that if he were outed, Blue might disappear.

And yet he does, and as Simon's life becomes increasingly topsy-turvy, the screenplay by Elizabeth Berger and Isaac Aptaker cranks up the manipulation. What will happen when Simon takes his own advice, going big, not going home?

**Glenn rates Love, Simon as worth Full Price.**



## In Cinemas Now

Once word got out that Love, Simon from openly gay director Greg Berlanti (The Broken Hearts Club) was going to play at several area Marcus cinemas, Glenn was quick to start organizing another outing.

Never a bad thing to start making suitable preparations for the night, mused Glenn. Beach Rats, Stonewall (2015) and Do it Like an Hombre are just a few films which appeared as if by magic at an area multiplex cinema only to vanish almost before the week was up.

Best laid plans and all. A surprise April snowstorm would require a postponement of the monthly cinema night. It would be a couple of days and braving blizzard conditions before Glenn and company were finally able to get to see Love, Simon.

In the opening minutes Simon is determined to make sure everyone knows how normal, how just like everyone else he, his family and friends are.

Simon's parents were High School sweethearts. Simon's father was the boringly handsome quarterback who married the hot valedictorian. In flashback Simon is shown being surprised by the gift of a car for his birthday. Their stunning, well-appointed home would fit perfectly in

## ... cordially yours

*Spring is in the air! We finally made it – a mild winter, yet long and tedious!*

First off I must offer my sincere congratulations and thanks to Mark "ZA" Mariucci and Quest magazine on 25 successful years in print! Serving the Community with a published monthly magazine during this Social Media Age we're living in is not easy. This may be the last days of actually holding something in our hands as opposed to reading off a screen – it's a sign of the times. Quest is a free publication brought to us all by ZA, through the generosity of all the advertisers. Please patronize our supporters and in turn they can keep assisting in getting this publication in print. Thank YOU for reading us – and long may the ink continue to flow!

What are you doing Mother's Day? Sunday, May 13th

will bring "A Celebration of Charlotte" – remembering Charlotte Lorraine AKA Chuck Poulson.

We lost Charlotte far too soon, this past January and Rona (The M&M Club) has orchestrated this tribute of love to his dear friend and a true friend to our Community. In my last column, I included my obituary of Charlotte and a promise of something to follow, and this is it! The festivities start at 2:00 pm at Fluid – a chance to gather, remember, a video montage, music, sharing stories, raising glasses, a balloon send off! In lieu of flowers, contributions will be greatly appreciated to The BestD Clinic. The Brady Street STD Clinic or the LGBTQ Community STD Clinic, before it moved

to Brady Street, was a very important charity to Charlotte; she was one of the founding members, always referring to herself as their "Founding Mother". Funds collected will go to an Annual Charlotte Lorraine Award for Community Service. All are invited; we welcome friends, fans, family and all coming together in a positive purpose. We anticipate an over-whelming turn out, so from Fluid we will extend the party to the neighboring LVL, third floor Montage. The party will continue into the night, by popular demand – a Mother's Day Show 'The Nuns' like we did for years at the old M's 6:00 pm. At this point we have a star-studded line-up: Dear Ruthie, Goldie Adams, Maple Veneer, Dame Edna Howser, Corky Morgan, Karen Valentine and the return of Rona! Let's give the old girl the sendoff she so richly deserves!

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any 60s sit-com suburb. Mom, Dad, Simon and Simon's little sister Nora (Talitha Bateman) have weekly movie nights.

Weekly movie nights? Really!

Simon (Nick Robinson) even admits he actually likes his younger sister, not that he'd ever

tell her; her devotion to Simon however is perfectly clear. Curious thing about Simon's little sister, in scene after scene Simon is shown rushing off to school whilst poor Nora remains in the kitchen, seemingly her personal domain. Doesn't the little girl go to school?

And what about the parents? Don't they ever go to work? Dad seems to spend much of the movie trying to hang one scraggly set of Christmas lights.

Abby (Alexandra Shipp), Nick (Jorge Lendeborg Jr.) and Leah (Katherine Langford) are Simon's best mates.

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Leah, Nick and Simon have known each other since "the beginning of time." Nick is something of a jock; Abby is a relative newcomer to the group whilst Leah is truly, madly, deeply and sadly unrequitedly in love with Simon.

All in all, an existence nearly idyllic.

The plot meanders along a bit until one fateful afternoon when Leah calls Simon with the latest gossip, specifically that some boy from their school has anonymously outed himself on a PostSecret-like website. Simon can't wait to respond to "Blue" and is delighted when he and Blue seem to make a real connection. Before long, Simon and Blue are getting as close as two comely lads can via the internet. All the while Simon's friends are nearly oblivious to the sudden change in their friend who has become totally self-absorbed. Worse yet, Simon has increasingly become one of those annoying people who can't stop checking their phone.

So happy is Simon with his burgeoning relationship, he has become rather careless,

one day he leaves his email open on one of the school computers. Martin, something of an odd character, discovers the emails. Martin has been pining for Simon's friend Abby, a girl way out of his league. Glenn swears he could actually see a small bulb atop Martin's head light up as he made screenshots of Simon and Blue's correspondence. Surely Abby's friend Simon could help him woo the lass, thinks Martin. Martin will return the favor by not leaking the incriminating emails.

What's a bit of blackmail amongst friends?

For a while all seems to be going well, in fact really well, as Abby sees depths in Martin that leave her friends mystified. Still, Martin and

Abby were surely a car crash just waiting to happen and when the crash does happen, after Simon advises Martin to go big or go home, the resulting scene is equal measures spectacular and terrifying.

The aftermath isn't especially pretty, either. Martin makes good on his threat, Blue shuns Simon and Simon's friends realize to their dismay that Simon has rather thoughtlessly thrown them under the bus to keep his "huge-ass secret" just a little longer.

Can Simon's friends ever forgive him? Will Simon ever find Blue? Is coming out on Christmas Eve a good idea?

You'll get no spoilers here.



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Fluid, Mon. 14th, 9:30-11:30

LaCage, Thurs. 17th, 10-12

Club Icon, 18th, 9:30-12:30  
(Kenosha)

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