

WiGOUT!

An interview with Henry Krieger, one of the men behind "Dreamgirls." In WiGOUT, page 14



THE VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR WISCONSIN'S LGBT COMMUNITY

December 31, 2009 | Vol. 1, No. 4

TAKING STOCK

Milwaukee & beyond

By Louis Weisberg

WiG Staff Writer

From the state Capitol to the Milwaukee Art Museum, from a library in West Bend to the Milwaukee post office, the top local stories of 2009 were born in a variety of settings, proving that we are indeed everywhere.

1. STATE ENACTS DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP REGISTRY

Beginning Aug. 3, same-sex couples in Wisconsin were allowed to register as domestic partners under a law that Gov. Jim Doyle inserted into the 2010-2011 budget. Since then, more 1,200 gay and lesbian couples have signed up, gaining such basic protec-

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THE TOP STORIES OF 2009



PHOTO: AP PHOTO/JOURNAL TIMES, MARK HERTZBERG

Jen, left, and Rose Wehrli-Mead affirm that their statements are true, as they apply for domestic partnership at the county clerk's office at the Racine County Courthouse Aug. 3. They had been together eight years. Aug. 3 was the first day for such applications in Wisconsin.



Beltway & beyond

By Lisa Neff

WiG Staff Writer

When 2009 began, the LGBT community had suffered a significant setback in California, where voters in November 2008 elected to revoke legal marriage for gays and lesbians. The community also had celebrated a significant victory nationally, with the election of Barack Obama to the White House.

On Christmas Eve 2008, Joe Solmonese of the Human Rights Campaign in Washington wrote, "It's the end of 2008, and the opportunities before us are vast."

And the national agenda for the year was lengthy: pass the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd, Jr., Hate Crimes Prevention Act to expand federal authority to investigate hate crimes, including crimes based on sexual orientation; move the Employment Non-Discrimination Act to ban workplace bias based on sexual orientation and gender identity; repeal "don't ask, don't tell," the 10-year-old military policy banning gays from serving openly; and

National page 13

Joseph M. Beagan, left, and Gordon Hansen wait in line to apply for a state declaration of domestic partnership, which formalized certain rights for same-sex couples, on Aug. 3 at the Dane County City-County Building in Madison.

PHOTO: AP PHOTO/WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL, KYLE MCDANIEL

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LGBT news with a twist



WIGWAG

By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg

STATE MARRIAGE RATE PLUMMETS

If Wisconsin voters believed that banning same-sex marriage would help to "protect" traditional marriage, they might want to think again. The Wisconsin Bureau of Health Information and Policy reported the marriage rate in 2007 was the lowest in nearly 80 years. And Milwaukee County Clerk Joe Czarnecki said the trend seems to be continuing this year. The state amended its constitution to outlaw same-sex marriage in 2006. A sociology professor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee blamed the declining numbers on the poor economy. Does this mean Christian right leaders will start addressing poverty and economic inequality? We kind of doubt it.

'VERY HARVEY'

This fall, officials of Hope

College in Holland, Mich., denied a student request to have Oscar-winning writer Dustin Lance Black present a screening of "Milk" on campus. Black was in the Holland area filming a new movie titled "What's With Virginia." In protest, a student group called "Hope is Ready" invited Black to host two off-campus screenings of the film in December, and he accepted. Addressing the audience following the Dec. 12 screening at the Saugatuck Center for the Arts, Black praised the students' response as "very Harvey."

MALE SERVICE

The owner of a Nevada brothel said she hopes to hire the state's first legal male prostitutes. Shady Lady Ranch owner Bobbi Davis says it's time for women and men to be able to legally buy male sex. She hopes that being the first to offer

the service will boost her business in tough economic times.

Until now, men could not be licensed as prostitutes in Nevada, due to STD testing requirements. But the health board recently approved a regulation allowing urethral testing for men, clearing the path for stud service. Davis wants to add two men to the three women now living and working at her compound of trailers about 150 miles northwest of Las Vegas. "We don't know how to structure the men's pricing yet," Davis said.

NO JAIL TIME FOR GLUED PENIS

When three women discovered their Fond du Lac Romeo was cheating last summer, they lured

him to a hotel room, tied him up and glued his penis to his stomach. Perhaps they were just too stuck on him. Earlier this month, the woman who did the gluing pleaded no contest to reduced charges of disorderly conduct and misdemeanor battery. Her sister, who assisted with the revenge plot, pleaded no contest to disorderly conduct. In exchange for their pleas, the district attorney agreed not to seek jail time for either one. The third woman who participated in the incident pleaded not guilty last month to false imprisonment.

DEMINT'S VIEWS NEED REFRESHING

Right-wing U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint, R-S.C., told Bloomberg News Service he couldn't accept a gay president. "It would be

bothersome to me just personally because I consider it immoral," DeMint said. DeMint went on to explain his opposition to same-sex marriage: "Governments should not be in the business of promoting a behavior that's proven to be destructive to our society," he said. The Bloomberg interview wasn't the first time DeMint has spoken out on the subject. In 2004 he supported a ban on openly gay teachers working in South Carolina public schools.

COMMISSIONER'S COMMENTS

Toward the end of a recent debate on partnership benefits for county workers in Mecklenburg County, N.C., Commissioner Bill James leaned over to Commissioner Vilma Leake to ask, "Your son was a homo, really?" Leake, who

had just completed comments about her son's death of AIDS-related complications in 1993, replied, "You're going to make me hurt you. Don't do that to me. Don't talk about my son." James said he was making a point of clarification, not a derisive comment. "People can believe whatever they want, they can believe in the tooth fairy and legend of Atlantis," James told reporters. "I don't determine what I do based on what people think. I determine it based on what I did and what I did was I asked a question and that question doesn't deserve or require an apology." James is no stranger to controversy — in 2004 he wrote in an e-mail that urban blacks "live in a moral sewer."

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Milwaukee hosts softball series

Local from I

tions for their relationships as hospital visitation rights, end-of-life decision-making, and the ability to take family medical leave to care for sick or injured partners.

The law made Wisconsin the first state to enact domestic partnerships despite a constitutional amendment banning both same-sex marriage and civil unions.

Wisconsin Family Action condemned the law as an "end-run around the Marriage Protection Amendment and an assault on the people, the state constitution, the institution of marriage and the democratic process."

The organization filed suit to halt the registry with the Wisconsin Supreme Court, which declined to hear the case without comment in November. WFA has vowed to take the case to a lower court of jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, a suit challenging the legality of the 2006 referendum that enacted Wisconsin's marriage and



PHOTO: MARCUS POWELL

Cheering on the players at the Gay Softball World Series held in Milwaukee Aug. 31 - Sept. 5.

civil union ban is winding its way through the court system.

2. MILWAUKEE HOSTS GAY SOFTBALL WORLD SERIES

Milwaukee won out over Chicago to become the host for NAGAAAFest 2009, which brought 128 gay soft-

ball teams and about 1,700 players to the city Aug. 31-Sept. 5 for the annual Gay Softball World Series. The event was the largest in the organization's 33-year history.

The Saturday Softball League hosted the festivities, which included an opening ceremony at Summerfest fea-

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Shepherd
Best of Milwaukee
 ★ 2009

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Vote derails partnership benefits study

By Louis Weisberg

WiG Staff Writer

The Milwaukee County Board came one vote short of saving a measure that could have led to health benefits for the domestic partners of county workers.

On Nov. 5, the board approved the measure, which authorized the county to examine costs associated with providing benefits. County Executive and Republican gubernatorial candidate Scott Walker promptly vetoed the plan.

The board voted 12-7 on Dec. 17 to override Walker's veto, but that count was one

shy of the required two-thirds majority.

In the weeks leading up to the most recent vote, Walker and Wisconsin Family Action issued warnings, via right-wing broadcast media, e-mail blasts and robocalls, claiming that domestic partner benefits would cost county taxpayers \$4 million annually during a time of fiscal crisis. They also claimed the measure under consideration would result in immediate legislation to enact partner benefits, not merely to study them.

Supporters of domestic partner benefits said

Walker's cost estimate was vastly inflated. The city of Milwaukee, which has offered domestic partner benefits since 2001, pays \$233,000 annually to cover the families enrolled in its plan. The county has about 30 percent fewer employees than the city.

"During this entire process, the misinformation spread throughout the media — through talk radio, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and other sources — really did not give a well-rounded report of what was included in the bill," said Lizzy Dahlk, project manager for Equality

Wisconsin. "That was a huge disappointment to us. We thought we were doing a pretty good job of getting out the facts."

County Supervisor Christopher Larson, who introduced the measure to study partner benefits, said he was surprised by the board's failure to override Walker's veto.

"It seemed like it would be pretty easy, because we got 13 votes initially, which was enough to override the veto," Larson said. The massive campaign of misinformation from the Christian right stirred up a lot of constituent

pressure, he said.

But advocates for the measure blamed its defeat mostly on a change of heart by Supervisor Lynne DeBruin, who originally offered to act as a co-sponsor and voted for it twice in the past.

"We were shocked when we heard that she was not going to support it in the final vote," Dahlk said. "It really felt treacherous to us."

Larson also criticized DeBruin's behavior. "She, unfortunately, is notoriously unreliable and changes her mind frequently," he said. "She just completely flipped on it. She didn't explain why.

'We thought we were doing a pretty good job of getting out the facts.'

I'd love to hear her explanation... She left the meeting early."

DeBruin did not return WiG's phone calls.

DID YOU KNOW?

In 1996, a Hawaii state court ruled that there is no reason, compelling or otherwise, to deny same-sex couples the right to marry. Voters in 1998 amended the Hawaii Constitution, allowing the state to ban same-sex couples from marrying.



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Mayor Tom Barrett: 414-286-2200, mayor@milwaukee.gov.

Common Council Office: Common Council President Willie L. Hines, Jr., 286-2221, whines@milwaukee.gov.

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West Bend library controversy attracts attention

Local from 2

turing a warm welcome from Mayor Tom Barrett, banners placed along Wisconsin Avenue by VISIT Milwaukee and a street fair in Walker's Point.

A talent show held in conjunction with the event raised \$14,000 for local non-profits.

3. WEST BEND LIBRARY CONTROVERSY STIRS NATIONAL DEBATE

In West Bend, a couple's petition to have books with gay content removed from the local library's young adult section set off Christian right calls for a good old-fashioned book burning and led to four members of the library board getting sacked by city council.

The story sparked a debate that raged for months in the national media and blogo-

sphere. In mid-July, the Pew Research Center's Project on Excellence in Journalism ranked it among the top five blogged-about topics in the news.

In the end, library director Michael Tyree and his staff prevailed and kept their stacks intact. They also were awarded the 2009 Robert B. Downs Intellectual Freedom Award by the faculty of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

4. MILWAUKEE POST OFFICE STAMPS OUT LGBT EXHIBIT

The world will never know if an LGBT display created in June for the Milwaukee Post Office Building, 345 W. St. Paul Ave., would have inspired an outcry similar to the one in West Bend: The exhibit was

dismantled just hours after staffers of the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center assembled it up in the building's lobby. The chair of the post office's diversity committee had asked the center to create the exhibit to honor Pride month.

News of the snub was heard as far away as Los Angeles, where the publicist for Sir Ian McKellan called the center to ask if he could help. After being named Jerk of the Week by the Shepherd Express, postmaster Charles Miller apologized and said he'd consider creating a PrideFest cancellation stamp to use on mail for the entire month of June 2010.

5. MAM HOSTS ACCLAIMED WARHOL EXHIBIT

The Milwaukee Art Museum was selected to launch the national tour

MAM hosted the first U.S. survey of work from Warhol's final years.

of "Andy Warhol: The Last Decade," the first U.S. survey exhibition of work from the gay pop-art icon's final years. Nearly 50 works loaned by private collectors and institutions were on display at MAM from Sept. 26, 2009, to Jan. 3, 2010. The exhibit bolstered both gay and straight tourism and helped to solidify Milwaukee's growing reputation as a Midwest center for arts and culture, as well as a forward-thinking city.



PHOTO: MAM

In 2009, the Milwaukee Art Museum was selected to host the launch of the national tour of "Andy Warhol: The Last Decade." Warhol's "Jackie III," from the portfolio *11 Pop Artists, Volume III*, 1966, is part of the exhibit.

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School board votes for condom availability

By Louis Weisberg

WIG Staff Writer

The Milwaukee School Board's decision to make condoms available at some high schools is winning praise from youth health advocates, who say it will help address the high rates of pregnancy, HIV and STDs among city youth.

The school board voted 7-0 on Dec. 17 to adopt the Communicable Disease Prevention Program, which will allow students to obtain up to two condoms at a time from their school nurses. Students requesting condoms will also receive information about communicable diseases and health referrals, if needed.

The program will make condoms available only at schools with nurses on staff. Supported through private funding, the program is expected to begin at the start of the 2010-2011 school year.

Although condom distribution in schools is opposed by the National Abstinence Education Association, the Catholic Church and other far-right Christian groups, the school board does not take public comments at meetings, and the program was adopted without discussion.

A spokesperson said the board acted in response to alarming statistics. A 2009 study found nearly 63 percent of MPS high school students were sexually active,

and nearly one-third of them had not used a condom the last time they had sexual intercourse. Milwaukee ranks high among U.S. cities in numbers of births to teen mothers and "particularly high" in the incidence of certain STDs.

According to Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin, 20 percent of new HIV infections in the state are diagnosed in people ages 15 to 24.

The condom distribution plan makes MPS one of the very few school districts in the country to provide contraception to students. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, only 4.5 per-

cent of high schools have such policies.

Doug Nelson, president and CEO of AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, commended the school board for taking action. "I think this is long overdue," he said.

While applauding MPS for its courage, Diverse and Resilient executive director Gary Hollander said the condom distribution plan is insufficient. He said the data used to develop the plan is limited, because it only considered heterosexual intercourse and overlooked anal and oral sex among youth.

Hollander said the plan should have gone further. "It appears politically necessary to limit access to condoms

'I think this is long overdue.'

and to assure the public that no public tax dollars will be used to purchase condoms," he said. "However, the opposition to this service is reprehensible. We have seen that even the children of conservative vice-presidential candidates can make errors in judgment in sexual behavior. How much more can be the case among MPS teens whose economic situation is so vastly different? As a cohort, their access to reproductive health

services, primary care, and funds to purchase condoms is limited."

The MPS vote came one day after Congress eliminated funding for abstinence-only sex education programs and, for the first time, allocated federal dollars for evidence-based programs.

"We commend Congress for understanding the link between the failed abstinence-only programs of the past eight years and the stagnant rates of unintended pregnancy and exploding rates of sexually transmitted infections among youth in Wisconsin," said Chris Taylor, public policy director of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin.

Supporters in majority at marijuana hearing

By Louis Weisberg

WIG Staff Writer

Backers and opponents of medical marijuana got their chance to speak out Dec. 15 at a hearing before the Assembly and Senate health committees, which are weighing a bill to legalize its use in Wisconsin.

One hundred and three people spoke or registered in favor of the bill, while only nine testified against it. The bill was introduced last month by openly gay state Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Madison, and state Sen. Jon Erpenbach, D-Waunakee.

The proposed bill would allow patients to grow up to 12 plants at home or obtain up to three ounces

from state-licensed nonprofit clinics. Users would be prohibited from driving a car or operating heavy machinery, and they would not be allowed to smoke marijuana at work, on a bus, on school grounds, or in such public places as parks and beaches.

Daniel Abrahamson, legal affairs director for the New York-based Drug Policy Alliance, told committee members that the 34-page bill under consideration is "the most comprehensive, responsible, thorough, and thoughtful, well-crafted bill in the country."

"If enacted, Wisconsin really would become a national model," Abrahamson said.

Many supporters of the

bill spoke about the relief they've gotten from smoking marijuana.

Seated in a wheelchair, Jacki Rickert gave an emotional account of how smoking marijuana has not only helped her deal with disabling pain, but enabled her to regain weight after dropping to 68 pounds. Rickert suffers from bone and joint diseases that limit her movement and cause muscle spasms.

Gary Storck described marijuana as a "godsend" in treating his glaucoma and other conditions. "I'm a living medical miracle," he told committee members. "Why should I be a criminal?"

Others testified that smoking marijuana helps patients



State Rep. Mark Pocan

with wasting syndrome due to HIV/AIDS, chemotherapy-related nausea and other conditions, including post-traumatic stress disorder.

A representative of the Wisconsin Medical Society spoke in opposition to the measure, charging that it does

an end-run on science and safety, because the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has not approved marijuana as a medicine. Dr. Michael Miller also told lawmakers that THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, is available legally in the prescribed pill Marinol.

But supporters said many patients suffering from nausea are unable to hold down Marinol. They also pointed out that Marinol is a synthetic drug that contains only one of the many potentially helpful compounds that produce marijuana's beneficial effects.

Rep. Leah Vukmir, R-Wauwatosa, was booed at the hearing after accusing Democrats of using chroni-

cally ill patients to push a secret agenda of legalizing pot. Erpenbach reacted sharply to Vukmir's statement.

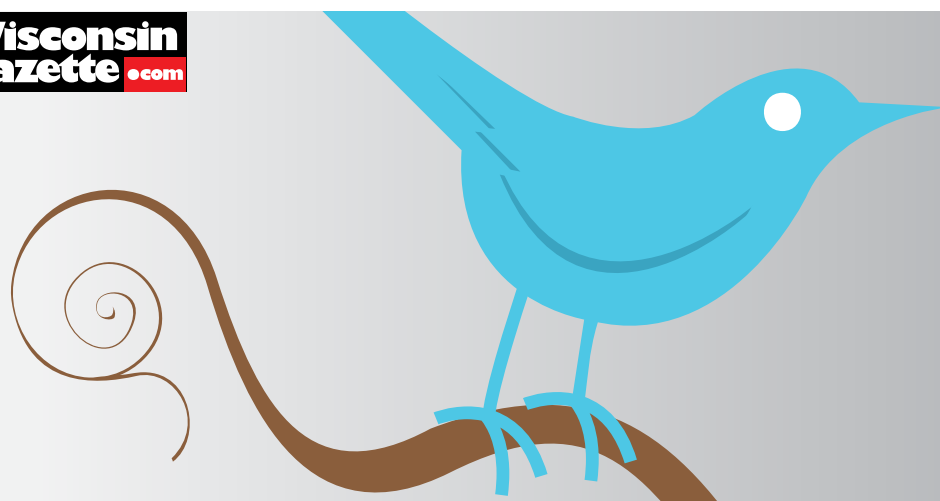
"Do you honestly think I want to legalize marijuana for everyone in Wisconsin?" he asked. "You don't even know me."

A member of the "tea party" wing of the Republican Party who posts biblical verses on her Web site, Vukmir maintained there is no medical reason for supporting the use of marijuana.

The sponsors of the medical marijuana bill hope to bring it up for a vote in January.

— AP contributed to this story

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The icon of Club ICON: Clint Jones

By Bruce H. Joffe

WIG Contributing Writer

His resume reads like a corporate success story of MBA-related experience in banking, credit, and revenue cycles for big business. But he's also the proprietor of Club ICON, the gay go-to dance club along the I-94 corridor access road in Kenosha.

Clinton M. Jones is smart and savvy. He's entrepreneurial and connected to the LGBT community from Chicago to Milwaukee. This dashing thirty-something man is tall, dark, and handsome. He's also sincere, sophisticated and a darned good guy.

Yet, "it's really tough for a guy who isn't in a relationship to own and operate a gay club, especially if he's a bar owner who's out in the LGBT community," Jones laments.

"You must take home three or four different guys every week, some people think. No, I don't. I try to avoid controversy out of respect for our employees and my own peace of mind."

That's not easy in the hospitality industry, where catering to clients means making them feel comfortable; flirting with strangers and happenstance are part and parcel of the territory.

It's an occupational hazard, to say the least.

So, where does a gay bar owner who's known throughout the community find someone desirable who respects and trusts him (and vice-versa), and can spend both business and leisure time together — despite the lay of the land?

Paradoxically, perhaps at the very places one would think should be avoided.

Which is how Club ICON came to be in this contemporary fairy tale:

Once upon a time, Jones was a patron at a place called "94 North," where he got to know people and realized "it could be a goldmine if it were run as a business, not like a bar."

Turns out, the bar was for sale and others were thinking about buying it.

"If this place weren't a gay bar, would you people have anywhere to go?" the potential purchasers asked

COMMUNITY PROFILE

Jones. Those words — "you people" — grated on his nerves, as he realized that the prospective new owners were planning to turn it into just another bar. Jones didn't want the area and its LGBT community to lose such a prime piece of personal property.

At the time, he worked as a consultant on corporate training, human resource management, and talent development. But, pressured by friends, Jones wrote a business plan and submitted it to his bank, which sent it on to the Small Business Administration. The rest, as they say, is history.

In November 2005, Jones became owner of 94 North. Then, in April 2006, it was reborn and rebranded as Club ICON.

"Anybody who'd been in the club very quickly saw the changes," Jones notes, ticking off his list of improvements: new sound equipment, digi-



PHOTO: LOUIS WEISBERG

Clint Jones of Club ICON

tal enhancements, new furnaces and an air conditioning system, smoke management technology, a paved parking lot, better beer coolers, granite bathrooms and the dance floor. "Almost the entire interior is new and updated from a former industrial, chain-link look to what it is today."

Apart from wanting a clean and safe place for LGBT people to go, Jones' savoir-faire told him it was imperative to be competitive. Indeed, why would people travel farther and longer to hang out on the suburban sidelines rather than remaining closer to their front steps in Chicago or Milwaukee?

"They can always drink cheaper at home," he says. "What is it that makes them come here for that drink? People are buying beverages,

karaoke on Wednesdays, and Packer Sundays.

Gay people and straight (including several septuagenarians) often travel some distance to dance, meet up and support events at Club ICON.

Why?

"Not because of the open bar or the 60 pounds of shrimp," quips Jones, "but because of the experience ... because we're a place where people really do get to know you."

Cheers, anyone?

In addition to annual festivities celebrating New Year's, Halloween and its anniversary, Club ICON throws an AIDS Walk fundraiser every year to benefit the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin. Other major events support several charities: one for the STD Clinic in Milwaukee; another benefits Toys for Tots; a Harley ride for breast cancer research ("Riders for Hope") provides funds for the Deanna Favre Hope Foundation; and Club ICON has been foremost in supporting southeastern Wisconsin's new LGBT center.

Even the usual suspects are asked to support a charity of their choosing when holding a special event at Club ICON.

"Every drag show, leather night, special event, should support a charity," Jones insists. "Half of our cover charge goes to that charity ... the club then matches the money raised."

As part of his public relations, he reaches out to others in the business.

"We try to build relationships with gay bars elsewhere, not because of competition but to engender more cama-

ICON is a large venue in a small town.

raderie," says Jones, "to keep the LGBT connection going."

His success in relationship-building may be among the reasons he's been nominated to serve as the next president of the LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin's board of directors, a position that brings with it both challenges and benefits. But he knows there's a definite line separating his club from the nonprofit community center.

"There's a clear distinction between Club ICON and the people it serves, and the people served by the LGBT center," he says. "There's a different demographic served by each. But there's always been a complement through the support Club ICON has provided to the Center. And there are people, too, who really are served by both places."

This determined man with a mission isn't ready to give up on the world beyond, either.

According to his Gallup Leadership Traits Analysis, Jones' strengths as an "achiever" demand that he accomplish something tangible every day to feel fulfilled, while his "relater" tendency pulls him towards other people.

Motivated to keep everything going and well managed, Jones still wants that "regular, life-focused job," along with a personal life.

"I want it all, again," he says, "just not to the extreme that I had it before."

DID YOU KNOW?

In May 2004, Massachusetts became the first state/commonwealth in the nation to legally issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

AIDS CENTER SET TO RECEIVE GRANT

AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin is set to receive an \$800,000 state grant to support the renovation and expansion of its Green

Bay facility, along with the expansion of its Milwaukee dental clinic.

In mid-December, the Wisconsin Building Commission approved release of the grant, which was allocated as part of the

2009-2010 Wisconsin state budget.

"While so many other states are slashing AIDS budgets, we are fortunate that the fight against AIDS in Wisconsin has strong bipartisan support," said ARCW

spokesperson Bill Keeton in a press release. He praised the commitment of Gov. Jim Doyle, state Sen. Jeff Pyle, D-Madison, and other legislative leaders.

ARCW is increasing its capacity in Green Bay due

to new HIV infections, a reduction in HIV medical care providers and the limited income and lack of insurance of many HIV patients.

— L.W.

Researchers chart decade of progress

By Lisa Neff
WiG Staff Writer

An analysis of the past decade shows significant strides in achieving LGBT equality in the United States.

In mid-December, the Movement Advancement Project and the Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund released a study of LGBT civil rights efforts since Y2K came and went.

"The remarkable achievements toward LGBT equality tend to be obscured by the day-to-day struggles, and overall progress often goes unnoticed nationally," said Linda Bush, executive direc-

tor of MAP, a think tank founded in 2006 to promote LGBT research. "By looking broadly at the last decade, this report gives a much fuller perspective on where we are today — and how far we've come in just 10 years."

Ira Hirschfeld, president of the Haas fund, a 56-year-old family foundation, said the "facts make it clear that equal rights for gay people are advancing at an exceptional rate."

The researchers tracked 36 indicators or issues from 2000 through 2009 and noted:

- The number of states outlawing discrimination based on sexual orientation increased 83 percent, from 12 to 22. An estimated 134 million people are living in states that ban bias based on sexual orientation, an increase of 65 million over the decade.

- The number of states outlawing discrimination based on gender identity increased 30 percent, from one state in 2000 to 14 states in 2009.

- In 2000, no state allowed same-sex couples to legally marry. Gay and lesbian couples can now marry in five

states, while six states offer broad partnership recognition and seven others offer limited recognition.

- Earlier this year, the president signed the Matthew Shepard and James Byrd Jr. Hate Crimes Prevention Act, the first federal law to specifically extend protections to LGBT people.

- The number of LGBT elected officials grew from 257 in 2000 to 445 in 2009.

- One state had a safe-school law protecting LGBT students in 2000. Today, 13 states have such laws.

- The number of gay-

straight alliances in high schools has increased from 700 to 4,700 over the decade.

- The percentage of LGBT students who say they have a supportive teacher at school increased from 60 percent in 2000 to 82.5 percent in 2009.

- In the public opinion arena, the percentage of people of think gays and lesbians should be allowed to serve openly in the Armed Forces increased from 62 percent in 2000 to 75 percent in 2009.

While the analysis overall showed marked gains, the

'Remarkable achievements toward LGBT equality.'

researchers also noted that citizens in five states had voted to block gays and lesbians from marrying as of 2000. Today, voters in 31 states have voted against marriage rights for gays.

Also, two more states have moved to bar gays from adopting children.

N.Y. GOVERNOR SIGNS ANTI-DISCRIMINATION ORDER

New York Gov. David Paterson recently signed an executive order to include transgender people in anti-discrimination policies that govern state agencies.

Responding, Lambda Legal civil liberties group issued a statement: "Gov. Paterson's executive order is a great first step towards protecting transgender and gender non-conforming state employees. But the New York Legislature must now pass the Gender Expression Non-discrimination Act so all New Yorkers are included in this important protection."

—L.N.

MINNEAPOLIS COUNCIL ADOPTS UGANDA RESOLUTION

The city of Minneapolis, a sister city of Kampala, Uganda, recently passed a resolution condemning Uganda's proposed Anti-Homosexuality Bill.

Councilmembers Scott Benson and Cam Gordon co-authored the resolution, saying the law would have a negative impact on all citizens of Kampala. They pointed out that the bill "targets lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender Ugandans, their advocates and defenders and anyone who fails to report them to the authorities."

The resolution amended the city's federal agenda for 2010 with a section entitled

"Human Rights Restrictions in Uganda."

—L.N.

GAY MARRIAGE OPPONENTS PUSH VOTE IN IOWA

A group demanding a vote to amend Iowa's constitution plan to leave calling cards early and often during the 2010 legislative session.

Bryan English of Iowa Family Policy Council ACTION said anti-gay activists plan to be at the state Capitol en masse Jan. 12, when Gov. Chet Culver delivers his Condition of the State address to a joint session of the General Assembly with Iowa Supreme Court justices present.

—AP

DID YOU KNOW? Vermont's supreme court in 1999 ruled that "the state is constitutionally required to extend to same-sex couples the common benefits and protections that flow from marriage under Vermont law."

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{ Editorial }

Be it resolved

New Year's resolutions. You probably have abundant personal evidence that they can be difficult to keep, forgotten even by mid-month, or worse, the morning after the big Dec. 31 bash at which so many pronouncements get made.

There is, of course, statistical evidence that New Year's resolutions all too often get tossed out with the needle-less Christmas trees, the expired eggnog and the heaps of holiday wrap. Surveys show that less than 75 percent of people keep their resolutions through the year and about 35 percent of people break their resolutions by the end of January.

Still, we make resolutions.

And we should.

But we should resolve that we look beyond making ourselves leaner, richer, happier and healthier. We should resolve to improve our relationships, our community, our city, our state, our nation, our world.

WiG encourages readers to resolve in 2010 to become more involved in the LGBT community on a personal level. To start, check out our community listings. You are sure to find another way to connect.

Sing.

Play.

Dance.

Socialize.

Worship.

Heal.

WiG encourages readers to resolve in 2010 to become more involved in the LGBT community on a political level.

Lobby.

Fundraise.

Advocate.

Demonstrate.

Educate.

And WiG encourages readers to resolve in 2010 to live openly and proudly — as lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people and as straight allies.

Goodbye 2009. Hello 2010, a new year, with new opportunities.

> TAKE ACTION!

Contact members of the Wisconsin Assembly and Senate health committees and urge them to support medical marijuana legislation:

Senate: Jon Erpenbach, 608-266-6670, Sen.Erpenbach@legis.wisconsin.gov; Tim Carpenter, 608-266-8535, Sen.Carpenter@legis.wisconsin.gov; Judith Robson, 608-266-2253, Sen.Robson@legis.wisconsin.gov; Julie Lassa, 608-266-3123, Sen.Lassa@legis.wisconsin.gov; Mary Lazich, 608-266-5400, Sen.Lazich@legis.wisconsin.gov; Ted Kanavas, 608-266-9174, Sen.Kanavas@legis.wisconsin.gov; Alberta Darling, 608-266-5830, Sen.Darling@legis.wisconsin.gov.

Assembly: Chuck Benedict (chair), 608-266-9967, Rep.Benedict@legis.wisconsin.gov; Sandy Pasch (vice-chair), 608-266-7671, Rep.Pasch@legis.wisconsin.gov; Kristen Dexter, 608-266-9172, Rep.Dexter@legis.wisconsin.gov; Penny Bernard Schaber, 608-266-3070, Rep.BernardSchaber@legis.wisconsin.gov; Patricia Strachota, 608-264-8486, Rep.Strachota@legis.wisconsin.gov; Leah Vukmir, 608-266-9180, Rep.Vukmir@legis.wisconsin.gov; Scott Newcomer, 608-266-3007, Rep.Newcomer@legis.wisconsin.gov.

{ Letters }

NEW YEAR, NEW RESOLVE

As 2010 approaches, LGBT business leaders have an opportunity to choose health for the LGBT community. On July 5, Wisconsin will go smoke free. That means perhaps we can begin to address the 44 percent LGBT smoking rate vs. the 19 percent general Wisconsin smoking rate disparity and its accompanying health problems. Many business leaders already are making the decision to go smoke free.

No one disputes the negative health effects of smoking — cancer, asthma, COPD and heart disease among them.

Bottom line: Smoke-free laws are good for health. Workers and the public will be protected from the immediate and serious long-term health effects of second-hand smoke.

It's time to get excited about this change! Let's go smoke free now!

Julie Bock, director of programs, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center

SUPPORT MEDICAL MARIJUANA

I'm writing to urge your support for Assembly Bill 554, the Jacki Rickert Medical Marijuana Act.

This act seeks to enact statewide legal protections shielding those seriously ill patients who use cannabis therapeutically with a doctor's recommendation.

The use of marijuana as medicine is a public health issue — it should not be part of the war on drugs. According to a recent national survey of U.S. physicians conducted for the American Society of Addiction Medicine, nearly half of all doctors with opinions support legalizing cannabis as a medicine.

Some 80 state and national health care organizations, including the American Nurses Association, American Public Health Association, The New England Journal of Medicine, and the Wisconsin Nurses Association, support immediate, legal patient access to medical cannabis.

Most recently, the largest association of doctors

of internal medicine and the second largest medical association in the country, the American College of Physicians, released a policy paper in support of medical cannabis, stating, "The ACP strongly urges protection from criminal or civil penalties for patients who use medical marijuana as permitted under state laws."

Prior to the 1990s, even the federal government allowed specific patients to use marijuana medicinally via the Compassionate IND program. Jacki Rickert, a Wisconsin native, was accepted into this program — only to learn that it was abruptly closed to new applicants. A handful of patients still receive medical marijuana from the federal government, but most patients, like Jacki, are forced to suffer needlessly.

Today 13 states — Alaska, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Maine, Michigan, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, Vermont and Washington — have enacted laws pro-

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The Wisconsin Gazette is published biweekly and distributed throughout the Milwaukee area, Racine and Kenosha. To have WiG delivered to your address, contact circulation@wisconsin-gazette.com or call 414-961-3240.

WiG Publishing, LLC. © 2009

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Our mission

To inform, engage and empower Wisconsin's LGBT community by providing a professional, independent print and online source for news and commentary, as well as coverage of political and cultural issues.

The pleasures of aging

As one of the few older men writing regular commentary for the gay press, I feel almost uniquely positioned to discuss the problems and pleasures of aging. My comments are based on my own experience and that of other men 60 and older I have discussed this with. But other older readers are welcome to write and tell me how their experience does or does not accord with mine.

There is no doubt that the gay community, like our whole American culture, is youth-oriented. Accordingly, too many young people view the prospects of aging with aversion. But I think they are wrong to think that way. So let me list a few of the advantages of growing older. Here

are five. There are others.

You accumulate more experience. With any luck this coagulates into better judgment and greater wisdom. I have talked to several men who said they wished they were younger but on cross-examination none ever said they would be willing to give up the knowledge and judgment they had gained in the intervening years. "Oh no!" was the usual reaction. There is little use in trying to explain this to younger gays. They will just have to find it out for themselves.

Closely related to this is seldom being surprised by the phenomena of the social world. Older people have, well, not "seen it all before" but often seen similar events and responses in the past. It



is not that nothing surprises you: stupidity, rudeness, mendacity and irrationality will continue to do that. But you develop coping mechanisms that make it easier to dismiss such things as part of the background noise of living in a multicultural urban environment.

You get more respect from people — young and old. When I was a gawky youth, I don't recall being treated with any particular respect. But nowadays not only do people call you "Sir" — and not just at leather bars — but they are more likely to hold doors open for you. This is not universally

true, but happens frequently enough to be a noticeable change. Your opinions are taken more seriously because they are presumably based on greater experience. As one of my friends put it, "Older people have more gravitas."

The intensity of your sexual desire somewhat diminishes. Cephalus in Plato's Republic remarks that he is finally free of "the tyranny of Venus." I understand what he means. This does not mean that sexual desire completely vanishes but that its claims seem less urgent and more under control. Most older men will understand this intuitively. Younger people who may evaluate themselves by the strength of their libido will just have to learn it —

You get more respect from people — young and old both.

and they will come to realize it is a blessing.

If you take care of yourself, with age you can get better looking, losing that patina of twinkiness that some young gays seem to have. You may remember that 1970s football star Joe Namath commented, "I can't wait for tomorrow 'cause I get better looking every day." It was a bit of self-promotional hype, of course, but there is often

something to it. This fact was made clear to me not long ago when I saw a recent picture of 1970s porn actor Bruno (real name: Hermes Forteza) in Bear magazine. He is still visibly the same good-looking man, but he has a kind of relaxed maturity about him now, 30 years later, that is more attractive than his earlier self. I can even share a personal anecdote. I have never been a wildly handsome man, but age has probably improved me. Just a few years ago a young man approached me in a bar and asked, "Can I be your little boy?" Well, maybe.

Write to Paul Varnell at pvarnell@aol.com.

> Heroes and villains

HERO

The Milwaukee School Board showed both courage and savvy in unanimously approving a plan to distribute condoms at some high schools. The bold move puts MPS at the forefront in helping to protect its students from unwanted pregnancies, HIV and other STDs. Only 4.5 percent of the nation's high schools make condoms available to students. The school board wisely chose to fund the program privately rather than with taxpayer dollars. The MPS decision comes a month after Republicans in Madison blocked a measure that would have required schools in the state that teach sex education to provide birth-control instruction.

VILLAIN

The LGBT community has long counted labor as an ally in its march for equality. And LGBT organizations have long supported labor's push to improve the lives of U.S. workers.

So why is the New York State Teamsters Council Health and Hospital Fund ignoring its obligation to extend a worker the spousal benefits she's due as a Teamster and legally married resident of New York?

Lambda Legal is representing Jackie Zacharewski in a dispute with the Teamsters council, which denied her request for spousal benefits. The truck driver married Marylou Dalton-Zacharewski in Connecticut, and New York recognizes out-of-state marriage.

Zacharewski's health plan says her wife is entitled to coverage. The Teamsters say otherwise — that the fund "does not provide spousal coverage for same-sex marriages." Should a union member really have to find a lawyer to get fair treatment from the union?

Nominate a hero or a villain. E-mail managingeditor@wisconsin Gazette.com.

We create our own families. That's what we say in the LGBT community.

What we mean is, historically, our own families have disowned us. So instead, we create new ones — and it is with these new families of friends that we celebrate holidays and share our grief and joys and hopes.

We rely on these created families for daily support and emotional sustenance. We love them and they love us, exactly as they are.

It is a beautiful tradition, created families, and one that makes the gay community bond even more tightly together.

But now it is time to go back home.

I don't mean that we should abandon our created families. How could we? They are where we rest our hearts. But we also have families we were born into and the holiday season is a perfect time to reach backward and help pull us all into the future.

Families are changing as the world is changing. Even conservative families are becoming more open to gays and lesbians, bisexuals and transgenders. There is less of a sense of shame and more



of a sense of pride.

But not all of us realize this, because we have built walls between ourselves and our families of origin out of deep hurt and for self-preservation. Growing up, we felt different, unwanted, unloved. We were rejected once (or more than once) as younger gay and trans people. We don't want to be rejected again.

So we send presents, but we don't visit. Or we visit, but don't share the facts of our lives. Or we cut off contact completely.

Some of us haven't spoken to our families in so long that we can't remember what their voices sound like, or recall the planes of their faces.

But a new decade is coming, my friends.

All of us have become more active in the past few years, as more of our issues have come up for public debate and more of our bills have come up for votes. We march. We write our legisla-

tors. We wear stickers and pins and explain our positions to strangers.

Now it is time to go home and explain our positions to our families.

There are some exceptions to this, of course. Some families are so dysfunctional that they can never hear us. Some families are emotionally or physically abusive, and it would be dangerous for us to darken their doors.

But in the majority of cases, I think, what separates us is not violence or the threat of violence, but a wall built of bricks of misunderstanding, silence, anger and denial.

It is time for us to break through. Not only for ourselves, but for the greater good of our civil rights.

Studies have shown that people are more likely to vote for our rights or otherwise act on our behalf if they know (and presumably, are fond of) gay people. Results must be even better if gay people also use love and gentle persuasion to show their families why bills such as ENDA and gay marriage are important to us.

Sometimes, our families surprise us.

Now it is time to go back home.

I tend to think that my family doesn't care at all about gay civil rights. Yet recently, when marriage was up for a vote in New York, I took a deep breath and called or e-mailed all of my New York relatives to ask them to call their legislators.

All of them did.

My family can't be the only one that seems indifferent but is instead only waiting to be asked to help.

So go home. Or call home. Let's start building bridges back to our families.

An intact family will not only warm our hearts, it will eventually help our cause.

Jennifer Vanasco is an award-winning, syndicated columnist. E-mail her at jennifer.vanasco@gmail.com; follow her at twitter.com/jenniferanasco.

Looking homeward

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A world tour

Opinion
 BY ANGEL SEVILLA

The Ugandan government is working on change ... for the worse.

There has been a lot going on in the world the last couple of weeks. We've got the healthcare reform legislation that no one seems happy with, Uganda is ready to turn its anti-gay prejudice to full blast, and Mexico City is actually getting things right.

First thing's first. So, senators worked late and overtime to make sure they finished by the Christmas deadline they had set for themselves on the healthcare reform bill.

I keep hearing the bill has too many loose ends and loopholes, and I've also been hearing a lot lately about how Barack Obama hasn't been doing anything as president.

I'll tell you what he hasn't done:

- He hasn't gotten us into any more wars.
- He hasn't gotten us more countries to hate us.
- He didn't just sit on his ass when it came to healthcare issues. Even if the Senate's bill is not the perfect legislation we all had dreamed of, Obama is still the first of eight presidents who've tried for healthcare reform and actually gotten somewhere.

And that's what he promised — change.

Speaking of change, the Ugandan government is working on change, but in this case it's change for the worse. Uganda has never been OK with homosexual-

ity, but the anti-gay bill introduced earlier this year took things to a new low, proposing that some gay citizens of Uganda could be imprisoned and even sentenced to death.

More recently it was reported that there was a "win," for lack of a better word, on the gay side. Ugandan officials announced that the bill would be revised to exclude execution, reduce life imprisonment to seven years and include counseling to help cure the gayness. Yea us! Only seven years in prison and we get to be called crazy. Also, Ugandan people who know of an openly gay person and don't report them to the authorities within 24 hours could be sentenced under the proposed measure.

The bill is being tied to Ugandan MP David Bahati, who has also been tied to the secretive religious organization in the United States

called "The Family."

He refuses to comment, though, on his involvement with the organization. The reasons behind the bill, he said in a British radio show interview posted at www.boxturtlebulletin.com, are religion and reducing the spread of HIV.

Proponents of the measure are backing up their reasoning citing non-credible sources from the United States, including Richard Cohen, author of "Coming Out Straight," copies of which were donated to Uganda by Cohen's organization.

Cohen writes in his book that homosexuality is curable. He cites his master's degree in the book to make himself look credible, but what he fails to mention is how he isn't a licensed therapist in any U.S. state and how he's been kicked out of the American Counseling Association.

This Uganda situation is a big mess and it's still brewing. Meanwhile, closer to home, Mexico City is on the progressive track. Lawmakers there voted to change the definition of "marriage" from "a union between a man and woman" to "a union between two people."

After all that hate going on in Uganda, feels really nice to know that in some parts of the world we aren't seen as a problem, or a threat, or even different, but as just people.

Letters to the editor

Letters from 8

protecting medical marijuana patients from state prosecution. These laws are operating primarily as lawmakers intended and have not led to widespread abuses among adolescents or adult recreational users.

I believe it is unconscionable to criminalize patients who find therapeutic relief from marijuana.

Annie Patterson, Milwaukee

BEST IN 2010

Log Cabin Republican members and supporters should be proud of the progress our organization has made this past year. We

look ahead to the important challenges facing us in 2010 as there is much important work to be done to build a more inclusive Republican Party.

The last year brought success and setbacks: Polls show more Republicans than ever supporting basic fairness for gay and lesbian people. Help us support inclusive candidates. Log Cabin is the only organization with an active legal challenge to the unfair military policy, "don't ask, don't tell." Our case has moved into the discovery stage. Despite promises to end the policy, the Obama administration is fighting to keep our case from moving

forward.

Even with the progress we're making, the passage of the Maine anti-gay measure shows how much work remains.

In the New Year, Log Cabin's work is more important than ever. The GOP is at a crossroads. Will the GOP learn the right lessons?

As supporters of the GOP, Log Cabin is determined to elect and support centrist Republicans by focusing Log Cabin Republican PAC funds on critical GOP races in 2010 to help rebuild an inclusive Republican majority.

Terry Hamilton, chairman,
 Log Cabin Republicans
 national board

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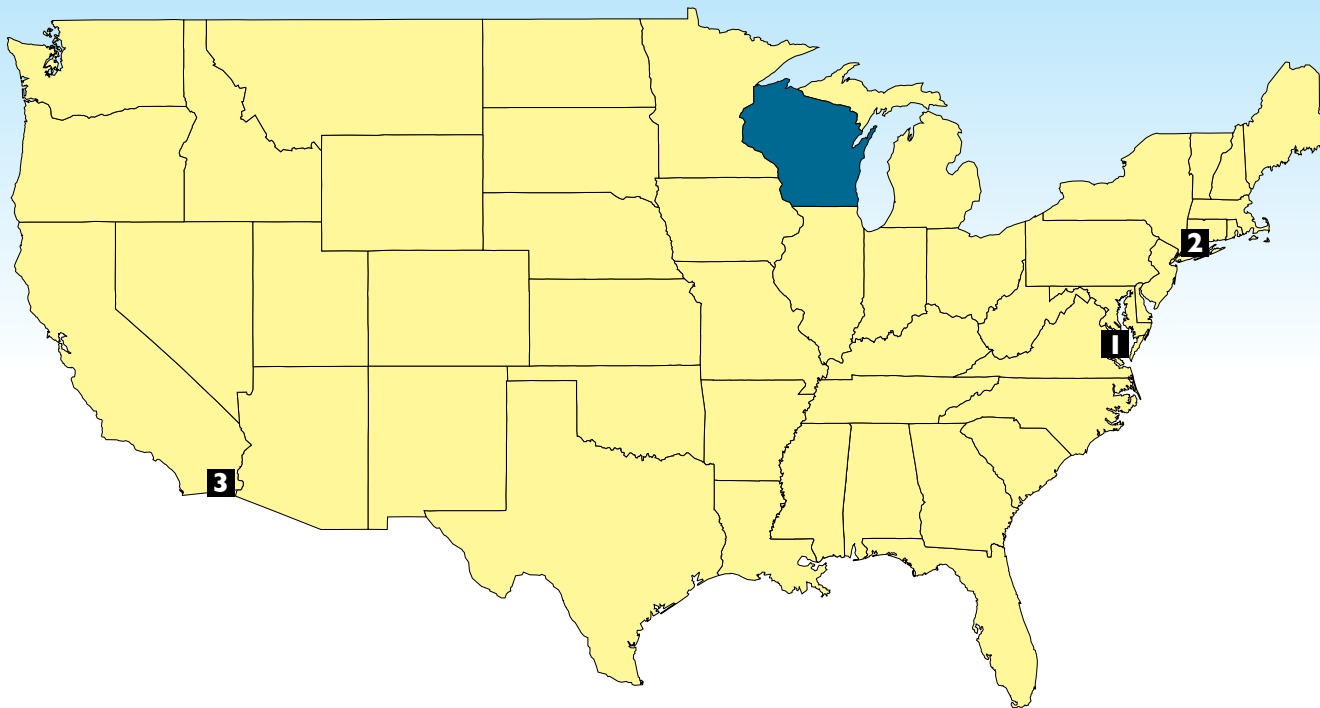
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1. SUPREME COURT TO HEAR CALIFORNIA DISPUTE

The U.S. Supreme Court recently announced it will hear a California case involving an evangelical Christian club at a public law school that wants recognition and funding as an official campus organization, even though it discriminates on religious grounds.

Americans United for Separation of Church and State urged the High Court to use the case as a vehicle to make it clear that groups seeking public funding and official recognition on public college campuses must be open to all.



"This case is about fundamental fairness," said the Rev. Barry W. Lynn, executive director of Americans United. "If the student religious group wins, it will mean some students will be compelled to support clubs that won't even admit them as members. That's just not right."

The dispute involves a branch of the Christian Legal Society at Hastings College of Law at the University of California in San Francisco. The group sought funding

and official status from the school, even though it effectively bars gays and non-Christians from membership by requiring all officers and voting members to sign an evangelical Christian statement of faith.

Hastings College of Law bans discrimination against gays and lesbians, as well as religious discrimination, and officials there said they did not want to support a club that was not open to all.

The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled in favor of Hastings.

—L.N.

2. QUEENS ATTACK UNDER INVESTIGATION

A 47-year-old man was assaulted Dec. 15 by two men in Queens, N.Y., for dancing with his boyfriend.

One of the attackers allegedly told the victim, "You can't do that here, this is not a gay bar." When the victim protested, the attackers punched and kicked him and smashed a chair over his head.

Police officers treated the victim as the perpetrator, according to a report he filed with the New York City Anti-Violence Project. He charged police with dragging him out of the restaurant, handcuffing him and forcing him to lie face down on the sidewalk. He also said police were verbally abusive and refused to

take a report.

The AVP said the police department's hate crimes task force is looking into the incident.

"AVP denounces these acts of violence and police misconduct. We are working with the NYPD's Hate Crimes Task Force to determine how to prevent this inadequate and harmful police response in the future," said Sharon Stapel, AVP executive director.

—L.N.

3. COUNTY ASKS TO HELP DEFEND PROPOSITION 8

Imperial County officials want to join the sponsors of California's gay marriage ban

in defending Proposition 8 during an upcoming trial.

The Imperial County Board of Supervisors voted in favor of an emergency motion to intervene in the case. Supervisors say the county's participation is needed because Attorney General Jerry Brown supports overturning the voter-approved measure, while Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has taken a neutral position on it.

The case is scheduled to go to trial on Jan. 11.

The papers filed by the county say that 70 percent of Imperial's voters supported Proposition 8.

—L.N.

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INTERNATIONAL GAZE

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Gay activist slain in Honduras

By Lisa Neff

WIG Staff Writer

Authorities are investigating the killing of a gay rights activist who protested the June coup that overthrew the government of Manuel Zelaya.

Walter Trochez was fatally shot as he walked in downtown Tegucigalpa Dec. 13. Reports indicated that Trochez, 27, was fired upon by gunmen in a passing car, and that friends rushed him to a hospital, where he died.

"Trochez was an active militant in the resistance and an example of the fight against the dictatorship," the National Resistance Front said in a statement released earlier this month.

The organization has staged daily protests demanding that Zelaya be returned to the presidency. The group blamed the attack on "repressive forces that the oligarchy uses to stop the demands of the Honduran people for liberty and democracy."

A police spokesman told the AP that the killing was "being exhaustively investigated."

Eleven days before the shooting, Trochez was kidnapped by four masked men who beat him and threatened his life.

On July 20, authorities detained Trochez for his participation in a demonstration.

Fifteen other LGBT activists have been slain in the Honduras since the ouster of Zelaya, according to the



International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission.

"Nobody has been brought to justice for any of these crimes, many of which were committed publicly," read a statement from IGLHRC. "More deaths of LGBT people have likely gone unreported."

The first such killing took place June 29, followed by two more killings in June, one in July, two in August, three in September, three in October, three in November, and, five weeks before the shooting of Trochez, another gay man was killed.

On Dec. 10, three days before Trochez' death, Indyra Mendoza, a human rights activist, warned United Nations officials in New York City about the dangers in the Honduras.

Eleven days before the shooting, Trochez was kidnapped by four masked men.

MEXICO CITY LEGALIZE MARRIAGE FOR GAYS

Mexico City lawmakers made the city the first in Latin America to legalize marriage for same-sex couples.

The bill passed the capital's local assembly 39-20 to the cheers of supporters who yelled: "Yes, we could! Yes, we could!"

Leftist Mayor Marcelo Ebrard of the Democratic Revolution Party was widely expected to sign the measure into law.

Mexico City's left-led assembly has made several decisions unpopular elsewhere in this deeply Roman Catholic country, including legalizing abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. That decision sparked a backlash,

with the majority of Mexico's other 32 states enacting legislation declaring life begins at conception.

The conservative Nation Action Party of President Felipe Calderon has vowed to challenge the gay marriage law in the courts. However, homosexuality is increasingly accepted in Mexico, with gay couples openly holding hands in parts of the capital and the annual gay pride parade drawing tens of thousands.

The bill calls for changing the definition of marriage in the city's civil code. Marriage is currently defined as the union of a man and a woman. The new definition will be "the free uniting of two people."

The change would allow same-sex couples to adopt children, apply for bank loans together, inherit wealth and

be included in the insurance policies of their spouse, rights they were denied under civil unions allowed in the city.

"We are so happy," said Temistocles Villanueva, a 23-year-old film student who celebrated by passionately kissing his boyfriend outside the city's assembly.

Only seven countries allow gay marriages: Canada, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium.

U.S. states that permit same-sex marriage are Iowa, Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut and New Hampshire.

Argentina's capital became the first Latin American city to legalize same-sex civil unions in 2002 for gay and lesbian couples. Four other Argentine cities later did the same, and as did Mexico City

in 2007 and some Mexican and Brazilian states. Uruguay alone has legalized civil unions nationwide.

—AP

BBC BOSS: SORRY FOR DEBATE ON KILLING GAYS

A senior BBC executive apologized for hosting an online debate over whether gays should face capital punishment in Uganda.

The broadcaster drew criticism from some lawmakers and users for the discussion forum, which ran under the headline: "Should homosexuals face execution?"

BBC's "Africa Have Your Say" Web site asked for people's views on a proposed Ugandan law that, as introduced, would punish some homosexual acts by life imprisonment or death. The African country's parliament is also considering rules that could jail family and friends for up to seven years if they fail to report their homosexuality to authorities.

Critics complained that the debate was sensationalist and inappropriate. Lynne Featherstone, an opposition lawmaker with the Liberal Democrats, said she was deeply offended that the BBC thought it legitimate to debate killing gays.

BBC World Service director Peter Horrocks wrote in a blog posted on the broadcaster's Web site: "We apologize for any offense it

caused."

He said the headline was too stark in hindsight. Editors had changed it to "Should Uganda debate gay execution?" after they closed down the debate.

He added, however, that the program was a legitimate and responsible attempt to encourage discussion about a crucial African issue.

The program provided "a platform for debate that otherwise would not exist across the continent and beyond," he wrote.

—AP

PORTUGUESE GOVERNMENT AIMS TO PERMIT GAY MARRIAGE

Portugal's Socialist government has drawn up a proposal that would make Portugal the sixth European country to allow gay marriage.

The law is almost certain to pass, as the center-left Socialist government has the support of all left-of-center parties, who together have a majority in Parliament. Right-of-center parties oppose the measure.

The proposal changes Portuguese law to remove references to marriage being between two people of different sexes, Cabinet Minister Pedro Silva Pereira told a news conference. He said the government will send its proposal to lawmakers for a debate, probably in January.

If approved by Parliament, the proposed law goes to Portugal's conservative President Anibal Cavaco Silva, who can ratify or veto it. A veto can be overturned by Parliament.

If there is no presidential veto, the first gay marriage ceremonies could take place in April — a month before Pope Benedict XVI is due on a four-day official visit.

Gay marriage is currently permitted in five European countries — Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden and Norway.

In Portugal, an overwhelmingly Roman Catholic country, previous efforts to introduce gay marriage have run into strong resistance from religious groups and conservative lawmakers.

Pedro Corte-Real, head of the Portuguese delegation of ILGA, the International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association, said the proposal was a vindication of his group's battle to end sexual discrimination.

"We have been fighting for this for years," he told AP.

In July, the Constitutional Court upheld the country's ban on gay marriage, rejecting an appeal by two lesbians seeking to wed. It said the constitution, while granting equal rights, did not state that same-sex marriages must be permitted.

—AP

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Taking stock

National from I

promote marriage equality at the state and national levels.

In a year of major news, with wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and economic turmoil at home, efforts to secure LGBT equality captured headlines. And marriage for same-sex couples proved a top story.

1. MARRIAGE EQUALITY

In early April, the Iowa Supreme Court ruled in favor of legal marriage for same-sex couples in the state.

That same month, the Vermont House followed the Vermont Senate's lead and voted for gay marriage rights. The governor vetoed the bill, but the legislature quickly voted to override the veto.

Still in April, proving a historic month in a historic year, lawmakers in Maine and New Hampshire voted for same-sex marriage rights. By early May, the governor in Maine had signed marriage legislation. And by June, the governor in New Hampshire had signed a bill set to take effect Jan. 1.

Catching marriage fever, the Washington, D.C., Council voted to recognize out-of-district same-sex marriages, and by December the council had voted to legalize marriage for same-sex couples in the capital.

There were other successes. Wyoming and Indiana lawmakers squashed attempts to amend their state constitutions to ban marriage for gays and, at the national level, a suit was filed to overturn the Defense of Marriage Act.

Victory seemed likely in New York last spring, when the House voted in favor of marriage for same-sex couples. But the Senate failed to take up legislation until a special session in December, when the measure was defeated.

A month earlier, Maine voters elected to repeal their marriage equality legislation.

2. HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION

In April, LGBT activists introduced a coalition of civil rights and faith-based groups committed to enacting hate crimes reform at the federal level.



PHOTO: AP/PAT WELLENBACH

Kathy Stickel holds a sign while joining supporters who turned out for a gay-rights supporter rally the day before Election Day in Portland, Maine. Gay marriage has lost in every single state in which it has been put to a popular vote.

Later that month, the U.S. House passed a hate crimes reform measure and a companion bill was introduced in the U.S. Senate, where a committee held hearings in June.

Attorney General Eric Holder testified in favor of the bill, as he had done 10 years earlier as a deputy attorney general under the Clinton administration.

By July, the legislation appeared to have the 60 votes needed for passage in the Senate.

On the eve of a winning vote in the Senate, a security video was released showing the beating of a gay man in New York City. The three-minute video showed two men repeatedly punching and kicking Jack Price in the street outside a Queens, N.Y., grocery.

Obama signed the bill into law Oct. 28. Judy Shepard, whose son Matthew was fatally beaten on the outskirts of Laramie, Wyo., in October 1998, attended the ceremony.

Shepard later said, "We are incredibly grateful to Congress and the president for taking this step forward on behalf of hate crime victims and their families, especially given the continuing attacks on people simply for living their lives openly and honestly."

3. WORKPLACE EQUALITY

With unemployment and foreclosures on the rise, with banks closing and businesses struggling to stay open, national gay rights activists were wary that the Employment Non-Discrimination Act would advance.

The bill, introduced in the House in June and in the Senate in August, included gender identity and sexual orientation.

For years, LGBT activists had been divided over whether including gender identity would hinder efforts to advance the legislation.

A hearing took place in the House shortly after Labor Day, and a hearing followed in the Senate in early November.

In his statement opening the House hearing, U.S. Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., said, "For more than three decades, gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender Americans have waged a courageous campaign for their workplace rights. I regret that they had to wait so long for us to respond."

At the Senate hearing, committee chair Tom Harkin, D-Iowa, said, "What we are talking about here is a fundamental American value — equal treatment for all!"

4. OBAMA PRESIDENCY

On Jan. 20, Barack Obama took his inaugural oath and many LGBT activists, from the Beltway to the Heartland to the Pacific Coast, shared a hope. "The pendulum has swung away from anti-gay forces and toward a new president who acknowledges our equality," said Solmonese.

The administration took criticism for not doing enough to further LGBT equality and, when the Justice Department defended the Defense of Marriage Act, for promoting anti-gay legislation. But, in addition to signing hate crimes legislation and providing a timetable for the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell," the administration guaranteed a count of same-sex couples in the 2010 Census, announced a grant program to assist LGBT organizations with aging issues and proposed non-discrimination policies for Housing and Urban Development.

Obama, meanwhile, signed the reauthorization of the Ryan White CARE Act into law, announced the end of the HIV travel and immigration ban, addressed the HRC National Dinner in October and awarded presidential medals of honor to Billie Jean King and, posthumously, to Harvey Milk, among others.

5. MILITARY BAN

The 10-year anniversary of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy was marked with a national tour of servicemembers, activists and lawmakers committed to repealing the measure.

Meanwhile, opposition to the ban grew among a variety of organizations, including the American Medical Association, and

REMEMBERING AN ALLY

John and Robert Kennedy lit a torch for a generation.

Edward Kennedy carried a torch for generation after generation.

The "Liberal Lion" of the Senate died of brain cancer on Aug. 25.

A champion of civil rights from his first term in the Senate in 1962, he was unrivaled as an advocate for LGBT equality.

Arguing against the Federal Marriage Amendment in 2006, Kennedy said, "It is wrong for our civil laws to deny any American the basic right to be part of a family, to have loved ones with whom to build a secure future and share life's joys and tears, and to be free from the stain of bigotry and discrimination." —L.N.

ON THE WEB: Go to www.wisconsin Gazette.com for WiG's timeline of 2009.

among voters.

A series of studies also recommended repealing the policy.

LOOKING AHEAD

The year closed with a delay in a vote on marriage equality in New Jersey and the defeat of a bill to legalize marriage for gays and lesbians in New York. That left gay civil rights activists angry and ready to fight in 2010.

"We're done being outspent and outmaneuvered," said Rea Carey of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force in Washington. "We're through with basic human rights and equality being debated as if it's really up for discussion in a country that promises 'equal rights for all.'"

So the new year begins with continued battles over marriage, in New Jersey, New York, and probably California. Additionally, Congress, some-

time in 2010, is expected to consider marriage rights for gays in the District of Columbia.

The agenda for the next year also includes a continued effort to pass ENDA and repeal "don't ask, don't tell."

"We are optimistic about a final end to the ban ... when the president and his senior military leaders put together their defense budget," said David Hall of the Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, which represents gay servicemembers and has long fought the military ban. "It was in this defense budget we got the gay ban in 1993. And it is here where DADT should die next year."

The new year, said activists, also will bring elections, the outcome of which will decide whether Democrats hold on to a majority in Congress and will serve as a report card on the Obama administration.

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PHOTO: JOAN MARCUS

Margaret Hoffman (Michelle), Adrienne Warren (Lorrell), Syesha Mercado (Deena) and the company of "Dreamgirls."

Regarding Henry

An interview with Henry Krieger

By Gregg Shapiro
WiG Staff Writer

You may not immediately recognize the name of out composer Henry Krieger, but you almost certainly know his trademark number, "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going."

Whether it's Jennifer Holiday's Tony Award-winning rendition from the original 1981 production of the stage musical "Dreamgirls" or, more recently, Jennifer Hudson's

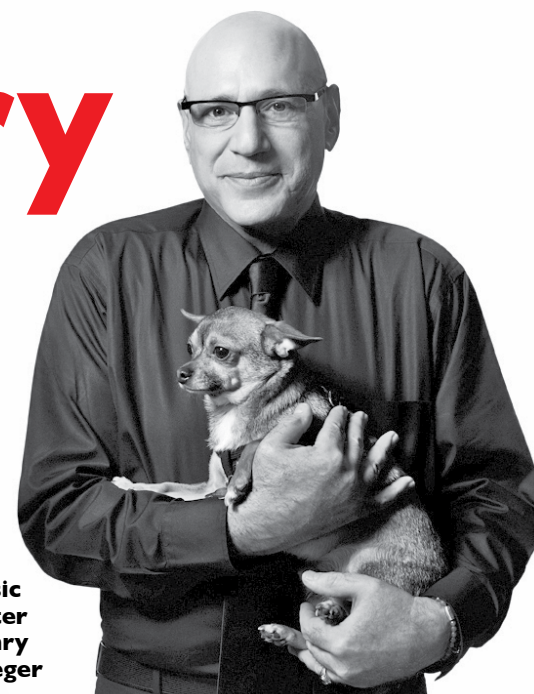
Oscar-winning portrayal of put-upon girl-group singer Effie, the song has no doubt crossed your radar.

A brand new, expanded stage production of "Dreamgirls" is touring the country. It stops in Milwaukee at Uihlein Hall in the Marcus Center For the Performing Arts Jan. 5 and runs through Jan. 10.

Krieger, who got his start off-off Broadway, also wrote the music for the hit Broadway musicals "Sideshow" and "The Tap Dance Kid."

Cover page 19

Music
writer
Henry
Krieger



Winter reading list

Books

WIGOUT

By Gregg Shapiro

WIG Staff Writer

Were you able to give or receive the books that you wanted for the holidays?

Of course, that's what gift receipts and gift cards are for.

Looking back on 2009, it would be safe to declare it the year of the memoir. Among the numerous memoirs published are a significant number of titles by LGBT writers or of LGBT interest.

The following is a list of books that will make the winter months more bearable:

QUEER MEMORIES

Edited by Elizabeth Benedict, **"Mentors, Muses & Monsters: 30 Writers on the People Who Changed Their Lives"** (Free Press, \$24.99) is a collection of personal essays by 30 of today's brightest writers — including out authors Alexander Chee, Michael Cunningham and Edmund White — recalling the people who helped shape them into who they are today.

Gay writers Felice Picano and Wayne Hoffman are among the dozen interview subjects in **"Living Alone Creatively: How Twelve People Do It"** (iUniverse, \$13.95) by Stanley E. Ely.

"American Romances: Essays" (City Lights, \$16.95) by award-winning lesbian writer Rebecca Brown ("Gifts of the Body" and others) is a marvelous and unusual essay collection that paints "a playful new image of American culture."

Alix Dobkin, whom Bob Dylan called his "favorite female singer," is best known for her groundbreaking recordings in the realm of women's music. With **"My Red Blood; A Memoir of Growing Up Communist, Coming Onto the Greenwich Village Folk Scene, and Coming Out in the Feminist Movement"** (Alyson Books, \$16.95), we learn that, as it turns out, it

JANIS IAN



Society's Child

my autobiography

Janis Ian's autobiography — one for a long winter's night.

was another color altogether that led her to release her groundbreaking "Lavender Jane Loves Women" album in the early 1970s.

Out Grammy Award-winning singer/songwriter Janis Ian has more in common with Dobkin than being a lesbian and a musician. In the paperback edition of **"Society's Child: My Autobiography"** (Tarcher Penguin, \$16.95), Ian tells her (and her family's) fascinating story, including how they ended up on an FBI watch list.

Picking up where his last memoir "Midlife Queer" left off, **"Waiting to Land; A (Mostly) Political Memoir, 1985-2008"** (The New Press, \$26.95) by Martin Duberman chronicles his involvement in gay politics, which includes the founding of the Center for Lesbian and Gay Studies and his role as an original board member of Queers for Economic Justice.

In **"A Report from Winter: A Memoir"** (Lethe Press, 2009 \$18), Wayne Courtois writes of

his untimely return home to an ill mother and a particularly harsh Maine winter, leaving him feeling barren until he invites his partner Ralph to stay with the "cold as December" Courtois family.

Mary Cappello's memoir **"Called Back: My Reply to Cancer, My Return to Life"** (Alyson Books, \$15.95) has been hailed as an honest, unflinching and new kind of book about facing cancer.

Fifteen years after it was first published, and 15 years since his death, **"Modern Nature"** (University of Minnesota, \$18.95) by the late gay filmmaker Derek Jarman has been reissued in a new edition.

Robert Rodi, a gay writer who established himself during the gay lit boom of the early 1990s with a series of humorous queer novels returned with a work of non-fiction. **"Dogged Pursuit: My Year of Competing Dusty, the World's Least Likely Agility Dog"** (Hudson Street Press, Books page 18

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“AVATAR” (20TH CENTURY FOX)

With 30 minutes worth of editing, James Cameron's latest cinematic epic “Avatar” could have qualified as his best movie. More than just a special-effects feat for the senses, Cameron gets political, commenting on the destruction of the planet, corporate greed and the military mentality.

In the not-too-distant future, paraplegic Marine Jake (Sam Worthington, of the distracting accent) is recruited to take the place of his recently deceased brilliant scientist brother on a mission on the planet Pandora. A multi-national corporation has a vested interest in the mission, since Pandora is rich in the valuable mineral “unobtainium,” which Earth needs for fuel. Under the guidance of the aptly named scientist Grace (Sigourney Weaver), Jake walks again in a surrogate body modeled after those of the Na’Vi, the inhabitants of Pandora.



Through a series of interactions with Neytiri (Zoe Saldana), the daughter of the Na’Vi’s tribal leaders/power couple, Jake earns their trust and is accepted as one of them. But he is being given orders by the square-jawed, GI Joe-minded Col. Quaritch (Stephen Lang), who would like to wipe out the Na’Vi, get the unobtainium and return to whatever Red State he calls home. Pulled in different directions, Jake realizes the relationship he worked so hard to establish is at risk, and he naturally switches sides. Preachy and mesmerizing, “Avatar” is first rate, if long.

“BROKEN EMBRACES” (SONY PICTURES CLASSICS)

Leave it to out, visionary



“Avatar”

filmmaker Pedro Almodovar to make a movie about a blind director. This is not the first time that Almodovar has made actors and movies the subject of one of his films, but it is certainly among his best. “Broken Embraces” features a cast of characters operating under a few different aliases. After the loss of his sight, director and screenwriter Mateo (Lluís Homar) goes by Harry Caine. Before becoming the mistress of the evil and cruel businessman Ernesto (Jose Luis Gomez), Lena (Penelope Cruz), who was in Ernesto’s employ as a secretary, earned extra cash as call girl Severine. But

when she pursued a career as a legitimate actress, she stuck with the name Lena. Revenge-seeking aspiring gay filmmaker and screenwriter Ray X (Ruben Ochandiano) was previously known as Ernesto’s son Ernesto Jr. — before he did a lot of ecstasy. In addition to all of the different identities, “Broken Embraces” specializes in being a movie about secrets and lies and never breaks our interest in Almodovar’s multi-layered storytelling abilities.

“IT’S COMPLICATED” (UNIVERSAL)

Busy Meryl Streep wraps up 2009 with a sweet comedy about the complexities of

love. With engaged daughter Lauren (Caitlin Fitzgerald) living with fiancée Harley (John Krasinski) and son Luke (Hunter Parrish) in college, divorced Jane (Streep) goes home to an empty nest following the departure of youngest daughter Gabby (Zoë Kazan). Her popular restaurant The Bakery keeps her busy and she meets with architect Adam (a restrained Steve Martin) to finally do the home remodeling she’s been planning.

Not far away, Jane’s ex-husband Jake (Alec Baldwin) lives with his much younger wife Agness (Lake Bell) and her son Pedro (Emjay Anthony). As it turns out, Jake isn’t all that pleased with his situation and, much to

Jane’s shock, he begins to pursue her again.

This premise is as complicated as the title promises, with Jane’s and Jake’s sexual shenanigans front and center. It’s also very funny, especially in the hands of Baldwin, who is at the top of his comedic game. And how can you go wrong with Streep, who lights up the screen in all of her scenes, especially the ones with her gal pals (played by Mary Kay Place, Alexandra Wentworth and Rita Wilson).

“NINE” (THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY)

In 2002, out director and choreographer Rob Marshall single-handedly revived the
Film page 24

Women in ruins



Add “My Life in Ruins” (Fox Searchlight) to director Donald Petrie’s list of painfully unfunny comedies, which already includes “The Favor,” “Welcome to Mooseport” and the unnecessary movie version of “My Favorite Martian.”

For her first film in five years, Nia Vardalos plays Greek-American Georgia. A former teacher turned temporary tour guide, Georgia knows her stuff, although she struggles to find balance between ancient and modern Greece. She’s saddled with Pangloss Tours’ more annoying tourists, including cliché ugly Americans Irv (Richard Dreyfuss), Gator (Jareb Duplaise), Marc (Brian Palermo), Kim (Rachel Dratch) and Big Al (Harland Williams), elderly British kleptomaniac Dorcas (Sheila Bernette) and a pair of unintelligible Aussies.

Her boss Maria assigns greasy tour guide Nico (Alistair McGowan) the better tourists, which naturally pits Georgia against him. She also sticks Georgia with hirsute tour bus driver Poupi



A scene from “A Woman In Berlin”

(Alexis Georgoulis), who turns out to be quite hot under all the hair. But the budding romance between Georgia and Poupi is derailed by toilet humor (see bus driver’s name), flat jokes, relentless scenery nibbling and unapologetic homophobia. Ultimately it’s the sites and sounds of Greece that are the real stars here.

Directed by Max Färberböck (the lesbian-themed “Aimee & Jaguar”), “A Woman In Berlin” (Strand Releasing) asks a lot of the viewer. First it asks us to find compassion in our hearts for followers of the fuhrer in the last days of World War II. In spite of the horrors they endured following the Russian army’s siege of that city, pitying

them could be a stretch for some viewers. The unflinching depiction of abuse heaped on the city’s women could be overwhelming for others.

Beginning in late April of 1945, a well-traveled journalist known only as Anonyma (Nina Hoss), kept a written account of the atrocities she and the other women in Berlin suffered at the hands of the Russian army, including multiple rapes and countless other indignities. Survival at all costs meant trading sex for necessities, transforming Berlin into “one big whorehouse.”

Often uncomfortable to watch, “A Woman In Berlin” brings a very personal and tragic story to a large audience. Whether that audience will be able to watch it is another question altogether.

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"GLEE: THE MUSIC" (COLUMBIA)

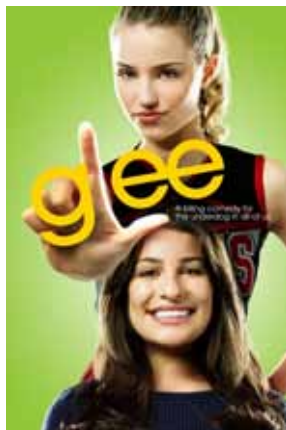
Am I the only gay person in America who doesn't watch "Glee"? I dig the concept, and the casting of out actress Jane Lynch is a coup, but I can't get around the fact that a show with such a massive LGBT following is on Fox.

Both volumes 1 and 2 of season one's "Glee: The Music" compilations make good use of the transformation that occurs when modern pop tunes are given the choral treatment.

Suddenly Journey's unbelievably corny "Don't Stop Believing" from volume 1 becomes something in which to believe. Queen's "Somebody To Love" already had a choral setting, but it's nice to hear it interpreted by other voices, including "Glee" cast members Lea Michele, Cory Monteith, Amber Riley and Kevin McHale. And the aforementioned Michele was born to sing "Defying Gravity," as was



The soundtrack to "Glee" delights. Also new to disc — the soundtracks to "Up In The Air" and "(500) Days of Summer."



her duet partner Chris Colter.

As with the Queen tune, "Lean On Me" from volume 2 is a natural fit for a school choir and really soars here. The same holds true of the Cyndi Lauper classic "True Colors," the Rolling Stones' "You Can't Always Get What You Want" and, even more surprisingly, of Van Halen's "Jump."

"THE SOUND OF MUSIC" (MASTERWORKS BROADWAY)

Back in the day, most school choral groups had to draw from the Rodgers and Hammerstein songbook for their concert selection. The 50th-anniversary edition of the original Broadway cast recording of "The Sound of Music" (Masterworks

Music

By Gregg Shapiro

Broadway) provides a strong argument for why. From the title song to "My Favorite Things," "Do-Re-Mi," "So Long, Farewell," "Climb Ev'ry Mountain" and "Edelweiss," all performed by the original Broadway cast members, including Mary Martin, Theodore Bikel and Patricia Neway, it's easy to understand how this music became part of our contemporary musical vocabulary. The handsomely packaged reissue also includes a few bonus tracks.

"NINE" (Geffen)

Out director Rob Marshall revived the art form of the movie musical with his 2002 film "Chicago." He once again has risen to the occasion with his cinematic interpretation of the Maury Yeston/Arthur Kopit musical "Nine." The movie and the "Original Motion Picture Soundtrack:

Nine" features both acting singers (Fergie, Nicole Kidman, Penelope Cruz, Marion Cotillard and, surprisingly enough, Kate Hudson) and non-singers (Sophia Loren, Dame Judi Dench and Daniel Day-Lewis) alike. "Cinema Italiano," Hudson's big number, which should be seen to be fully appreciated, is one of the new additions to the movie and has the potential to be a massive club sensation. Kidman does justice to "Unusual Way," perhaps the best-known song from the musical. There are also a handful of bonus tracks on the soundtrack.

"UP IN THE AIR" (RHINO)

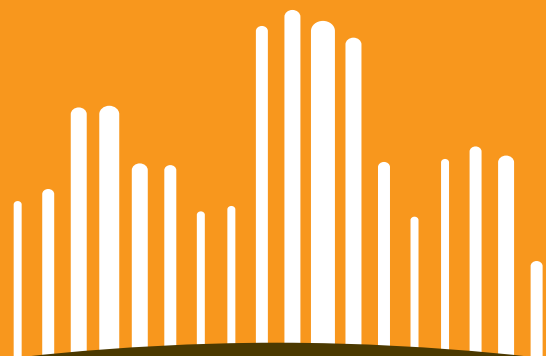
The soundtrack to Jason Reitman's 2007 smash hit movie "Juno" was as well-received as the movie. In the liner notes for "Up In The Air: Music From the Motion Picture," Reitman writes, "My soundtrack begins the day I start writing a screenplay." Coming from a variety of sources, the music

for his acclaimed George Clooney vehicle includes tracks by Sharon Jones & The Dap-Kings, Elliott Smith, Dan Auerbach (of The Black Keys), Sad Brad Smith, Rolfe Kent and others.

"(500) DAYS OF SUMMER" (SIRE)

As quirky as the delightful movie from which it is drawn, "Music from the Motion Picture: (500) Days of Summer" includes some of the "sad British pop music" referred to in the opening track "A Story of Boy Meets Girl." There are Smiths songs performed both by the band and She & Him (featuring the movie's Summer, Zoe Deschanel). Regina Spektor also is present, as are the duos Simon & Garfunkel and Hall & Oates, whose "You Make My Dreams" inspires a song and dance number performed by Joseph Gordon-Levitt that is a joy to behold.

What are you listening to?
Write managingeditor@wisconsin Gazette.com.



88NINE

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YOUTHINK



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For the winter reading list

Books from 15

\$24.95) retains much of Rodi's trademark humor and is bound to appeal to all lovers of animals.

QUEER BIOS

A jarring insight into the life of Patricia Highsmith, author of the "Strangers on a Train" and "The Talented Mr. Ripley," "The Talented Miss Highsmith: The Secret Life and Serious Art of Patricia Highsmith" by Joan Schenkar (St. Martin's Press, \$35) is a page-turner. Schenkar had full access to Highsmith's love letters, journals and close friends, resulting in new insight into the secretive Highsmith's life and loves.

Born Reginald Dwight, Sir Elton John has sold more than 200 million records and won five Grammy Awards in a career that is entering its fifth decade. "Elton John: The Bitch is Back" (Phoenix Books, \$22.95) by Mark Bego is the latest book to tell his story.

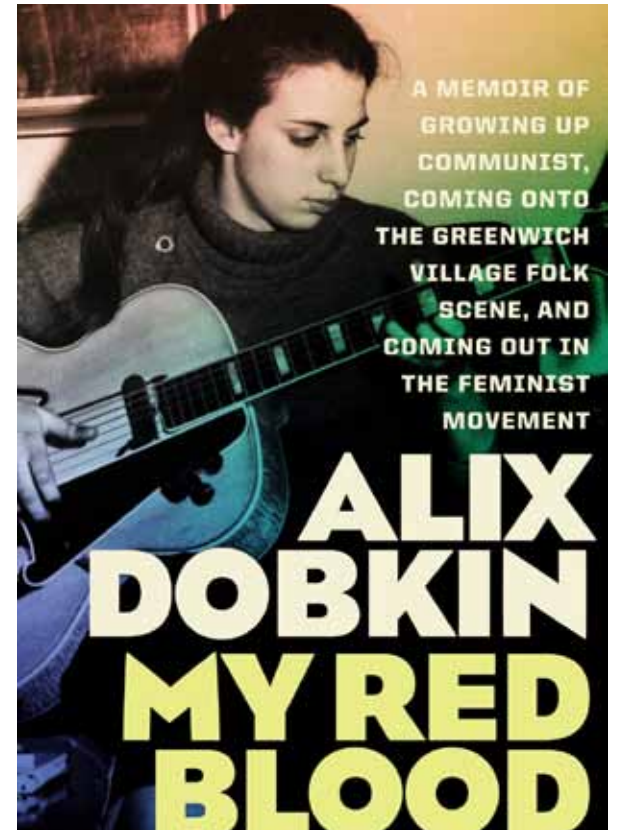
The works of important queer artists are given the scholarly treatment in "Derek Jarman's Angelic Conversations" (University of Minnesota, \$21.95) by Jim Ellis and "Concerning E. M. Forster" (Farrar, Straus, Giroux, \$24).

Straight stories

With marriage equality still one of the prevailing hot button issues, the last thing LGBT people probably want to read is a book on the subject of a heterosexual marriage. But author Elizabeth Gilbert amassed a sizable following, including several in our community, with her book "Eat, Pray, Love." In "Committed: A Skeptic Makes Peace with Marriage" (Penguin, \$26.95), Gilbert touches on gay marriage, feminism and other topics related to the book's theme.

Gay icon and comedy goddess Kathy Griffin reveals how she clawed her way to the top, sparing few details in "Official Book Club Selection: A Memoir According to Kathy Griffin by Kathy Griffin" (Ballantine, 2009 \$25).

Casablanca Records co-founder Larry Harris candidly recalls the story of



"My Red Blood; A Memoir of Growing Up Communist, Coming Onto the Greenwich Village Folk Scene, and Coming Out in the Feminist Movement" is Alix Dobkin's story.

Books

WiGOUT

Despite its serious subject matter, the 2009 paperback edition of "Cancer Vixen" (Pantheon Books, 2006 \$16.95) by cartoonist Marisa Acocella Marchetto is a colorful and witty graphic novel.

POP CULTURE

The Magnetic Fields, led by out frontman Stephin Merritt, is the centerpiece of "Our Noise: The Story of Merge Records" (Algonquin Books, \$18.95) by John Cook with Mac McCaughan and Laura Balance. The Magnetic Fields' revolutionary 1999 triple-disc set "69 Love Songs" remains not only one of the most significant albums released by a band, gay or straight, but also an essential chapter in legendary indie record label Merge's history.

Harvey Fierstein and Barry Diller are among the queer "dramatis personae" represented in "The Simpsons: An Uncensored, Unauthorized History" (Faber and Faber, \$27) by John Ortved, described as "the first-ever behind the scenes look" at the perennial pop-culture powerhouse.

the definitive 1970s record label that was home to such acts as the Village People, Donna Summer, Kiss and George Clinton's Parliament Funkadelic, in "And Party Every Day: The Inside Story of Casablanca Records" (Backbeat Books, \$24.99) by Harris with Curt Gooch and Jeff Suhs.

In "The Adderall Diaries: A Memoir of Moods, Masochism, and Murder" (Graywolf Press, \$23), Stephen Elliott interweaves his personal story and complex relationship with his father with the story of the murder trial of computer programmer Hans Reiser.

Melanie Gideon's "The Slippery Year: A Meditation on Happily Ever After" (Knopf, \$24.95) takes the "Is this all there is?" concept and makes it both personal and universal in this touching and moving memoir.

Permanently outrageous: An interview with Christopher Durang

By Jody Hirsh

WIG Contributing writer

In his nearly 40-year career, playwright Christopher Durang has never pulled his punches. Outrageous and iconoclastic, Durang has mined humor from all manner of foolishness in American society.

For example, in his 1980 Broadway hit "Sister Mary Ignatius Explains It All For You," a gay former pupil comes out to the mean-spirited Sister Mary. She replies, "You mean you do the thing that makes our Lord Jesus Christ puke?" His latest play, "Why Torture Is Wrong, and the People Who Love Them," is a comedy about terrorism and torture.

"I'm tickled by how successful the comedy worked," he says. "The whole play came out of living through all the red state/blue state stuff and the Bush/Cheney administration. I myself was so tortured by the political

Theater
WIGOUT

reality, that I found it hard to be funny."

"Torture" is really about the political divide in America. It doesn't refer to any specific events or figures. But six days after the play opened in New York last April, its popularity was boosted by the Justice Department's release of memos disclosing the brutal interrogation techniques authorized by President Bush.

Although he is known as a gay playwright, Durang's latest hit has no gay themes. It does have a gay connection, though.

"I got a call from Richard Ganoung in Madison, Wis., about the play," Durang says. "I had never met him, but Richard starred in one of the best gay-themed movies ever made, 'Parting



Christopher Durang

Glances.' He wanted to star in 'Why Torture is Wrong,' and he wanted it to be the Midwestern premiere of my play."

Ganoung got his wish. The play opens Jan. 30 at the Forward Theater Company at the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison.

Does Durang consider himself a "gay playwright?" "When I was younger, I guess,

to be honest, I didn't," he said. "My first plays had no gay content. But then, in 'Sister Mary Ignatius,' it appeared. I wanted to present a cross section of people whose lives didn't match what they were told. I became more aware that I wanted to present a gay character who was sympathetic.

"For my generation, being gay and in the theater was

ON STAGE

"Why Torture Is Wrong and the People Who Love Them" at The Forward Theater Company, The Overture Center for the Arts, Madison; through Jan. 17.

"The Marriage of Bette and Boo" at The Boulevard Theatre, 2250 S. Kinnickinnic Ave., Milwaukee, through Jan. 2.

narrator Matt is a veiled secret. "Early on, in the first version of the play, there was a scene about Matt being involved with an alcoholic gay man. It just didn't work. Matt wasn't really the hero of the play in that way. The play was really not about Matt, but his family, so I cut the scene."

Durang lives in Pennsylvania with John Augustine, his partner of more than 20 years. "We met in 1986, moved in together in 1988, and have been together ever since."

Durang is currently working on a cabaret show starring Michael Feinstein and Dame Edna, playing themselves. Opening in March, the work is built around the hilarious premise that the hall inadvertently has been double booked, forcing Feinstein and Dame Edna to begrudgingly work together. With his imagination on permanent overdrive, this latest effort is not likely to be the last we'll hear from Durang.

'I'm a child of the 1960s'

Cover from 14

He recently answered a few questions about "Dreamgirls."

Gregg Shapiro: What influence did soul music, R&B and Motown have on you?

Henry Krieger: I'm a child of the 1960s. That's when I was going to high school. The big stars of the day were the R&B singers — Aretha Franklin, Etta James, Chuck Jackson, The Drifters. That's who we listened to in our cars.

It was also the time of the civil rights movement, and it was very big in our feelings — my friends and I. And it was just something that appealed to me and that I felt inside me.

GS: "Dreamgirls" was an essential part of the evolution of the Broadway musical. Did you have any idea, at the time you were creating it, of the impact the show would have?

HK: I felt that people were going to like it and that it was going to do well. I don't think that I was sophisticated enough to realize what a departure that it was. I felt it, but I didn't realize in an intellectual way.

GS: You had the distinction of working with the late director/choreographer Michael Bennett

on the production. What did that mean to you?

HK: I felt that having a real brand name of an artist, and somebody who had a track record like nobody else's, was sort of a special gift from the universe. I didn't think about it too much, in that he and I and others lived so much in the moment in the way that we do what we do.

GS: "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going" has gone on to become a significant part of the canon of classic Broadway songs. What has that song meant to you personally?

HK: It's unique, a startling thing. It startles people. It startles me.

GS: Still to this day?

HK: Sure. Because it's a special case. It's very unusual, and I don't think people write this kind of song that often.

I think it's more something that would have been written in a different spotlight in the late 1800s, where you really scream your guts out. And it's not necessarily in a particular kind of style. It's about telling a heart-wrenching story and doing it in a way that's chilling. It happened.

It was an absurd title of a

song that my (writing) partner (Tom Eyan) handed me. And I didn't know what the heck I was going to do with it. Somehow, eventually, it sort of wrote itself. You use the technique that you acquire after working hard over time. But it's also the luck of (laughs) ... you channel things.

GS: And, of course, having it in the hands of someone such as Jennifer Holiday probably helped too.

HK: Oh, God, yeah! A very articulate (performer). I was listening to her doing the song, just the other day, on YouTube. And, my God, it splits right into the center of you in a way that tells a story.

GS: Bill Condon's 2006 movie version of "Dreamgirls" won a number of awards, including an Oscar for Jennifer Hudson and a Grammy for you. Were you pleased with the film adaptation?

HK: Totally thrilled, yeah. He (Condon) and I are going to be working on another project shortly. We're best of friends. His film worked out really well, I thought. It made another star out of another Effie (Hudson). That's very gratifying. I loved the experi-

ence and I loved being invited to do work on it. I

GS: How involved were you in the new tour of the stage version of "Dreamgirls"?

HK: I wrote a whole new second act opening. I also collaborated with my friend Willie Reale, who wrote the song "Patience" for the movie, and we wrote a new version of "Listen," (which) was Beyonce's solo (in the movie). The new version is a reconciliation number between Effie and Deena, and it is a balance to "And I Am Telling You I'm Not Going," in that it is an 11 o'clock number that we never had before. And it works! It works really well between the two women.

GS: You also mentioned that you are working on something with Bill Condon. Have you begun work on any other new stage or film projects?

HK: This one is a stage project. It's a redirect of "Sideshow." And then Bobby Longbottom, who redirected "Dreamgirls," and I have started work on a new project. I'm not going to say what it is yet, but I'm very, very excited by it.

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Cream City Squares, 414-445-8080.

Men's Voices Milwaukee Chorus, Plymouth Church, 2717 E. Hampshire St., Shorewood, 414-964-1513.

Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. Second St., 414-383-3727.

Milwaukee LGBT Film/Video Festival, 414-229-4758, www4.uwm.edu/psoa/programs/film/lgbtfilm.

Queer Program, P.O. Box 090441, Milwaukee, 53209, 414-265-8500.

Queer Zine Archive Project, 2935 N. Fratney St.

Shoreline Country Dancers, 818 S. Water St. (Hot Water Bar), www.shoreline-milw.org.

Wisconsin Cream City Chorus, 315 W. Court St., Suite 101, 414-276-8787.

Women's Voices Milwaukee, 315 W. Court St., womensvoicesmilwaukee@gmail.com, 414-534-5645.

Community

Bay View Gays, 414-482-3796, www.bvlgays.com.

BWMT Milwaukee (Black & White Men Together), P.O. Box 1091475, Milwaukee, 53209, 414-463-5359.

CONNEXUS/African American LGBT Social and Educational Program, 2439 N. Holton, Milwaukee, WI 53212, 414-390-0444.

Cream City Foundation, 759 N. Milwaukee St., Suite 212, 414-225-0244.

Equality Wisconsin, 2717 E. Hampshire, Milwaukee, 53211, 414-431-1306, www.equalitywi.org.

Firebirds, P.O. Box 159, Milwaukee, 53201.

FORGE, PO Box 1272, Milwaukee, WI 53201, www.forge-forward.org.

G/L Community Center, 904 S. 1st St., 414-643-1652.

G/L Community Trust Fund, P.O. Box 1686, Milwaukee, WI 53201, 414-643-1652.

Gemini Gender Group, P.O. Box 44211, Milwaukee, WI 53214.

Lesbian Alliance, 315 W.

Court St., 414-272-9442.

Lesbian Fund of the Women's Fund of Greater Milwaukee, 316 N. Milwaukee Street, Suite 215, 414-290-7350, www.womensfund.com.

LOC/Women of color, P.O. Box 93594, Milwaukee, WI 53203, 414-263-1631.

Log Cabin Republicans, P.O. Box 199, Milwaukee, 53201, 414-755-1954.

Milwaukee Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Suite 101, 414-271-2656, www.mkelgbt.org.

Milwaukee LGBT History Project, 414-224-0517, www.mkelgbthist.org.

PFLAG-Milwaukee, 315 W. Court St., 414-299-9198.

Pridefest, 315 W. Court St., Suite 203, 414-272-3378, www.pridefest.com.

Pride Parade, www.pride-parademke.com.

SHEBA/Sisters Helping Each other Battle AIDS, 2439 N. Holton, Milwaukee, WI 53212, 414-390-0444.

Washington Heights

Rainbow Association, 414-217-1571, on Facebook.

SAGE Milwaukee, 1845 N. Farwell Ave., Suite 220, 414-224-0517.

Wisconsin Rainbow Families, 315 W. Court St., Room 112, info@wirainbow-families.com.

Business

Gay & Lesbian Tavern Guild, 209 E. National Ave.

Health

AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, 820 N. Plankinton Ave., 414-273-1991.

BESTD Clinic, 1240 E. Brady St., 414-272-2144.

Diverse and Resilient, 1240B E. Brady St., 414-390-0444, www.diverseandresilient.org.

Galano Club, 315 W. Court Street, Suite 201-A, 414-276-6936.

Health Institute of Milwaukee, 1817 N. Martin Luther King Drive, Suite 3, 414-263-9999.

Milwaukee Women's Center, 611 N. Broadway, Suite 230, 414-272-6199.

Walker's Point Community Clinic, 611 W. National Ave., Suite 400, 414-384-1400.

Religion/spirituality

Central United Methodist Church, 639 N. 25th St., 414-344-1600.

Congregation Shir Hadash, 414-297-9159, www.cshmilw.org.

Cross Lutheran Church, 1821 N. 16th St., 414-344-1746.

Divine Word Lutheran Church, 5505 W. Lloyd St., 414-476-3189.

First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee, 1342 N. Astor St., 414-273-5257.

Lake Park Lutheran Church, 2647 N. Stowell Ave., 414-962-9190. Metropolitan Community Church, 1239 W. Mineral St., 414-383-1100.

Milwaukee Friends Meeting (Quakers), 3224 N. Gordon Place.

Plymouth Church, 2717 E. Hampshire Ave., Milwaukee, 414-964-1513. St. James Episcopal Church, 833 W. Wisconsin Ave., 414-271-1340.

Sports

Front Runners, 414-332-1527.

GAMMA-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 1900, Milwaukee, WI 53201-1900, www.milwaukeekeegamma.com

Metro Milwaukee Tennis Club, 414-616-3716.

Milwaukee Gay Soccer League, 1012 E. Clarke St., 414-405-5878, www.milwaukeekeegaysoccer.org.

Milwaukee Gay Volleyball League, <http://milwaukeegay-volleyball.com>.

Saturday Softball Beer League, 2333 N. 56th St., 414-350-7147, www.ssblmilwaukee.com.

Youth/education

Alliance School, 850 W. Walnut St., 414-227-2550, www.allianceschool.org.

Alliance for LGBTQ Youth, 1212 S. 70th St., 414-453-1400, www.cssw.org. Gay Youth Milwaukee, P.O. Box 090441, Milwaukee, WI 53209, 414-265-8500.

LGBT Resource Center a UWM, U.W.-M. Student Union, P.O. Box 413, Milwaukee, 53201, 414-229-4116.

Marquette U G/L Alumni, P.O. Box 92722, Milwaukee, WI 53202.

Marquette Univ. Gay/Straight Alliance, 1442 W. Wisconsin Ave.

Project Q, 315 W. Court St., Suite 101, 414-223-3220.

Rainbow Alliance at UWM, 220 E. Kenwood Ave., 414-229-6555.

UWM LGBT Resource Center, UWM Union WG89, www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/LGBT.

KENOSHA**Religion/spirituality**

Bradford Community Church-Unitarian Universalist, 5810 8th Ave., 262-656-0544.

MADISON**Arts/entertainment**

Dairyland Cowboys and Cowgirls, Club 5, 5 Applegate Court, 608-277-9700.

Community

OutReach, 600 Williamson St., 608-255-8582, www.lgbt-outreach.org.

Politics

Fair Wisconsin, 122 State, Suite 500, 608-441-0143, www.actionwisconsin.com.

Sports

Madison Gay Hockey Association, www.madison-gayhockey.org/ Madison Volleyball Group, 608-251-8716

**RACINE
Community**

LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin, 1456 Junction Ave., 262-664-4100, www.lgbtsewisw.org.

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PHOTOS BY LEONARD SOBCZAK

Seen & heard

By **Louis Weisberg**
WiG Staff Writer



Andy Stillman, Dean Bressler and Dave Zach



Gary Witt, Ryan Matteson and Laura Mueller at Cubanita's



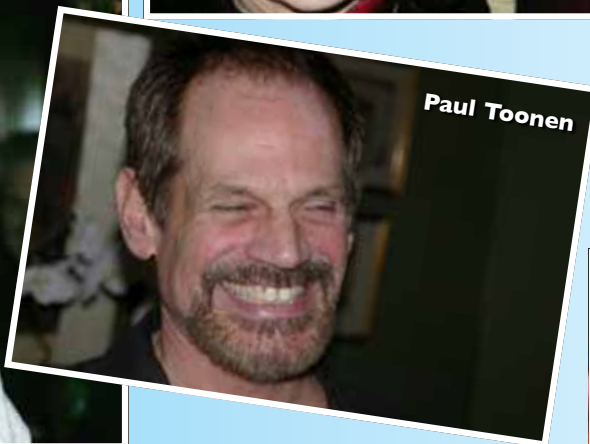
Mary Louise Mussoline (second from left) and family



Maxine Wishner and Dan Mooney



Neil Albrecht



Paul Toonen

I felt depressingly old lunching with **Gary Witt** Dec. 18. Witt is the brilliant impresario who resuscitated the Pabst, Riverside and Turner Hall. Not only is he hip and sexy, but Witt's mind soars along at a speed and altitude that mine hasn't reached since the opening of "Saturday Night Fever" (yes, the movie). I sat choking on my Botox, feeling anachronistic in my starched Brooks Brothers shirt, while Witt and his youthful staff explained the glories of electronic social networking. I was so inspired that I returned to the office, hid my Susan Boyle CD in a drawer and added 40 organizations to WiG's Twitter "following" list.

Dave Stowe and Gene Webb's holiday party Dec. 19 was a decidedly pre-Twitter kind of affair, complete with a gorgeous ice sculpture, scrumptious hors d'oeuvres and novelty holiday cocktails that surprisingly didn't taste like cough syrup. The couple's lovingly maintained George Niedecken home provided a picture-perfect setting for an array of interesting, friendly guests to mingle. As one of them enthused when asked if he'd enjoyed himself, "There were probably 70 people there, and I only hated two of them."

Milwaukee has no more exuberant hostess — or committed LGBT ally — than

Mary Louise Mussoline, executive director of RadioMilwaukee (88.9 FM). Her radiant cheer set the tone for a delightful Dec. 20 holiday evening at her home that included lots of dancing. Guests included **Pam Percy** and **Marty Hinz**. Many thanks to Mary Louise and husband **Dr. Jim Cope** for the invite.

Your humble correspondent is headed to Florida for a few days of much-needed R&R and won't be around to share any New Year's Eve events with you. But you can go to www.wisconsin-gazette.com, scroll to the bottom of the home page and upload photos from your parties to share with the WiG community. C'mon, don't be shy. While

you're there, you can post anonymous rants, raves and rages. Let the world know what you're thinking! And don't forget to follow us on Twitter!

On Twitter, we're: @wigazette



Tom Smith and Brian Shew

ATTENTION SHUTTERBUGS! Bars, community events, sports, nightlife, benefits, parties, anything and everything fun! Just let us know what's going on. Send your tips and pics (with names!) to pics@wisconsin-gazette.com.

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What two divas who are popular
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Barbra Streisand & Cher

OUT & ABOUT

MILWAUKEE

Ballgame, 196 S. Second St., 414-273-7474. Sports bar.

Boom, 625 S. Second St., 414-277-5040. www.boom-mke.com. Neighborhood bar.

Cafe Central, 2306 S. Kinnickinnic Ave., 414-755-0378, thecafecentral.com. Bar, restaurant, music.

Cuvee Lounge, 177 N. Broadway, 414-225-9800, www.cuveemke.com. Cocktail lounge.

Elsa's on the Park, 833 N. Jefferson, 414-765-0615, elsas.com. Upscale lounge.

Fluid, 819 S. Second St., 414-643-5843, fluid.gaymke.com. Cocktail lounge

Kenadee's Ultra Pub, 725 N. Milwaukee, 414-431-5556, kenadees.com. Trendy bar.

Kruz, 354 E. National Ave., 414-272-5789. Neighborhood bar.

La Cage, 801 S. Second St., 414-383-8330, www.lacagemke.com. Dance bar.

M's, 1101 S. Second St., 414-383-8900. Piano bar.

Mikey's, 811 N. Jefferson, 414-273-5397, mikeymilwaukee.com.

Trendy bar.

MOCT, 240 E. Pittsburgh Ave., 414-273-6628, www.themoct.com. Dance club.

Out 'n About and Mona's Restaurant, 1407 S. 1st St., 414-643-0377, www.m-o-n-a-s.com. Nightclub/restaurant.

Nessun Dorma, 2778 N. Weil St., 414-264-8466, nessundormariverwest.com. Neighborhood bar and eatery.

Redroom, 1875 N. Humboldt Ave., 414-224-7666. Neighborhood bar.

Suite, 1103 Old World Third Street, 414-270-9653. Dance club, lounge.

Taylor's, 795 N.

Jefferson St., 414-271-2855, taylorsmilwaukee.com. Trendy lounge.

This Is It, 418 E. Wells St., 414-278-9192, www.thisisitbar.com. Cocktail lounge.

Trocadero, 1758 Water St., 414-272-0205, ztrocadero.com. Hip bar, restaurant.

Tropical Night Club, 626 S. Fifth St., 414-460-6277. Latino dance club.

Walker's Pint, 818 S. Second St., 414-643-7468, www.walkerspint.com.

Neighborhood bar.

Whiskey Bar, 788 N. Jackson St., 414-312-8566, whiskeybarmilwaukee.com. Trendy bar, dance floor.

Woody's, 1579 S. Second St., 414-672-0806, www.woody-s-mke.com. Sports bar/drag.

KENOSHA

Club Icon, 6305 120th Ave., 262-857-3240, www.club-icon.com. Dance club.

MADISON

Club 5, 5 Applegate Court, 608-277-8700, www.club-5.com. Nightclub.

Plan B, 924 Williamson St., www.planbmadison.com. Nightclub.

Shamrock, 117 W. Main St., 608-255-5029, www.shamrockbar.com. Neighborhood bar/dining.

Woof's, 114 King St., 608-204-6222, www.woofs-madison.com. Sports bar.

RACINE

Jo'Dee's International, 2139 Racine St., 262-634-9804, www.jodeesintl.com. Neighborhood bar.

To get listed e-mail
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ARIES: All it would take to turn this into a positive thing is a willingness to hear people out. Get over yourself.

TAURUS: Why do you find it so hard to listen? Someone keeps trying to get through. It wouldn't matter so much if this was something you didn't need to hear.

GEMINI: The greater part of you is sick of being diplomatic, but common sense dictates that you have to keep it up.

CANCER: Don't try to fix this now. Warring parties get along better if they wait for things to cool down before they talk about it.

LEO: Others might have signed the treaty, they have yet to bury the hatchet! Don't put anything past them. This was a purely political move.

VIRGO: There's noth-

ing wrong with being quiet and contemplative but it becomes morose if you're not careful.

LIBRA: Your next move isn't clear, but the gypsy in you would prefer to hit the road. If your heartstrings keep you tied to someone, don't let that keep you from finding out that they will follow you wherever you go.

SCORPIO: The minute you stop dwelling on this, it will fade away. Whoever is giving you a hard time will be stung by their own poison.

SAGITTARIUS: You've got too many good things coming together to keep grinding this axe. Clinging to things that drive us nuts

denies any further possibility that life might cease to be a continuous source of insanity.

CAPRICORN: Your biggest problem isn't even yours. Too many people expect you to rescue them. If their troubles always lead them back to your door, then how do you expect to ever be free enough to live your own life?

AQUARIUS: The Big Bad Wolf isn't going to get you. In fact, he's virtually impotent here. Relax. Sometimes there's more power in the weaker position.

PISCES: Just as you found your purpose for living, someone dragged you back into their soap opera. This is so Mickey Mouse compared to what you could be doing. One last round of drama and you'll be free to leave.

— From AP

Rants, Raves & Other Remarks

HATING HATE CRIMES

What's with all the hate attacks? This is Wisconsin, not Alabama.

WIG READER

Good paper. Glad to see something out there for us. Thanks.

THINK YOU'RE SMART?

So, think you know your right-wing lunatics? Take the right-wing quiz at People for the American Way's Web site, pfaw.org. You can win a free bumper sticker. Question No. 1 last week: It's the most wonderful time of the year, so naturally GOPers are taking to the barricades for their annual fantasy "War on Christmas." What's the latest from the frontlines?

POSSIBLE ANSWERS

The possible answers to the above are:
A. House Republicans

voted to disapprove of bans on Christmas references.

B. Tea partiers want to make Christmas carols mandatory in schools.

C. Bill O'Reilly wants to ban the use of "happy holidays" on Fox.

D. Both A and B.

IN THE YEAR TWENTY OH NINE

I don't even need to do the math. I spent 365 hours on e-mail in 2009, 365 hours on Facebook, 365 hours surfing the Web. I need a life. We all need lives.

COLD OR FLU?

Brrr. But for the cold or

flu, or just plain fighting the cold, my remedy is hot and sour soup. Works every time. Better than any cold medicine on the market.

FAREWELL

Goodbye Michael Jackson, Farrah Fawcett, Patrick Swayze, Bea Arthur,

CLINTON CLUB

Good to know you like Hillary Clinton. That says a lot.

SCREEN SAYING

"Faith is believing when

common sense tells you not to."

GRANITE STATE STATUTE

So, how much does New Hampshire value marriage?

Gays and lesbians can marry in the New England state, and, if they commit adultery, they — and any other married person — can be fined \$1,200.

ACHIEVEMENT?

Barack Obama is ending his first year in office and

what's his biggest achievement? Winning the Noble Peace Prize while escalating a war. OK.

Got a rant? A rave?
An urge to rage?

Go to www.wisconsin Gazette.com and write what's on your mind. Yep, it's that simple.

**WiG wishes
you a
healthy 2010!**

On stage

By Gregg Shapiro

Dec. 31, Thursday

Happy new year!

Club Icon's All-Inclusive New Year's Eve VIP Party includes a buffet, open bar, music by DJ 6'8", giveaways, party favors and a champagne toast, beginning at 8 p.m. at Club Icon, 6305 120th (off I-94) in Kenosha. Call 262-857-3240.

Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. Second, hosts Kael's New Year's Eve Burlesque Cabaret at 8 p.m. Call 414-383-3727.

Ring in the new year with Spoon and Jay Reatard at The Riverside, 116 W. Wisconsin, at 9 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

Art Bar, 722 E. Burleigh, hosts a Cosmic Blue Moon New Years Eve Dance Party with Uncle Larry and Cackle at 11 p.m. Call 414-372-7880.

The Get Down performs at 9 p.m. at Bay View Brew Haus, 2535 S. Kinnickinnic. Call 414-481-8060.

Jim Gaffigan's New Year's Eve show begins at 10:30 p.m. at The Pabst, 144 E. Wells. Call 414-286-3663.

The Boulevard Ensemble Studio Theatre stages acclaimed playwright Christopher Durang's comedy "The Marriage Of Bette & Boo" through Jan. 2 at the Boulevard Theatre, 2252 S. Kinnickinnic. Call 414-744-5747 or visit www.boulevardtheatre.com.

Off The Wall Theatre, 127 E. Wells, presents the celebrated musical "La Cage Aux Folles," running through Dec. 31. Call 414-327-3552.

Jan. 1, Friday

ForwardTheater Company presents Christopher Durang's "Why Torture Is Wrong, and the People Who Love Them," opening tonight and running through Jan. 17 in The Playhouse at the Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison. Call 608-258-4141.

Skylight Opera Theater presents "Plaid Tidings," featuring The Plaids bringing harmony to a discordant world, with hits from the '50s and '60s, as well as "plaid-erized" holiday standards, running through Jan. 3 at Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway. Call 414-291-7800.

Cynergy 67 and Sensuous Enemy perform at 10 p.m. at The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison. Call 608-819-8777.

Jan. 2, Saturday

Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, has Philip Gatewood and Chris Kohn at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, hosts the Subatomic/Underculture double CD release, with Soul Shaker, at 10 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Jan. 3, Sunday

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, has Madison Skylights with counterfeit i, Loftland, Saw Horse and John Davey, at 8 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Jan. 5, Tuesday

The musical "Dreamgirls"

opens tonight and runs through Jan. 10 at Marcus Center For the Performing Arts, at the corner of Water and State. Call 414-273-2787.

Quadracci Powerhouse Theater presents "Yankee Tavern" by Steven Dietz tonight through Jan. 31 at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, 108 E. Wells. Call 414-224-9490.

Jan. 6, Wednesday

At 7 p.m., The Rave, 2401 W. Wisconsin, welcomes Kid Cudi and Chip tha Ripper. Call 414-342-RAVE.

Jan. 7, Thursday

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, presents Fishhooks with International Espionage at 10 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Jan. 8, Friday

Katie Todd Band is at Motherfools Coffee House, 1101 Williamson in Madison, at 8 p.m. Call 608-259-1301.

Stackner Cabaret presents Roz White starring in "Pearl Bailey...By Request" tonight through Feb. 28 at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, 108 E. Wells. Call 414-224-9490.

The Northern Lights Theater at Potawatomi Bingo Casino, 1721 W. Canal, has Lee Rocker with special guest James Intveld at 9 p.m. Call 414-847-7922.

Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, welcomes Gende's Giant at 9 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, welcomes Blueheels with Surgeons in Heat and Old Panther at 10 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Jan. 9, Saturday

Tommy Held and Brittney Mitchell perform at 8 p.m. at Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell.

Call 414-276-7288.

Cameron McGill plays The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, with Jeremiah Nelson and Miles Nielsen at 10 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Jan. 10, Sunday

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, has The Fancy with El Valiente, Sonmi and Skye Carrasco at 7:59 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Jan. 12, Tuesday

The Northern Lights

Theater at Potawatomi Bingo Casino, 1721 W. Canal, presents "Tribute To The King" starring Ryan Pelton, tonight through Jan. 15 at 8 p.m. Call 414-847-7922.

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, welcomes The Black Saints at 9:30 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Jan. 13, Wednesday

Stiemke Theater's production of "Almost,

Maine" runs through Feb. 7 at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, 108 E. Wells. Call 414-224-9490.

Jan. 14, Thursday
The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, presents The Hussy with The Zygoteens, The Midwest Beat, Screamin Cyn Cyn and the Pons at 10 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Send tips to gshapiro@wisconsin Gazette.com.

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ONGOING

Through Jan. 2, Christopher Durang's "The Marriage of Bette and Boo," Boulevard Theatre, 2252 S. Kinnickinnic, Milwaukee. Info: 414-744-5757.

Mondays, Wednesdays-Saturdays, the LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin, 1456 Junction Ave., Racine, holds drop-in hours. Info: www.lgbtsewisc.org, 262-664-4100.

THURSDAY

7 p.m., third Thursdays, Lesbian Alliance movie night, LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-272-9442; www.lesbianalliance.org.

7 p.m., AA Living Sober; 7 p.m., Crystal Meth Anonymous, The Galano Club, 315 W. Court St., No. 201, Milwaukee. Info: 414-276-6936, galanoclub.org.

6 p.m., QGrads, UW Memorial Union Rathskeller, 800 Langdon St., Madison.

7:30 p.m., Four Lakes Bears, Michelangelo's Coffee Shop, 114 State St., Madison. Info: 608-251-5299.

FRIDAY

6 p.m., second Fridays, Lesbian Alliance game night and potluck, LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-272-9442; www.lesbianalliance.org.

Court St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-272-9442; www.lesbianalliance.org.

7 p.m., AA, The Galano Club, 315 W. Court St., No. 201, Milwaukee. Info: 414-276-6936, galanoclub.org.

8:30 p.m., second and fourth Fridays, Shoreline Milwaukee line dancing and lessons, Hot Water, 818 S. Water St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-383-7593, www.shoreline-milw.org.

SATURDAY

9 a.m., Frontrunners Milwaukee Run Walk, starting at the Water Tower at the East end of North

Avenue, Milwaukee. Info: 262-285-7645.

9 a.m., Frontrunners/Frontwalkers Madison, Wingra Park off Monroe Street, Madison. Info: 469-4882

6 p.m., AA The Women's Light Meeting; 7:30 p.m., Spiritual Light, The Galano Club, 315 W. Court St., No. 201, Milwaukee. Info: 414-276-6936, galanoclub.org.

SUNDAY

1 p.m., Cream City Squares dances, Lake Park Lutheran Church 2647 N. Stowell, Milwaukee. Info: www.iagsdc.org/creamcity/#Calendar.

creamcity/#Calendar.

7 p.m., AA The Big Book Meeting, The Galano Club, 315 W. Court St., No. 201, Milwaukee. Info: 414-276-6936, galanoclub.org.

5 p.m., OutThere LGBT youth group meeting, OutReach-Gateway Mall, 600 Williamson St., Madison. Info: 608-255-8582.

MONDAY

7:30 p.m., AA Came to Believe, The Galano Club, 315 W. Court St., No. 201, Milwaukee. Info: 414-276-6936, galanoclub.org.

TUESDAY

5 p.m., AA Over 40, and 7 p.m. AA The Blue Group, The Galano Club, 315 W. Court St., No. 201, Milwaukee. Info: 414-276-6936, galanoclub.org.

WEDNESDAY

7 p.m., AA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, The Galano Club, 315 W. Court St., No. 201, Milwaukee. Info: 414-276-6936, galanoclub.org.

Send listings to
managingeditor@
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THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

THURSDAY

Dec. 31

New Year's Eve
8 p.m., Kael's New Year's Eve Burlesque Cabaret, Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. 2nd., Milwaukee. Info: 414-383-3727.

FRIDAY

Jan. 1

New Year's Day

SATURDAY

Jan. 2

7 p.m., Milwaukee Gamma 2010 party, Menomonie Falls. Info: www.milwaukeegamma.com.

8 p.m., Madison Gay Video Club watches "Gridiron Gang Bang." Info: www.mgvc.org, 608-244-8690.

MONDAY

Jan. 4

7:30 p.m., LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin Gender Identity Support Group, 1456 Junction Ave., Racine. Info: 262-664-4100.

THURSDAY

Jan. 7

7 p.m., Milwaukee Gamma plays cribbage. Info: www.milwaukeegamma.com.

SATURDAY

Jan. 9

6 p.m., Second Saturday Art Walk, 5615 Seventh Ave., Kenosha. Info: 262-654-0065.

3 p.m., Women4Women meets to discuss partnerships at OutReach, 600 Williamson St., Madison.

SUNDAY

Jan. 10

3 p.m., Castaway's MC Beer/Soda Bust with a "Longjohn Party" theme, Kruz, 354 E. National Ave., Milwaukee.

MONDAY

Jan. 11

6:30 p.m., Domestic partnership financial literacy 101 program, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-292-3065.

WEDNESDAY

Jan. 13

7 p.m., Milwaukee Gamma board meeting. Info: www.milwaukeegamma.com.

7 p.m., LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin board meeting, 1456 Junction Ave., Racine. Info: 262-664-4100.

6:30 p.m., QCinema International Film Group

SAVE THE DATES

Feb. 2: Risk and Resiliency for LGBTQ Youth. Relevant for professionals working with youth.

Feb. 11: LGBT Mental Health and Suicide: Guidance for Practitioners. Relevant for mental health workers, social workers, counselors, clergy and post-secondary educators.

Gary Hollander, founder and executive director

of Diverse and Resilient, is the instructor for both programs, which are approved for continuing education credit.

The programs are offered by the University of Wisconsin Division of Continuing Studies

For details, contact Anne Voxman at 608-263-7023 or avoxman@dcs.wisc.edu. To register online, go to www.dcs.wisc.edu/pda/health-education.

watches "Madam Sata," OutReach, 600 Williamson St., Madison.

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'Nine' elevates the musical to an art form once more

Film from 16

lost art of the Hollywood musical with his long overdue film version of Kander and Ebb's "Chicago." The film was a commercial success and earned a fair share of awards and acclaim.

In 2009, the musical has been elevated to a cinematic

art form once more with his film adaptation of the Maury Yeston/Arthur Kopit stage musical "Nine." Based on the classic Federico Fellini film "8½," "Nine" finds renowned Italian filmmaker Guido Contini (a singing and dancing Daniel Day-Lewis), whose body is nearing 50 while his mind is that of a 10-year-old, at a career crossroads in

1965 Rome. After a string of popular early films, his last few movies have been flops. In the midst of creative and personal crises, he has no script for his ambitiously titled "Italia" and his marriage to Luisa (Marion Cotillard, also singing and dancing), is hanging by a thread.

Guido turns to his rich fantasy life for inspiration. He

summons the women from his past and present, his long-time muses, to arouse his imagination. His deceased mother (played by Sophia Loren), provides a sympathetic ear. Lilli (Dame Judi Dench), his longtime film wardrobe mistress, offers him advice. Saraghina (Fergie), the town tramp of his childhood, proves to be inspira-

tional, as does his mistress, Carla (Penelope Cruz). But the unstable Carla can be as difficult as Luisa, not to mention his demanding film muse, movie star Claudia (Nicole Kidman). And when reporter Stephanie (Kate Hudson in one her most Goldie-esque performances) enters the picture, we can see that Guido is being stretched to

his limit.

That's where the musical numbers come in. Marshall gives each of them a distinctive and unforgettable flair, and even non-singers such as Loren survive their numbers intact. And who knows? Maybe Marshall will also inspire a revival of interest in the maestro Fellini's work in the process.

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REAL ESTATE

Pint-sized glamour

Style for small spaces, small budgets

By Kerrie Kennedy
WIG Staff Writer

Who says you can't have a fabulous place even if your budget — and space — is pint-sized? After all, some of the biggest stars come in small packages. We polled two of the area's top designers and found out that a lack of money and space don't have to be limitations.

Here are six key strategies to follow:

Color your world. "People have this tendency to think that they have to have to have a light color on the wall in a small room," says Milwaukee-based interior designer Beth Applegate Liebl. "That's not the case. If you paint the walls a dark color, it makes the walls go away and does make the room seem larger. Also, walls in darker shades are really very comforting. We have so many cloudy days here in Wisconsin, color can really set a mood."

Liebl recommends rich colors — chocolate brown, cobalt blue, moss green, gray, and even black — for a small room. She follows her own advice: Her small den is painted black and her kitchen



PHOTO: IKEA'S COMPLETE BEDROOM COLLECTION

"I truly believe in a luxurious bed," Milwaukee-based interior designer Beth Applegate Liebl says. "You should have a down comforter and down pillows. It should feel like such a treat to sleep in."

features gold walls and a blue ceiling.

"Definitely paint the ceiling — it's fun. And put some shine on your walls. Any kind of luster in the paint makes it reflect more. Buy some polyurethane and put it over the paint so it's shiny — or at least use an eggshell finish."

Put your furniture on a crash diet. "You can't have oversized recliners and big leather sectionals in a room that's small," Liebl says. "You need to feel like you can walk around." Less is more, which is good news for your budget.

Liebl recommends purchasing a sofa with clean, straight lines and one or two really beautiful Chinese or French chairs.

"If you need extra seating for entertaining, pull in some occasional chairs or put pillows around a large coffee table," she says. "Another

'In a living room, you can put a desk behind the sofa to use as your office.'

idea is to invest in some nice bamboo folding chairs. In smaller spaces, you should be able to move things from room to room."

Get glam with lighting and accessories. While furniture in a small room shouldn't be oversized, the objects in the room can be, says Chicago-based interior designer Alison Pickart.

"Go over the top with a killer accessory," she recommends. "CB2 has a firefly

pendant lamp that is totally glam for just \$199. Double up and hang them two in a row over an island!" A shag rug in an unexpected color, like chocolate brown, is another great way to liven up a small space. "Big textures in bold colors add a huge amount of punch to a room," says Pickart, who has numerous clients in Wisconsin.

Artwork is yet another way to add drama. "One of my favorite tricks is to grab your best friend and go to the nearest mall photo booth. Then frame the pictures using Pottery Barn large matte 16 x 16 frames. It's an easy and inexpensive way to create a black and white photo wall."

Fake it till you make it. Don't have a home office? In need of a dining room or den? It's possible to have it all in a small space, but your furniture — and rooms —

may have to serve several purposes.

"In a living room, you can put a desk behind the sofa to use as your office," Liebl says. "Or turn your dining room table into an office with a laptop. If you don't have a separate dining room, you

can create one by making one half of your living room a sitting area and the other half a dining/office area. If you have a guest room, definitely repurpose it as an office or den. Most people have guests only a few times a year, so it's nice to be able to use that room for something else."

Curtain call. Windows are one of the biggest focal points in a room, so it's important to play them up as much as possible with window treatments. Even small windows can seem larger if you employ the right technique.

"Hang side panels as tall as you can — almost to the ceiling, so it gives height to the window," Liebl says. To save money, make the panels yourself. "Just go to any fabric store, buy a width of fabric for each panel and have them hemmed, she says. "They don't need to cover the window, they're purely decorative to soften the space and add some height."

Layer on the luxury. Just because you live in a small space doesn't mean you

Real estate page 26

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TANGO'S
TIP

Include your companion animal in your New Year's resolutions. Some simple vows include keeping the

cat indoors, taking your dog for an extra weekly walk, micro-chipping your animal or renewing their

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OUR MISSION

To inform, engage and empower Wisconsin's LGBT community by providing a professional, independent print and online source for news and commentary, as well as coverage of political and cultural issues.

PHOTO: JASON SMITH

Add eye candy

Real estate from 25

have to scrimp on luxury. Layering pillows, fabrics and objects creates a feeling of sumptuousness and abundance in any size space.

"I truly believe in a luxurious bed," Liebl says. "You should have a down comforter and down pillows. It should feel like such a treat to sleep in." According to Liebl, decorative pillows and throws — from wool to faux fur — can add depth, color

and texture to sofas and chairs.

Coffee tables are another place to add eye candy. "Fill it with beautiful coffee table books and objects you pick up at resale stores, Liebl says. "Make it look like you've traveled the world."

Recommend a neighborhood for WiG to explore:
managingeditor@
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WHERE TO PICK UP CHEAP CHIC

CB2. "You can pick up a fabulous shag rug for less than \$500," designer Alison Pickart says. "No matter what, you'll always walk out with something of good quality design."

Etsy.com. "This website features the work of burgeoning artisans, craft people, print makers and artists," Pickart says. "You can find amazing vintage reproduction silk screens and prints for less than \$18."

Baker outlet. "I take my customers up there all the time," designer Beth Applegate Liebl says. "It's a third of what it would cost retail."

Home Goods. "A great resource for pillows, linens and lamps," Liebl says.

Ikea. "I like to mix their industrial pieces with traditional décor," Liebl says.

— K.K.

Happiness. Raymond Carver

So early it's still almost dark out. I'm near the window with coffee, and the usual early morning stuff that passes for thought.

When I see the boy and his friend walking up the road to deliver the newspaper. I think if they could, they would take each other's arm. It's early in the morning, and they are doing this thing together.

They come on, slowly. The sky is taking on light, though the moon still hangs pale over the water.

Such beauty that for a minute death and ambition, even love, doesn't enter into this.

Happiness. It comes on unexpectedly. And goes beyond, really, any early morning talk about it.



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