

WiGOUT!

'Beyond Priscilla'
An interview with filmmaker
Stephan Elliott. Page 11



THE VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR WISCONSIN'S LGBT COMMUNITY

January 14, 2010 | Vol. 1, No. 5

State, M&I Bank workers receive partner benefits

By Louis Weisberg
WiG Staff Writer

Two of the state's largest employers began offering domestic partner benefits Jan. 1.

The State of Wisconsin Department of Employee Trust Funds, which handles benefits for most employees of state government and the University of Wisconsin system, will offer domestic partners page 4

CALIFORNIA MARRIAGE TRIAL BEGINS

Page 5

This issue

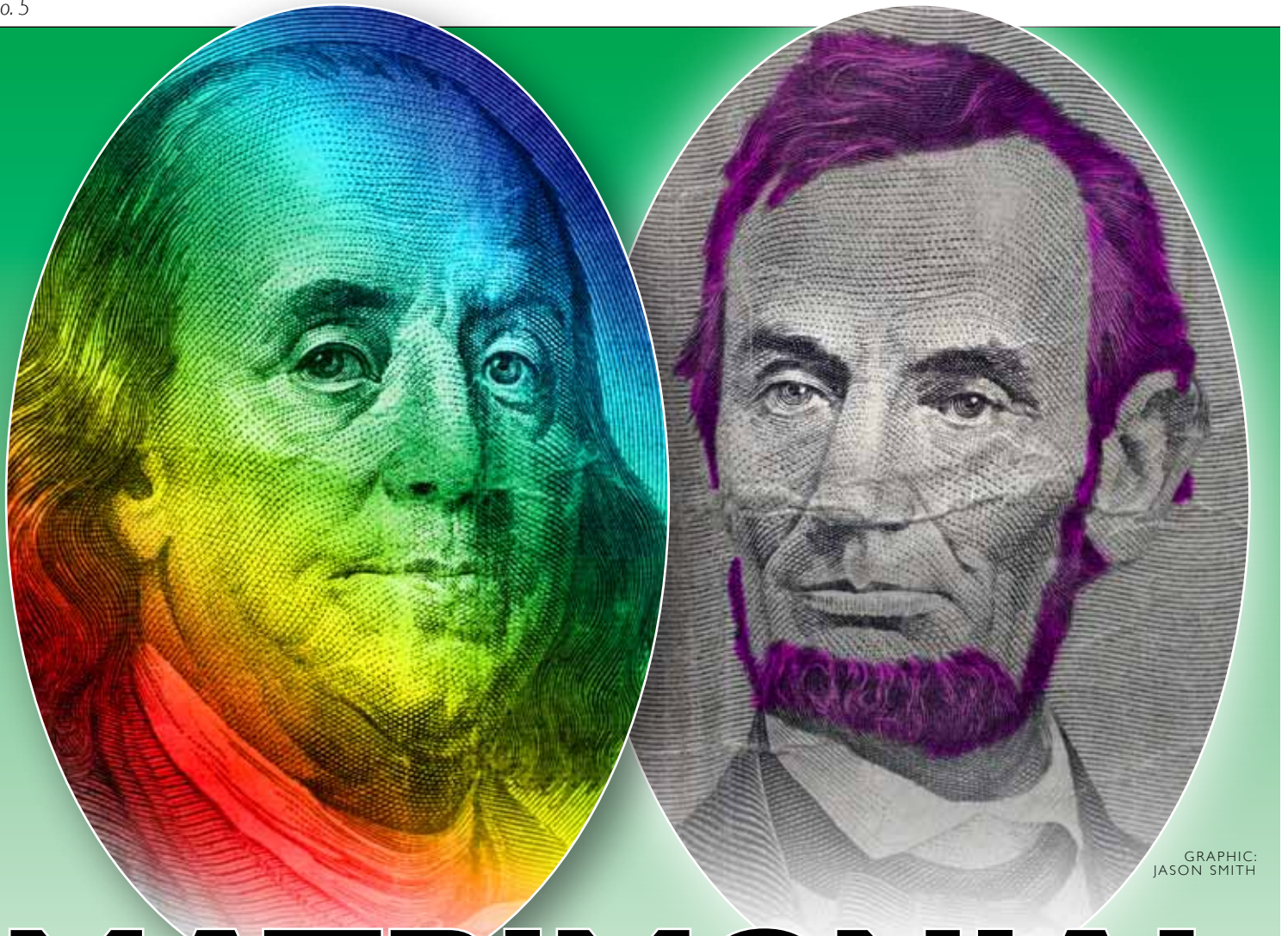
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News

- WiGWAG..... 2
- Milwaukee Gaze 4
- National Gaze..... 5
- Editorial 6
- Opinion 7
- International Gaze 10

Features

- WiGOUT..... 11
- Books..... 13
- Dining..... 17
- Real Estate..... 21
- StarGaze..... 22



GRAPHIC:
JASON SMITH

MATRIMONIAL BUCKS

Study forecasts windfall from same-sex weddings

By Lisa Neff
WiG Staff Writer

When "The Wedding March" plays, cash registers ring. Marriage can bring bliss and marriage can bring bucks, generating millions in revenues for local and state governments, and millions more for businesses. A new study estimates that legalizing gay marriage in New Jersey would generate \$15.1 million in new

government revenues over a three-year period and pump \$200 million into the state's economy over the same time.

The study from the Williams Institute at the UCLA School of Law was released as New Jersey lawmakers were debating a marriage equality bill in late 2009. Gay couples can marry in five states — Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, Vermont and, as of Jan. 1, New Hampshire.

The New Jersey Senate, in a 20-14 vote,

defeated the marriage measure Jan. 8, prompting gay rights advocates to vow to fight on in court.

The New Jersey Supreme Court ruled in 2006 that the state must treat same-sex couples equally and provide them the same benefits as heterosexual couples. Legislators responded with a civil unions law, but activists pressed on for marriage.

The court "ruled unanimously that same-sex couples are entitled to equality under Bucks page 8

LGBT news with a twist



WIGWAG

By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg

PUTTING CHILD ABUSE ON A PEDESTAL

Former Milwaukee archbishop Rembert Weakland is under fire by the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests for using charitable money to create a bronze relief of himself pictured in the biblical scene of Jesus protecting children. The relief is part of the recently completed renovation of The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 812 N. Jackson St., Milwaukee. As archbishop, Weakland knowingly shielded pedophile priests and paid \$450,000 in hush money to a man who claimed Weakland raped him. In his memoir "A Pilgrim in a Pilgrim Church," which was released last summer, Weakland defended himself by saying he didn't realize that child molestation was a crime, and that he "naively" believed victims either "would not remem-

ber or they would grow out of it."

A SLIPPERY SLOPE

A woman caught using her boyfriend's ski pass last month at Colorado's Keystone Ski Resort thought fast: She told police that she was in the middle of transitioning from male to female. But her lie turned into a slippery slope when she invited the Summit County Sheriff's office to call her father to confirm her story. That's because the sheriff's office called her boyfriend's dad, who voiced great skepticism that his son was in the process of becoming his daughter. The woman was arrested for theft and criminal impersonation.

THE PRICE OF INDULGENCE

CNN reports that beautifulpeople.com, an online dating site that trumpets

itself as an "elite" community with a "strict ban on ugly people," terminated about 5,000 members who posted photos showing they'd "let themselves go" during the holiday season. "As a business, we mourn the loss of any member, but the fact remains that our members demand the high standard of beauty be upheld," site founder Robert Hintze told CNN. "Letting fatties roam the site is a direct threat to our business model and the very concept for which BeautifulPeople.com was founded." Users can join only after enough members vote for them as "beautiful" during the 48 hours after their profile is uploaded.

TIGER'S CURE

Far-right pundit Brit

Hume has the cure for Tiger Woods' philandering ways: Jesus. Appearing Jan. 3 on "Fox News Sunday," Hume gave the golf phenomenon some personal advice. "The extent to which he can recover seems to me depends on his faith," Hume pontificated. "He is said to be a Buddhist. I don't think that faith offers the kind of forgiveness and redemption that is offered by the Christian faith. My message to Tiger would be, 'Tiger, turn to the Christian faith and you can make a total recovery and be a great example to the world.'" Would that be the Christian faith of Ted Haggard? Earl Paulk? Mark Sanford? Jimmy Swaggart? Can we hear an amen?

CRITICS SAY...

Charmin has teamed up with Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS to present "Bathrooms over

Broadway," the first-ever Broadway show in a bathroom. It's described as a "cheeky" musical number — all things potty — starring that squeezable Charmin roll. So, is the best seat on Broadway on the toilet?

NOW NO-NO

NOW magazine celebrated a mayoral candidate in Toronto with a profile piece that said Adam Giambrone is "young. He's bright. He's gay. And he looks better than any of his challengers so far." Giambrone, who had not officially entered the mayoral race, also is not gay. "Easy mistake, given my great relationship with the LGTQ people/communities and our long-standing mutual support," Giambrone wrote on Facebook. "But so as not to mislead anyone, I should correct the record: I'm not, in fact, gay." He added that his partner Sarah

took the NOW story in stride.

THE NOW COUPLE

An online poll at www.popeater.com names Ellen DeGeneres and Portia de Rossi as the most popular celebrity couple. Yes, more popular than Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. Yes, more popular than Beyonce and Jay-Z.

LEATHERED UP

Milwaukee's Harley-Davidson celebrates Elvis Presley's birthday this month with a display of rarely seen photos from Presley's 1968 comeback TV special, along with the King's famed red-and-white motorcycle. Wear Elvis sunglasses and sideburns and get a \$4 discount. And yes, the museum restaurant is serving peanut butter and banana sandwiches. Thankyavermuch.

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> Heroes & Villains

HERO

Annie Parker worked hard in both the private and public sectors before taking a shot at the mayoral office in the nation's fourth-largest city. She spent two decades in oil and gas, worked as a gay rights advocate and served three terms as city controller.

Last fall, she ran a clean, honest campaign for mayor. She ran with integrity, and she ran on a smart platform that Houstonians believe will help the city continue to weather the recession better than most U.S. cities.

In December, Parker entered a runoff race against Gene Locke, whose supporters circulated campaign material suggesting her sexual orientation made her unqualified for the job. Parker secured the mayoral seat, and Houston won prominence as the largest city in the coun-

try to elect an openly gay mayor.

In her inaugural speech Jan. 4, WiG's hero said her election marked a milestone, but "today is simply one step toward a tomorrow of greater justice." Parker's partner Kathy Hubbard held the Bible upon which Parker took her oath of office.

VILLAINS

Amanda Simpson has worked in the defense and aerospace industries for more than 30 years, most recently as deputy director in advanced technology for Raytheon Missile Systems. Her peers describe her as top-caliber, sophisticated, smart and brave.

The Obama administration recently appointed Simpson as senior technical advisor with the U.S. Department of Commerce, making her one of the first transgender appointees to the federal government.

Despite her impeccable qualifications, Simpson's transgender status has drawn anger and ridicule from far-right pundits and TV-land comics. We describe her critics as infantile, offensive, ignorant, and, yes, our villains.

"Is there going to be a transgender quota now in the Obama administration?" asked Peter LaBarbera of Americans for Truth, accusing the administration of pandering to the LGBT community for hiring the best candidate for the job.

Matt Barber of Jerry Falwell's Liberty University said the appointment "boggles the mind."

And when David Letterman announced Simpson's appointment, announcer Alan Kalter feigned trans-panic, "What? My God," he shouted and hurried off the stage as the audience laughed.

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 PET ENGINE / TRUTH IN FICTION

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SATURDAY, JANUARY 30 • TURNER
JAY FARRAR OF SON VOLT
 + **BEN GIBBARD** OF DEATH CAB FOR CUTIE

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4 • TURNER
DR. DOG

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 4 • PABST
DARK STAR ORCHESTRA

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6 • PABST
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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12 • TURNER
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CORY CHISEL & DAWES

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15 • PABST
THE MUSICAL BOX
 A TRICK OF THE TAIL

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16 • TURNER
THE RESIDENTS

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17 • TURNER HALL
ST. VINCENT
 W/ WILDBIRDS & PEACEDRUMS

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MILWAUKEE GAZE

Benefits include health, dental and vision

Partners from I

tem, now provides a comprehensive package of benefits, including health insurance, retirement benefits and death benefits, to the partners of its workers.

The benefits were mandated in the two-year budget signed into law by Gov. Jim Doyle last July — the same budget that established the state's domestic partner registry. The registry went into effect last August.

Employees applying for benefits must sign affidavits with their partners attesting that they have lived together for at least six months and have "the functional equivalent of a marriage."

They must be able to provide such documentation as a joint lease, joint ownership of a home or car and a joint checking account.

At least 1,067 employees had submitted partnership forms prior to the end of December 2009, according to trust fund spokesperson Matt Stohr.

Of those, 710 had applied

for health insurance benefits. About 265,000 people currently work for employers who are part of the fund's system.

The Legislative Fiscal Bureau projects the annual cost of the benefits at \$4.7 million to \$6.7 million, which amounts to an increase of 1.2 percent to 1.75 percent in costs to the state.

M&I Bank also launched a domestic partner benefit plan on Jan. 1. With about 9,500 employees, the bank is the largest in the state and among the top 20 in the nation.

M&I's benefits include health, dental and vision insurance as well as family medical leave and funeral leave.

Vice president of corporate relations Dennis Salentine said M&I adopted

domestic partner benefits in response to requests from employees and new hires.

"We've had nothing but positive (feedback) from every group, saying it's good to work for a company that's progressive and open to this," Salentine said. "The bottom line is that it was the right thing to do."

M&I, which is mostly self-insured, estimates that the new policy will increase the bank's benefits costs by less than 1 percent.

Salentine said most same-sex couples choose to keep their individual health insurance policies, which are cheaper than family policies and carry less tax liability.

But if one partner is a stay-at-home parent or loses coverage, the domestic partner policies provide a needed option.

GET CONNECTED

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

REGIONAL GAZE

Kirk responds to gay-baiting ad

Republican Mark Kirk is responding to ads from a fringe candidate in Illinois' U.S. Senate race by flatly stating that he's not gay.

The radio ads challenge Kirk to address rumors that he is gay.

They began running while Kirk was on active duty in Afghanistan as a member of the Navy Reserves, which kept Kirk from responding

directly.

Now Kirk is back on the campaign trail and on Jan. 7 he called the ads "completely outrageous and untrue."

The Chicago congressman says it's ironic that he defends free speech as a member of the military and then rival candidate Andy Martin uses the right of free speech to make false allegations.

— AP



U.S. Rep. Mark Kirk

DID YOU KNOW?

"MSM" was coined by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control for "men who have sex with men." It should not be used to describe openly gay or bisexual men individually or collectively, except in specific clinical or statistical contexts, according to GLAAD.

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Lesbian mom seeks daughter's return

By Lisa Neff

WIG Staff Writer

A mother snared in an inter-state custody dispute is appealing to the public for help in locating her daughter.

"I am so worried about Isabella. I do not know where she is or whether she is OK," said Janet Jenkins.

In November, Jenkins secured a family court order from Vermont that Isabella Miller-Jenkins, 7, be transferred to her custody on Jan. 1. The child is believed to be with her other mother, Lisa Miller.

But the transfer of custody did not take place on New Year's Day.

SAFE RETURN

Anyone with information regarding the whereabouts of Isabella Miller-Jenkins and Lisa Miller should call the Center for Missing and Exploited Children at 800-843-5678 or the Bedford County, Va., Sheriff's Office at 540-586-4800.

Jenkins said she doesn't know where Isabella or Lisa Miller is, nor do Miller's attorneys and Isabella's guardian ad litem.

Jenkins and Miller, joined

'I just want Isabella to know and love both of her parents.'

in a civil union in Vermont in 2000, had Isabella in 2002. The couple separated and dissolved their union in 2003. At the time, a Vermont court granted temporary custody to Miller, Isabella's biological mother, and visitation rights to Jenkins. Both women were identified as Isabella's legal parents.



PHOTO: COURTESY LAMBDA

LEGAL

Janet Jenkins and daughter Isabella last January.

But Miller moved to Virginia, where she filed a claim seeking to be named Isabella's sole parent. Miller's case became a celebrated cause of the Christian right, with the ultra-conservative Liberty Counsel handling the legal work. In a 2008 appeal

for public support, Liberty Counsel special attorney Rena Lindevaldsen wrote, "Lisa Miller is one of thousands across this nation who have left the homosexual life through the redeeming power of Jesus Christ," while Jenkins is "openly living the homosexual life-style."

Jenkins, represented by the American Civil Liberties Union and Lambda Legal, successfully challenged Miller's petition, arguing that Vermont, not Virginia, was the proper jurisdiction for the custody case.

Eventually courts ordered that custody of Isabella be transferred to Jenkins, find-

ing Miller repeatedly in contempt of court for failing to allow Jenkins' visitation with her daughter.

Jenkins said, "It was devastating to me, as I'm sure it was to Isabella, when Lisa withheld contact between me and my daughter.

"My goal has never been to separate Isabella from Lisa. I just want Isabella to know and love both of her parents. I just want to be with her, like any parent."

"This terrible situation cannot continue. Miller and Isabella must be found and the transfer of custody must take place as the court has ordered," said Lambda attorney Greg Nevins.

Marriage trial begins in California

By Lisa Neff

WIG Staff Writer

California's constitutional amendment banning gay couples from marrying went on trial in a San Francisco federal courtroom Jan. 11.

The trial is expected to last three weeks, but the case, Perry v. Schwarzenegger, is expected to eventually go to the U.S. Supreme Court for

a final — and possibly landmark — ruling.

At issue is whether the U.S. Constitution prohibits states from outlawing same-sex marriage, which California voters did with the passage of Proposition 8 in November 2008.

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Attorney General Brown are

the defendants in the case because of their offices, but both have said the marriage ban is indefensible. Thus, the Prop. 8 sponsors are defending the ban.

Prior to trial, Chief U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker had authorized court employees to record the trial for delayed broadcast on YouTube.

Walker said the case's national importance was one of the reasons he wanted proceedings recorded. "I always thought that if people could see how the judiciary really works, they would take a somewhat different view of it," he said.

Defense lawyers opposed taping the trial, arguing that their witnesses might be

intimidated or harassed. They went to the nation's High Court to stop the broadcast, although Walker had said he would consider requests to black out the video if individual witnesses object to being recorded.

As of WIG's press time, the Supreme Court had not decided whether to allow a broadcast of proceedings from the San Francisco courtroom.

While the trial is under way on one coast and justices on another coast are considering the video issue,

LGBT activists are calling on the Obama administration to file a brief asking the court to overturn Prop. 8.

"Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Attorney General Jerry Brown are speaking out and standing with us by telling the Court that Prop. 8 cannot be defended under the U.S. Constitution," said Geoff Kors of Equality California. "No voice would have more of an impact on the case than President Obama's. It is time for him to stand up and act."

A guide to the Prop 8 trial

The national debate over same-sex marriage is taking center stage in a California courtroom at a closely watched federal trial that could ultimately become the landmark case that determines whether gay Americans have a right to marry.

The case will decide a challenge to California's gay marriage ban that was approved by voters in 2008, and the ruling will likely be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court. How the high court rules in the case could set the precedent for whether gay marriage becomes legal nationwide.

"This could be our Brown vs. Board of Education," said

former Clinton White House adviser Richard Socarides, referring to the 1954 Supreme Court decision that outlawed racial segregation in schools and other public facilities.

The case marks the first federal trial to examine if the U.S. Constitution permits bans on gay marriages.

Plaintiffs: Two of the nation's most influential lawyers are to argue the case — former U.S. Solicitor General Theodore Olson and trial lawyer David Boies. The lawyers are best known as the rivals who represented George W. Bush and Al Gore in the "hanging chad" dispute over the 2000 presidential

election in Florida. They have tapped the talent of their respective law firms in preparation for the trial and they plan to take turns questioning witnesses.

Defendants: Republican Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and Democratic Attorney General Jerry Brown are defendants in the lawsuit, by virtue of their prominent positions in California government. But both men opposed the ban and have refused to defend the suit in court.

The sponsors of the gay marriage ban, a coalition of religious and conservative groups, joined the case as defendants. Their legal team is

being led by Charles Cooper, a veteran trial lawyer who worked for the Reagan-era Justice Department. Cooper is being assisted by a team of lawyers from his own firm, along with a Christian legal group based in Arizona.

Judge: Presiding over the case is U.S. District Court Chief Judge Vaughn Walker, a Republican named to the bench in 1989 by the first President Bush. Walker, who has a reputation as an independent thinker, was randomly assigned the lawsuit. He put it on a fast-track to trial, saying it raises serious civil rights claims.

— AP

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{ Editorial }

Unmasked?

As of press time, the same people who spent millions fighting a massive campaign to overturn same-sex marriage in California were fighting a judge's decision to videotape a trial to determine Proposition 8's constitutionality. They claimed the proceedings, to be shown on YouTube.com, would expose them to intimidation and harassment by same-sex marriage supporters, and they asked the U.S. Supreme Court to halt the plan.

Hak-Shing William Tam, a chief organizer of the campaign, was so frightened of repercussions that on Jan. 8 he asked a judge to remove him from the suit. In his petition, Tam wrote, "I do not like people questioning me on my private personal beliefs."

What's behind their sudden faintheartedness? As Theodore Brouros, who is part of the anti-Prop. 8 legal team, put it in late December, "They certainly did not exhibit a similar fear of public attention when attempting to garner votes for Prop 8 from millions of California voters, (or) when touting their successful campaign strategy in post-election magazine articles and public appearances."

The problem is that Tam and his crowd don't want the ugly details of their beliefs known. Tam doesn't want the people of America to know he told his church that the consequences of same-sex marriage would be: "One by one, other states would fall into Satan's hands. ... More children would become homosexuals."

Tam and his colleagues fear that such revelations would lead to open hostility — perhaps even violence of the sort that LGBT people suffer at the hands of bashers inflamed by their own rhetoric. But their fears leave us cold.

If they could not walk down many streets in America holding hands with their spouses for fear of being tormented, beaten or killed, maybe we'd have sympathy. If they could be booted out of the military, fired from their jobs or denied fundamental rights like marriage merely because of who they are, then maybe we'd feel pity.

These people who claim such confidence that God is on their side should stand proudly and openly in the face of possible condemnation, just as so many of us have done.

> TAKE ACTION!

This is an election year, and, we are in the midst of an important election now — Facebook voters are choosing charities to receive \$1 million in Chase Community Giving, a campaign by Chase and Facebook.

The top vote-getter in this election, which concludes Jan. 22, will receive \$1 million and five runners-up will receive \$100,000.

Among the 100 charities competing for the awards are three groups working to improve the lives of LGBT youth — the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, the Matthew Shepard Foundation and The Trevor Project.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Each Facebook user can vote for up to five charities. You can help put these important groups in the running for funding that could go a long way to making the world safer for LGBT youth. Go to apps.facebook.com/chasecommunitygiving/.

{ Letters }

A RESOLUTION

Like many others, I was not sorry to see 2009 come to an end. A lot of misery, great expectations, dashed hopes, deferred dreams and daily anxiety were packed into those 12 months.

As 2010 dawns, I can't say I possess irrefutable proof for budding optimism, but there are some signs, both obvious and nuanced, that positive change may be coming our way.

There are, of course, some big indicators. From my perspective, an active LGBT community that recognizes that our activism and engagement are essential if we are to see movement on LGBT issues at the national level. This coming year we must elevate our involvement in national and local politics, understanding that this is the only way we can hold our elected leaders accountable.

I respect and admire our president a great deal. I have some sense of the enormity of his task and the toxicity of his opposition. Even so, there is no reason why he cannot exert his moral lead-

ership and his actual power to make change on behalf of the LGBT community and our families.

But as he himself acknowledged, his leadership will only be as good as our activism. He virtually demanded that we pressure him to be his best self on our issues. That is a call we must heed. And not just for President Obama, but for every member of Congress and every other elected official whose voice and courage and power we need pressed into service for our lives. Phone calls, e-mails, in-district and in-D.C. visits, letters to the editor, and recruiting friends and family to also stand with us. This is the language of political pressure, and, believe me, it works.

We await the passage of long overdue legislation ranging from federal employment protections to the repeal of "don't ask, don't tell" and DOMA to comprehensive immigration reform that includes LGBT families. We heard plenty of promises about hope and change in 2009, yet little was delivered.

We know far too well how the urgent needs of our community fall to the bottom of political priorities. That's why we need to be as vocal and visible as ever in 2010.

I ask you to make this resolution: Every time we send you an action alert asking you to call Congress, please do so. It may seem like a small ask, but the truth of the matter is Congress is not hearing from our community as much as they need to. Our opponents flood their phone lines and fax machines. They fill their inboxes. We don't.

If our voices are not heard, we are dismissed. Let us be louder and brighter and bigger than our opponents. Let us shine the light on moral leadership and insist that we are not a disposable constituency who can once again be dropped to the bottom of the list.

Kate Kendall, executive director, National Center for Lesbian Rights

Send letters to managingeditor@wisconsin-gazette.com.

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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.

Just kidding

As a young gay man in the 21st century, I often feel a certain detachment from my gay roots. I don't think this is necessarily a bad thing. A lot of people of my generation don't want to be labeled as gay or black or white. Our main concern is to be treated like human beings — that's all.

This brings me to my topic — jokes about race, gender, sexual orientation, etc.

I was surfing YouTube, one of my favorite things to do, and I was watching stand-up comedy sketches by Sarah Silverman and Chelsea Handler. On

the sidebar was a video of racist jokes, one of which I thought was so funny that I posted it as my Facebook status. I knew at the time that this had the potential to cause a bit of controversy, but I wasn't afraid to defend my decision.

Some people commented with a simple "LOL," and I even got a "Wow" out of someone. But one person asked this question: "How do you seriously feel about telling racially motivated jokes when you're brown yourself? I feel like telling jokes like this makes the bigger issues be taken less seriously."

To this person I can easily say I disagree. Racist people, homophobic people and sexist people alike are all members of one group: bad people. They are people who hate.

As for the "bigger issues" she was concerned about, I can say that hate crimes and gay bashing are a couple of big issues that I have experienced, and they had nothing to do with me being gay. They had everything to do with the fact the people who hit me were afraid of me. They hate change and hate things they don't understand.

My point is that if there were no such thing as gay

Opinion
BY ANGEL SEVILLA

people, the gay basher would just bash someone else.

That's one type of bad person. There's another type that Sarah Silverman described in an interview with Katie Couric. Silverman was talking about how sometimes when she's doing her stand-up comedy, she'll observe a Jewish audience

member, for example, who will laugh at black jokes, Mexican jokes and

gay jokes. But when it comes to jokes about Jews, his laughter stops. It's as if it's not OK to laugh at his people, but to laugh at everyone else's people is fine. Do you know what you are when you laugh at other people's cultures and think yours is special? You're a racist!

I'm Mexican. I can laugh at black jokes, white jokes and Mexican jokes alike. Do you know why? Because they're just jokes!

These days, sexual orientation, race and gender are irrelevant. People are people. The president is black. I hold hands with my boyfriend in public. It's not a big deal anymore.

There are bad people, and there are good people. Just as long as you know you're on the right team, you shouldn't have anything to be concerned about. People need to stop singling themselves out as "the oppressed minority." You can be anything you want to be and, if you're oppressed, it's most likely because you're acting oppressed. So stop it. Treat yourself with respect, and so will others.

Angel Sevilla III is a student at the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design.

People are people.

Gay marriage: a tale of two cities

In an unusual example of synchronicity, in mid-December the semi-autonomous capital cities of both the United States and Mexico altered their laws to allow same-sex marriage.

In neither case was the vote even close.

In Mexico City's legislative assembly, the vote was 39-20. In the Washington, D.C., City Council, the vote was 11-2. In both cases the new law was a modest change from an existing civil unions law. The new Mexico City law, for example, defines marriage as "a free union between two people" instead of "a free union between a man and woman."

Both offer possible lessons for efforts elsewhere. The Washington law is a tribute to two decades of sustained efforts by the Gay and Lesbian Activist Alliance and other groups, which lobbied legislators and spoke regularly at churches and community events. They worked on an

incremental approach, adding one element after another to a narrow civil unions law until there was little difference from marriage except the highly symbolic name.

The Mexico City law affects far more people. Washington has a population of less than 700,000 while Mexico City has a population of nearly 9 million, making it the largest city in Latin America.

The Washington law has the advantage of the precedents of five U.S. states, which have adopted gay marriage. By contrast, Mexico City is the first jurisdiction in Latin America to adopt gay marriage. Both Uruguay and Colombia have adopted civil unions but not gay marriage.

The Latin American precedent provided by Mexico City is considerable, much as the legalization of gay marriage in Massachusetts constituted an impressive precedent for courts and legislatures in other New England states.

It provides a model of what Mexican states should do if they want to be equal to the federal district, and it implicitly constitutes a reminder to social democratic parties in other countries that they have no grounds for denying equality for gays.

Although Mexico is a conservative Catholic country, Mexico City's legislature is controlled by the left-wing Democratic Revolutionary Party, which has long existed in tension with the Catholic Church. It has evolved a position of supporting comprehensive equality for gays as part of its social democratic agenda. A spokesman for the Catholic Church deplored the new law and said that gays and transsexuals would "never enter into the kingdom of heaven"; but the DRP was not intimidated by medieval theology and silly costumes and gave the new law 100-percent support.

Beyond that, both cities illustrate an interesting point

Opinion
BY PAUL VARNELL

about the relation of economic and social freedom. Like Washington, Mexico City has a sizable and visible gay population, a gay enclave and several gay bars. Once a jurisdiction affords economic freedom to its citizens, they begin to assert the right to more autonomy in other parts of their lives as well.

It may be worth mentioning here that the social democratic route to gay equality is not the only one. There is also the libertarian/minimal government route of reducing the scope of government and depriving it of the power and right to grant special rights to some groups (e.g., heterosexuals) but not to others (e.g., homosexuals).

Paul Varnell is a nationally syndicated columnist based in Chicago.

A family's marriage aisle widens

It's sometimes tough to measure progress, personal or political. Our lives are lived slowly, day by day, and so change can seem incremental. Or impossible.

But a lot of difference can be made in a decade.

About 10 years ago, I went to my dad's second wedding and wrote about it in a column. It was the first time since high school that I had seen many of the family friends and neighbors I grew up with, and so it was an evening of perpetual coming out.

Gray-haired friends of my dad would ask, "Are you married?"

And I'd say, "I'm partnered with a woman. I'm a lesbian."

There would be a short pause. They'd start to say something. Then a longer pause.

Then they'd say something like, "Excuse me, I need to say hello to Mrs. Smith, I just spotted her"; or, "Would you like something from the bar?"; or, in one memorable case, a woman who I like very much said — with the best of intentions — "I work

Opinion
BY JENNIFER VANASCO

like her, how perfect we are together.

When they left, they made a point of saying goodbye to Jenny, too; of asking us both to dinner; of hoping they saw us both again soon.

Jenny and I slow danced together. We held hands. A year into our relationship, we are obviously in love and we didn't try to hide that or mute it.

We were out lesbians at my sister's wedding and no one cared.

And that is exactly how it should be.

Marriage in Massachusetts, Iowa, New Hampshire and Connecticut has legitimated gay and lesbian couples in a way nothing else could. It even affects couples like Jenny and me, who can't get married in our home state of New York (though our governor tried in the final month of 2009).

People are getting accustomed to the idea that gays and lesbians get married, that we call each other husbands and wives. And with social change, familiarity breeds

acceptance, not contempt. That is why the marriage debate itself has been useful — even when it fails in places like California. Because it has meant that hundreds of ordinary gay and lesbian couples have been showcased in the media and on the streets. We are no longer a mysterious minority with strange and secret rituals. We are couples. We are families. Yes, my dad's friends had 10 years to get used to the idea that I was a lesbian. But they wouldn't have changed their minds if society hadn't rapidly changed. Jenny and I are planning to get married when our marriage can be legally performed in New York. We're planning on a small wedding, so we don't know if we'll invite any of my dad's friends. But the difference now, is that we feel like we could. And if we invited them, we think they'd come.

Jennifer Vanasco is an award-winning columnist based in New York City.

'Our side is going back to court to win marriage equality'

Bucks from I

the law, but civil unions do not provide equality," said Kevin Cathcart of Lambda Legal, which argued the 2006 court case. "The Legislature has failed not only same-sex couples and their families, but the state constitution's promise of equal protection."

"Our side is going back to court to win marriage equality," said Steven Goldstein of Garden State Equality, the New Jersey statewide LGBT group partnering with Lambda on a return to court. Goldstein noted that while the legislative fight was lost, one outcome was a wealth of public testimony and research.

The public record includes the testimony of Williams Institute executive Brad Sears, who explained for the New Jersey Senate Judiciary Committee the economic benefits of enacting a marriage equality bill.

MATRIMONIAL MONEY

Marriage is a \$70 billion a

Pioneering plaintiff wants DC's 1st gay marriage

Craig Dean's first wedding was attended by thousands, and as he recited his vows, gay couples behind him on Constitution Avenue echoed their own.

It was 1993, and Dean and boyfriend Patrick Gill headlined what was billed as the largest gay marriage ceremony at the time. Dean, 29, and Gill, 26, were celebrities after suing the city of Washington for denying them a marriage license.

They'd been on CNN, were profiled in The Washington Post and sat on Oprah's couch.

And though they lost their landmark case, the city last month finally did what it had refused to do back then: Legalize marriage for gays and lesbians.

Dean, who now lives in South Carolina, said he cried when he read the news.

"They owe me a mar-

riage license," he said.

The measure still has to survive a review by Congress, which has final say over the district's laws. Lawmakers appear unlikely to intervene though, so gay couples could be marrying in Washington — legally this time — by March. It would be the sixth place in the country where gay marriages are allowed. And Dean, who carries bittersweet memories of his and Gill's

pioneering effort, wants the first spot in line.

Gill died in June 1997, just over two years after the court decision against the couple.

"Whether it became legal or not, he was my husband," Dean said. "If anything, it was a marriage in the way we lived our lives."

His current partner, photographer John Blevins, told Dean not to cry when the district passed its law last

month; he should be proud. Blevins and Dean met several months ago on a blind date, but their romance has moved fast. On Christmas, Blevins put a ring in Dean's stocking and asked, "Would you do the honor of marrying me?"

"Yes," Dean said, as long as he gets a real Washington wedding.

— AP

year industry in the United States, with spending for ceremonies, clothes, meals, parties, transportation, flowers, photographers and other services and goods.

The Wedding Report, an industry research group, puts the average cost of a wedding in the United States at \$20,910.

"It's not a recession-proof industry," said Lawrence

Taylor, a consultant with MarriageMarket Research. "But the industry remained strong throughout the worst of last year. And it will remain strong in the coming years. People don't cheat this budget."

Still, in analyzing the impact of legalizing same-sex marriage in New Jersey, Williams Institute researchers Sears, Christopher Ramos and M.V. Lee Badgett were conservative.

"The new report takes into account the changing legal landscape and the recession," said Sears.

SAME-SEX CENTS

The researchers have used U.S. Census data and a survey of same-sex couples who married in Massachusetts to forecast the financial impact of legalizing marriage for gays in Washington, Maryland, New Mexico, California, Connecticut, Colorado, Vermont, Maryland and Iowa. Each analysis found that

'The new report takes into account the changing legal landscape.'

extending the rights of marriage to same-sex couples would positively impact a state's budget and its businesses.

Legislative offices in Connecticut and Vermont and the comptroller in New York have reached similar conclusions in studying the issue.

As did the Office of the Chief Financial Officer in Washington, D.C., which recently said that same-sex weddings would generate as much as \$22 million over the next three years. Washington's city council voted in late December to legalize marriage for gay couples, though the measure still needs congressional approval.

In New Jersey, the wedding windfall would largely come from tourism — out-of-state couples traveling to the Garden State to exchange their vows.

GARDEN STATE GREEN

In "The Impact of Extending Marriage to Same-Sex Couples on the New Jersey Budget," Sears, Ramos and Badgett estimate:

- Based on trends in other states, about half of

the 19,494 same-sex couples living in New Jersey would legally marry if they could in the next three years.

- Based on trends and New Jersey's popularity as a tourism destination for New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia, Maryland and Delaware, an estimated 35,500 same-sex couples from other states would go to New Jersey to marry.

The researchers point to the spring of 2004, when couples from 46 states and eight countries traveled to San Francisco during the one month that the city issued marriage licenses to gay couples.

- Spending by same-sex couples on weddings and tourism would generate about \$15.1 million in revenues for state and local governments.

- Spending would generate about \$12.7 million in local and state sales tax revenues and occupancy fee revenues.

- Spending would generate about \$1.3 million over three years in marriage license fees.

- Spending by same-sex couples on weddings would create and sustain more than 1,400 jobs.

- Spending by same-sex couples on weddings would boost New Jersey's economy by about \$200 million over three years.

The researchers' estimate does not include spending by relatives and friends on gifts, or expenses of guests traveling within New Jersey to attend weddings. The estimate also does not include the standard multiplier for tourist spending, which is

FEDERAL FORECAST

In studying the marriage issue, The Congressional Budget Office concluded that if all 50 states and the federal government extended marriage rights to same-sex couples, the government would benefit by nearly \$1 billion a year.

Forbes magazine projected that if gays could marry in all 50 states, same-sex weddings would generate \$16.8 billion a year in wedding industry revenues.

— L.N.

that \$1 spent in the state generates more than \$2 in additional spending.

"If these factors are taken into account," Sears said, "the total impact in New Jersey could be close to half a billion dollars."

But, with the defeat of the marriage equality bill Jan. 8, the Williams Institute researchers will have to wait to test the validity of their projections.

And New Jersey Gov.-Elect Chris Christie, R — whose vow to veto any gay marriage bill that reached his desk prompted the rushed vote in the senate — will not rely on any revenues from same-sex marriages to help balance a state budget projected to be \$9.5 billion in the red.

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PARKER INAUGURATED AS MAYOR

Annise Parker has taken over as Houston's mayor, making her city the nation's largest to be presided over by an openly gay person.

The 53-year-old Parker was sworn in during a private ceremony as chief executive of America's fourth-biggest city. She repeated the oath of office Jan. 4 as part of public inaugural ceremonies and celebrations.

Parker received almost 54 percent of the vote in a December runoff, defeating former city attorney Gene Locke in a race to succeed term-limited Bill White. Democrat White is now running for Texas governor.

Parker, a three-term former city controller, has never made a secret or issue of her sexual orientation in her runs for office.

Her sexual orientation drew attention after anti-gay activists and some religious groups endorsed Locke and sent out mailers condemning her.

—AP

VAIL REVIVES GAY SKI WEEK

Gay Ski Week is back in Vail, Colo., this winter.

The mountain resort skipped the week-long promotion last year because of the economic downturn. But resort tourism officials say they hope to attract 500 to 1,000 attendees during this year's event, planned for Jan. 27-31.

Aspen, Telluride and Whistler ski resorts have

News

FROM AROUND THE U.S.
WIG AND AP REPORTS

held Gay Ski Weeks for years. Aspen's Gay Ski Week, planned the week before Vail's, drew about 2,000 people last year.

Vail also plans a Gay Week in the summer.

—AP

GAY MAN TO JOIN SALT LAKE CITY COUNCIL

An openly gay man was sworn in recently as a Salt Lake City councilman.

Stan Penfold, who was elected to represent the liberal Avenues and Capitol Hill areas, is thought to be the council's first openly gay member.

Penfold said the council has done a "remarkable job" on social issues and he doesn't intend to become a lightning rod for gay rights.

Among other actions, the council has passed ordinances banning discrimination against gays in housing and employment. Penfold said he will focus on grassroots issues such as affordable housing and improving neighborhoods' quality of life.

The 52-year-old Penfold grew up Mormon in Humboldt County, Calif., and ran nurseries in Sandy and West Jordan after moving to Utah nearly 30 years ago. His parents hail from Idaho and met at Brigham Young University in Provo.

He was executive director



Houston Mayor Annise Parker

of the Utah AIDS Foundation over the last decade.

—AP

RI LAWMAKERS BACK FUNERAL RIGHTS FOR GAYS

Rhode Island lawmakers voted Jan. 5 to allow same-sex and unmarried couples the right to plan the funerals of their late partners, overriding a veto by the governor, who warned it eroded traditional marriage.

The bill passed 67-3 in the House and 31-3 in the Senate. It enjoyed support from several Republican lawmakers in the same party as Gov. Don Carcieri, who is an adamant opponent of same-sex marriage in a state that does not recognize gay unions.

The new funeral planning rights also apply to unmarried heterosexual couples.



Gay Ski Week is back on in Vail, Colo.

—AP

INVESTIGATORS SEEK CAUSE OF DEATH OF U.S. SOCIALITE

Casey Johnson, an heiress to the Johnson & Johnson fortune, lived the life of a Hollywood socialite — partying with Paris Hilton, posing for paparazzi, becoming engaged to bisexual reality TV star Tila Tequila and, like her idol Marilyn Monroe, dying young.

An autopsy Jan. 5 found no evidence of trauma on the body of the 30-year-old Johnson and a determina-

tion of the cause of death was deferred pending toxicological tests and microscopic studies that could take eight weeks or more.

Johnson was diagnosed with diabetes as a child, but it was unclear if that had a role in her death.

Johnson's body was found Jan. 4 in the California home where she lived.

There were no signs of foul play, according to police.

—AP

BAR ATTACK PROBED AS HATE CRIME

Santa Cruz, Calif., police are investigating as a hate crime an alleged attack on a gay man at a downtown nightclub.

Police spokesman Zach Friend said detectives believe the 31-year-old man was assaulted Jan. 2 at the Blue Lagoon because of his sexual orientation.

The alleged victim told police a man yelled anti-gay slurs at him outside the bar and then attacked him inside, leaving him with bruises and cuts.

—WIG

MONTANA CITY CONSIDERS NON- DISCRIMINATION POLICY

Bozeman, Mont., city commissioners are considering a policy change that would prohibit discriminating against people because they are lesbian or gay.

If approved, the change would add sexual orientation and gender identity to the categories of people protected under the city's anti-discrimination policy. The current policy prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, creed, sex, age, marital status, national origin, political ideas and disability.

Bozeman Mayor Jeff Krauss says he hasn't heard of any gay or lesbian discrimination issues with city workers, but he said the policy change could save the city from future legal trouble.

—AP



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Gay couple marries in Argentina

By Almudena
Calatrava

AP Writer

They had to travel to the ends of the Earth to do it, but two Argentine men succeeded in becoming Latin America's first same-sex married couple.

After their first attempt to wed in December in Buenos Aires was thwarted, gay rights activists Jose Maria Di Bello and Alex Freyre took their civil ceremony to the capital of Argentina's Tierra del Fuego province, where a sympathetic governor backed their bid to make Latin American history.

The couple exchanged rings Dec. 28 in Ushuaia, the southernmost city in the world, closer to Antarctica than Buenos Aires. The informal ceremony was witnessed by state and federal officials.

"My knees didn't stop shaking," said Di Bello. "We are the first gay couple in Latin America to marry."

Di Bello, 41, an executive at the Argentine Red Cross, met Freyre, 39, executive director of the Buenos Aires AIDS Foundation, at an HIV awareness conference.

At the indoor civil ceremony, the grooms wore sport coats without ties and had large red ribbons draped around their necks in solidarity with other people living with HIV.

Argentina's Constitution is silent on whether marriage must be between a man and a woman, effectively leaving the matter to provincial and city officials. The men tried to get married in Argentina's capital but city officials, who had earlier said the ceremony could proceed, refused to



wed them, citing conflicting judicial rulings.

Di Bello said Ushuaia initially declined to authorize the marriage, but went ahead after the couple received backing from Tierra del Fuego province.

Gov. Fabiana Rios said in a statement that marriage equality "is an important advance in human rights and social inclusion and we are very happy that this has happened in our state."

An official representing the federal government's anti-discrimination agency, Claudio Morgado, attended

the wedding and called the occasion "historic."

Many in Argentina and throughout Latin America remain opposed to marriage rights for gays, particularly the Roman Catholic Church.

"The decision took me by surprise and I'm concerned," Bishop Juan Carlos, of the southern city of Rio Gallegos, told the Argentine news agency DyN. He called the marriage "an attack against the survival of the human species."

But same-sex civil unions have been legalized in Uruguay, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and some states in Mexico and Brazil. Marriage generally carries more exclusive rights, such as adopting children, inheriting wealth and enabling a partner to gain citizenship.

Legal analyst Andres Gil

Dominguez said the Tierra del Fuego government appeared to base its authorization on a broad interpretation of the Argentine Constitution and obligations under international treaties.

Rios said her province's approval was based on a ruling by a Buenos Aires judge who declared two provisions of the constitution discriminatory and gave the go-ahead for the Dec. 1 marriage, which was then blocked by another judge's ruling based on civil law.

Individual provinces may not have final say over same-sex marriages for long.

A bill that would legalize gay marriage was introduced in Argentina's Congress in October but it has stalled without a vote.

Argentina's Supreme Court currently is analyzing

'My knees didn't stop shaking.'

ing appeals by same-sex couples whose marriages were rejected. A Supreme Court justice said that the high court would likely rule on same-sex marriage sometime this year, but could defer to Congress if legislation moves forward.

Seven countries in the world allow gay marriages: Canada, Spain, South Africa, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands and Belgium.

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LAWMAKER REFUSES TO WITHDRAW ANTI-GAY BILL

The Ugandan lawmaker who proposed a bill that would give some gays the death penalty said he will refuse any request to withdraw the legislation after a minister said the government would ask him to.

Lawmaker David Bahati said he felt the bill is necessary in the conservative East African country. Minister of State for Investment Aston Kajara had said the government would ask Bahati to scrap the bill because they fear backlash from foreign investors.

The bill, which Bahati proposed in September, has provoked criticism from gay-rights groups and protests in London, New York and Washington.

"I stand by the bill," Bahati said. "I will not withdraw it. We have our children in schools to protect against being recruit-

'I stand by the bill. I will not withdraw it.'

ed into (homosexuality). The process of legislating a law to protect our children against homosexuality and defending our family values must go on. The proposed legislation would toughen Uganda's already strict laws against homosexuality, which are bolstered by Uganda's conservative society.

The draft of the new bill says anyone convicted of a homosexual act — which includes touching someone of the same sex with the intent of committing a homosexual act — could face life imprisonment. The death sentence could apply to sexually active gays living with HIV or in cases of same-sex rape. The new

law also expands its scope to include Ugandans living abroad, who can be extradited and punished.

MEN ARRESTED FOR ENGAGEMENT

Officials in Malawi say they have arrested two men for celebrating their engagement to each other in the conservative southern African country.

Malawi Attorney General Jane Ansah says the men were charged with indecency. Those convicted under the law can be sentenced to 5-14 years in jail.

Police said Blantyre residents Steven Monjeza and Tiwonge Chimbalanga were arrested in late December after their engagement ceremony, which attracted many onlookers.

In Africa, only South Africa has legalized same-sex marriage. Uganda will soon debate a proposed law that could impose the death penalty on some

gays.

PARLIAMENT VOTES FOR MARRIAGE

Portugal's parliament passed a bill Jan. 8 that would make the predominantly Catholic nation the sixth in Europe to permit gay marriage.

Conservative President Anibal Cavaco Silva is thought unlikely to veto the Socialist government's bill, which won the support of all left-of-center parties. His ratification would allow the first gay marriage ceremonies to take place in April — a month before Pope Benedict XVI is due on an official visit to Portugal.

Right-of-center parties opposed the change and sought a national referendum on the issue, but their proposal was rejected and the government's bill was passed by 125 votes to 99.

Gay rights campaigners applauded from the galleries, hugged and kissed outside the building and ate wedding cake. — AP

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WIGOUT!

WISCONSIN GAZETTE ENTERTAINMENT

BEYOND 'PRISCILLA'

An interview with filmmaker Stephan Elliott

By Gregg Shapiro
WIG Staff Writer

Stephan Elliott is a storyteller. On screen or over the phone, Elliott has a way of telling a story and making it fascinating.

Having just mounted "Priscilla, Queen of the Desert," the stage musical version of his Oscar-winning 1994 movie "The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert," Elliott's latest film "Easy Virtue" is making its DVD and BluRay debut this month.

Based on an early Noel Coward play, the film tells the story of the arrival of American widow and race car driver Larita (Jessica Biel) into the terribly proper lives of a stuffy British family following her marriage to favored son John (Ben Barnes).

I spoke with Elliott about "Easy Virtue" and his other movies.

Gregg Shapiro: Your previous films, including "The Adventures of Priscilla Queen of the Desert" and "Welcome To Woop Woop," were contemporary stories. What was it about Noel Coward's play "Easy Virtue" that made you want to do a period piece?

Stephan Elliott: Actually, I was quite famously having a career of basically trying to remove myself from "Priscilla." As much as I love her, she is an old ball and chain. I haven't actually ever been able to get past it.... Quite helpful was Richard O'Brien, who did the "Rocky Horror Show." He said, "Look, Stephan, it's the same thing. I've got 'Rocky,' and I can't get past it. But there comes a point when you have to start looking at it

Cover page 14

Director Stephan Elliott holds Fizz as he arrives for the BFI London Film Festival screening of "Easy Virtue" in London.

PHOTO: AP/
MATT DUNHAM

Musically inclined

"YOU WEREN'T THERE: A HISTORY OF CHICAGO PUNK, 1977-1984"

Factory 25

Chicago probably isn't the first place that you think of when you think of punk rock circa 1977 to 1984.

London, the land of the Sex Pistols and The Clash, more likely. Or New York, home of The Ramones, Blondie and Talking Heads. Even Los Angeles, with X and Black Flag.

But Chicago's contributions, limited as they may have been, get the recognition they deserve in Joe Losurdo and Christina Tillman's rock doc.

From bands such as Tutu & The Pirates and Bohemia through Naked Raygun and Big Black, punk in Chicago thrived in difficult conditions, including coming up against misguided Mayor Jane Byrne and the Chicago police, the syndicate and various personality conflicts among the various bands. Although



By Gregg Shapiro

it never extended beyond the city's borders to achieve national success in the way bands from other major metropolitan areas did, the city's punk community managed to keep the spirit alive.

"You Weren't There" features a wealth of performance and archival footage, as well as interviews. One of the most fascinating revelations of the doc is the role of the gay community in the scene. La Mere Vipere, Chicago's premiere punk stomping ground, was originally a gay bar. Gay bar owner Dem Hopkins, whose Rogers Park tavern The Greenleaf also went from gay to punk, is interviewed. Other punk clubs with gay origins included O'Banions and Ann Arkee's. Seminal punk record store Wax Trax, owned by the late Jim Nash and his life



"You Weren't There: A History of Chicago Punk"

partner Dannie Flesher, gets praised by those interviewed.

"JOHNNY MERCER: THE DREAM'S ON ME"

TCM/WB

In time for the Johnny Mercer centennial, Bruce Ricker's film is a loving tribute to one of the greatest songwriters of the 20th century. A Savannah, Ga., native, John Herndon Mercer was born in 1909 to a prominent and philanthropic family and went on to become an Oscar-

winning singer, composer and lyricist in a class all his own. His songbook includes such familiar standards as "Hooray for Hollywood," "That Old

Black Magic," "Satin Doll" and "Moon River."

Ricker makes excellent use of archival footage. Mercer was a singer as well as a songwriter, and the performance footage of him provides an essential perspective on the man.

The film also contains interviews with musicians, composers and journalists, including Michael Feinstein, Margaret Whiting, Tony Bennett, John Williams, Leonard Maltin, Julie Andrews, Cleo Laine, Johnny Mandel and Andre Previn.

For the most part, this doc is an affectionate homage to Mercer.

OTHER SOUNDTRACKS

There are several notable musical soundtracks on the shelves. "My Fair Lady," George Cukor's movie adaptation of the Lerner and Loewe musical starring Audrey Hepburn and Rex Harrison, is one example. The DVD includes features such as audio commentary, a vintage featurette and alternate Hepburn vocals. The Blu-Ray edition of Rob Reiner's mockumentary "This Is Spinal Tap," starring Christopher Guest, Harry Shearer and Michael McKean, includes more than an hour of deleted scenes and outtakes.

In theaters



By Gregg Shapiro

"CRAZY HEART"

Fox Searchlight

A honky-tonk version of "The Wrestler," writer/director Scott Cooper's feature film debut features a stellar performance by lead actor Jeff Bridges.

Hard living has taken its toll on 57-year-old country/western singer Bad Blake (Bridges), a cross between Waylon Jennings and Kris Kristofferson. He's been reduced to playing in bowling alleys where, because of his reputation, he's not allowed to run a bar tab. But, heck, he can bowl all he wants. Bad is broke and his agent Jack (Paul Herman) does what he can to set up gigs. Protege Tommy Sweet (Colin Farrell) has surpassed Bad professionally.

While in Santa Fe, N.M., to play a saloon, Bad meets Jean (Maggie Gyllenhaal), a journalist who wants an interview, a film device that allows the audience to learn about Bad.

Jean and Bad hit it off and begin a relationship. Meanwhile, Tommy has arranged an opening slot for Bad on his tour stop in Phoenix. He also offers Bad a sizable sum to write some new songs for him. Bad is a hit with Tommy's crowd, but



Jeff Bridges stars in "Crazy Heart."

on the way back to Santa Fe to see Jean and her son Buddy (Jack Nation), Bad falls asleep and flips his vehicle.

With a broken ankle, a concussion and doctor's orders to quit drinking and smoking, Bad finds himself laid up at Jean's place, facing a golden opportunity to concentrate on songwriting. But watching Jean's interactions with Buddy remind him of his own grown son. Back home in Houston, he calls on his son, Steven (Brian Gleason), who, as you might have guessed, doesn't want

anything to do with him. A visit from Jean and Buddy ends disastrously when Bad momentarily loses the boy in a mall after stopping at a bar.

The ensuing post-visit bender leads to a stint in rehab, and then Bad, now going by his given name Otis, shows up on Jean's doorstep to show he's reformed, but she turns him away. In Houston again, Otis continues to put his house in order, literally. And he begins writing new songs. Bridges is at his best here and deserves the raves he's been getting.

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Men of the dance



“Men in Motion: the Art and Passion of the Male Dancer,” photographed by Francois Rousseau

Books

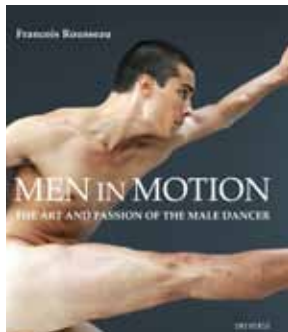
WIGOUT

By Paul Varnell
WiG Contributing Writer

“Men in Motion” displays the lithe, muscled bodies of about 50 male dancers, demonstrating that they are as athletic as sports figures. There is not an ounce of body fat anywhere in this oversized volume, which includes 130 muted-color photographs of the dancers performing various movements.

Both ballet and modern dance require great control over the body. Dancers must stretch to assume and sustain difficult, often unnatural, positions. Their training doesn’t develop large muscles, but rather muscles that are instantly responsive to the dancer’s demands. A few of the photos, for example, show the pliancy of dancers’ feet, which have flexibility far beyond the normal range.

Perhaps half the men depicted in the book are nude, while most of the others wear dance belts. When the Dutch National Ballet toured several years ago with some nude dances, one critic remarked that they had not



The cover of “Men in Motion”

solved the “flop flop” problem. Dance belts do just that, while doing nothing to disguise the presence of genitals. Paradoxically, they seem to emphasize them.

The men in almost equal portion are black and white, drawn mostly from the Paris Opera, New York City Ballet, Alvin Alley American Dance Theater and the Bill T. Jones/Arnie Zane dance troupe. A smaller number are drawn from Broadway, hip hop and break dancing.

Although most of the men, as the title promises, are “in motion,” a few are sitting or just staring moodily at the camera. Advance publicity for the book included some excellent photos of men “in motion” that could have been used instead of these, which add nothing to

The lithe, muscled bodies of about 50 male dancers

the book.

Ballet has – and has always had – a strong erotic component. The Paris Opera, for example, long refused to perform any opera that did not contain a ballet episode, which allowed the female dancers to display themselves and then later mingle with the men in the audience to make “dates.” And so, to have their operas performed in Paris, composers like Wagner and Verdi composed music to go with largely unrelated ballet episodes inserted into their operas.

Nowadays, with more male-centered troupes, the erotic appeal of men’s bodies too can be openly acknowledged and welcomed.

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'They're all fish-out-of-water stories'

Cover from 11

as a gift. As a gift, instead of a burden." Those were wise words at the right time for me. It is a gift and it's time to get back to work and do something different. And yet it's not different in a sense. I think there was a theme in there (that) attracted me to it, which is ultimately, at the end of the day, all of the work has had something similar — even "Woop Woop" had it — they're all fish-out-of-water stories. Like it or not, it's very much there. Jessica Biel is the drag queen, so to speak.

GS: I'm glad that you mentioned Jessica. At first, I wasn't sure that she had the range to bring Larita to bear, but she surprised me.

SE: That's the best thing you could ever possibly say to me. That's what I was banking on. Coward had originally written Larita as a little bit older. This sassy, ballsy, American divorcee who marries this younger man. I actually looked at a lot of actresses a little bit older and a lot of them had done similar (work). It's very similar to what I did with (Terence) Stamp in "Priscilla," which is look outside the box. When I met Jessica, there was something incredibly fresh about her. I realized that she's got this baggage of being called "the most beautiful woman in the world," which she's been voted several times. There's a part of her that's fighting to get out of that and stretch.... And she worked her guts out. I've never seen anybody work that hard. She got up every morning and fought her way through it and that was just a joy to behold.

'Honestly, I'm a frustrated composer.'

Within about two days of shooting the film, Colin Firth spun around, looked at me and said, "She's going to steal this movie."...

GS: Both "...Priscilla..." and "...Woop Woop..." had wonderful soundtracks, and so does "Easy Virtue." I was especially struck by the period arrangements of modern tunes such as Rose Royce's "Car Wash," Billy Ocean's "When The Going Gets Tough The Tough Get Going" and Tom Jones' "Sexbomb."

SE: Honestly, I'm a frustrated composer. It's funny, I fell into this job and actually all I've ever wanted to do is write music. Usually before I start anywhere, I start with a strong musical concept of what I want to do. In this instance, I wanted to stretch



myself a little bit.

GS: Something that I noticed in the movie is the use of reflections — in mirrors, windows, and even the eight ball on the billiards table.

SE: That was very deliberate. When Coward wrote this play, he was very young. The original play is very vicious. It wasn't funny, it was really rather cruel. He was having a go at the English. The Coward that we know



A scene from Stephan Elliott's "Easy Virtue"

and love, which is quite a lot lighter, he became that later in his career. Part of what my thinking was — Coward's known as the master, I wonder what the master would have done if he'd approached the same material when he was older. That became what we were doing in the writing department. Most people don't know this, but a very young Alfred Hitchcock shot the original "Easy Virtue" as a silent movie as his second movie. It was Coward's second play and Hitchcock's second movie.

GS: Kind of ironic.

SE: Yes! When you look at the (original) film, it's not very good, because it was a small black-and-white movie. ... Hitchcock wasn't even Hitchcock yet. If we're going to attack the script from the perspective of what the older

Coward would have done if he'd rewritten it, I thought to myself, what would the older Hitchcock have done if he'd done it in his prime, rather than when he was 20 years old. A lot of the visuals throughout the film (are) classic Hitchcock in his prime.

GS: I don't think I'm ruining it for anybody, but the movie contains the unfortunate death of the family dog.

SE: Ah, yes.

GS: Are you worried about PETA or animal rights activists making a fuss?

SE: No. It actually happened to a girlfriend of mine. She'd met a guy, and when she went to meet the family for the first time, she was so nervous, she actually sat on the family Chihuahua the minute she walked in the house. All hell broke loose


and there were tears. She went away and they bought the family a new dog, and when they came back for a second meeting with the family she was so nervous about doing anything wrong. She went looking for the toilet, couldn't find it and rather than keep asking where the toilet was, she shut the door, locked herself in the bathroom, pulled down her pants and jumped up on the sink to go to the toilet. The sink snapped off and she knocked herself out. They eventually broke the door down about two hours later and found herself unconscious in a pile of her own piddle with her underpants around her ankles. You'll be happy to know that that was the end of that relationship. They never got past the second one (laughs).

GS: There were signs that it was not meant to be.

SE: It was not meant to be. I've actually been trying to do this gag for quite some time.

GS: How does being a gay man influence your work, if at all?


SE: There's a single theme that I've only recognized in the last couple of years, but there is definitely a feeling through every film and in everything I've ever written that has only recently dawned on me — and that is that I've always felt like a bit of an outsider. Every film I've done is about an outsider not fitting in. I have never not fit in. I've always fit in fine. But I guess going back to my early teens, it was probably a traumatic experience, as I think it probably is for most gay and lesbians when they don't fit in.



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'PRECIOUS' NOMINATED FOR NAACP AWARD

The heart-wrenching story of an illiterate and abused teen in New York's Harlem who finds hope in a classroom of misfits tops nominees for the 41st civil rights group NAACP's annual Image Awards.

"Precious: Based on the Novel 'Push' by Sapphire" added to its awards-season momentum with a leading eight nominations, earning nods for director Lee

Daniels, star Gabourey Sidibe and supporting actors Mariah Carey, Mo'Nique, Paula Patton and Lenny Kravitz. "Precious" was also nominated for outstanding motion picture and outstanding independent film.

The NAACP Image Awards honor diversity in the arts and will be presented Feb. 26.

Other movies nominated include "Invictus," "Michael Jackson's This Is It," "The Blind Side" and "The Princess and the Frog." "Princess"

star Anika Noni Rose, and "Invictus" star Morgan Freeman also were nominated for their performances.

Sophie Okonedo ("Skin") and Taraji P. Henson ("Tyler Perry's I Can Do Bad All By Myself") round out the best actress category, while Denzel Washington ("The Taking of Pelham 12"), Idris Elba ("Obsessed") and Jamie Foxx ("Law Abiding Citizen") are up for best actor.

Queer through the year

Music

By Gregg Shapiro

“FOR HIM AND THE GIRLS” Hawksley Workman, Isadora

It's a testament to the timelessness of Hawksley Workman's music that the reissue of “For Him and the Girls” sounds like he could have written and recorded it yesterday or today.

The out Canadian singer/songwriter and guitar virtuoso, one of the most riveting live performers I have ever experienced, is simply whetting our appetites for his forthcoming album. Songs such as the delectable “No Sissies,” sinister “Tarantulove,” “Sweet Hallelujah” (which lands softly somewhere between fellow Canadians Leonard Cohen and Rufus Wainwright), the exquisite acoustic “Safe and Sound,” and the crazy comfort of “Paper Shoes” are proof that Workman is one of a kind.

I advise you to also snag Workman's 2001 masterwork “(Last Night We Were) The Delicious Wolves,” which contains the irresistible “Jealous of your Cigarette.”

“ORIGON: ORPHAN” The Hidden Cameras, Arts & Crafts

O, Canada! The Hidden Cameras also hail from that mighty land to our north, but “Origin: Orphan” opens on an exotic note with the Middle Eastern-influenced “Ratify The New.” Then, before you know it, Joel Gibb and company return to their delirious and suggestive chamber pop roots.

Sexually active cuts, such as “He Falls to Me,” “Colour of a Man” and “Kingdom Come,” indicate Gibb still has men on his mind. And he proves himself to be a romantic, both hopeless and hopeful, on “In The NA” and “Do I Belong.”

“SAINTHOOD” Tegan and Sara, Sire/Vapor

Keeping with the Canadian theme, out twin sisters Tegan



Hawksley Workman

and Sara return with another fine album, “Sainthood.” The songs are examples of the twins' continued growth as one of the most influential musical acts out there. In the same way that Ani DiFranco inspired imitators, it's easy to imagine girl bands planning to follow in Tegan and Sara's distinctive footsteps.

“Sainthood” contains all of the elements that have made Tegan and Sara so popular — the unique lyrical perspective, the way their voices spill over each other like waves, their masterful musicianship. Alluring tunes include “On Directing,” “Red Belt,” the thrashing “Northshore,” the biting and blubbing “Alligator,” the fluid “The Ocean” and the compelling “Someday.”

“MUSIC FOR MEN” Gossip, Columbia

Beth Ditto of the Gossip is another visible out musician who has broken down barriers and received acclaim and adoration. A brash and brazen southern belle, Ditto and her band mates blaze through 13 tunes on “Music For Men,” leaving ashes and asses shaking in their wake.

Equally adept at belting bluesy numbers such as “8th Wonder,” “Dimestore Diamond” and “The Breakdown” as she is at strutting like a disco diva on “Love Long Distance,” “Pop Goes The World,” “Men In Love,” “Love And Let Love,” Beth Ditto is a true original and Gossip is something to talk about.

“GIVE UP THE GHOST” Brandi Carlile, Columbia

As queer voices go, Brandi Carlile, who performs at The Pabst, Jan. 21, has one for

the ages. Soulful and haunting, it's a voice that sticks to your ribs and brings a range of emotions to your ears. “Give Up The Ghost,” Carlile's third studio disc, is her most accomplished, accessible and enjoyable. Still in her 20s, Carlile is a seasoned performer, having recently toured with the Indigo Girls (again).

She wastes no time reeling us in with the amazing “Looking Out” and follows it with equally enticing numbers, including “Dying Day,” “Dreams,” “That Year,” “Caroline,” “Before It Breaks,” “If There Was No You” and “Oh Dear.”

“I BOUGHT A BLUE CAR TODAY” Alan Cumming, Yellow Sound

It wouldn't take much effort to eviscerate “I Bought A Blue Car Today” by out star of stage and screen Alan Cumming. His unique vocal style probably isn't to all tastes, even those with the least bit of affection for the theatrical or the absurd.

However, I want to commend Mr. C for the notable chances he took on his debut album. “Wig In A Box/Wicked Little Town” from “Hedwig and the Angry Inch” is a fit for Cumming. So are his renditions of songs by John Bucchino (“Expressed”) and William Finn (“What More Can I Say”), as well as “Where I Want To Be” from “Chess” and Jimmy Webb's “All I Know.” That said, Cumming falls short on the remainder of the selections, including “Shine” (co-written by “Three Penny Opera” co-star Cyndi Lauper) and bad homages to Sinatra and Dolly (“That's Life” and “Here You Come Again”).



Twins Tegan and Sara. Their new release is “Sainthood.”

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Queer Zine Archive Project, 2935 N. Fratney St.

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Milwaukee Street, Suite 215, 414-290-7350, www.womensfund.com.

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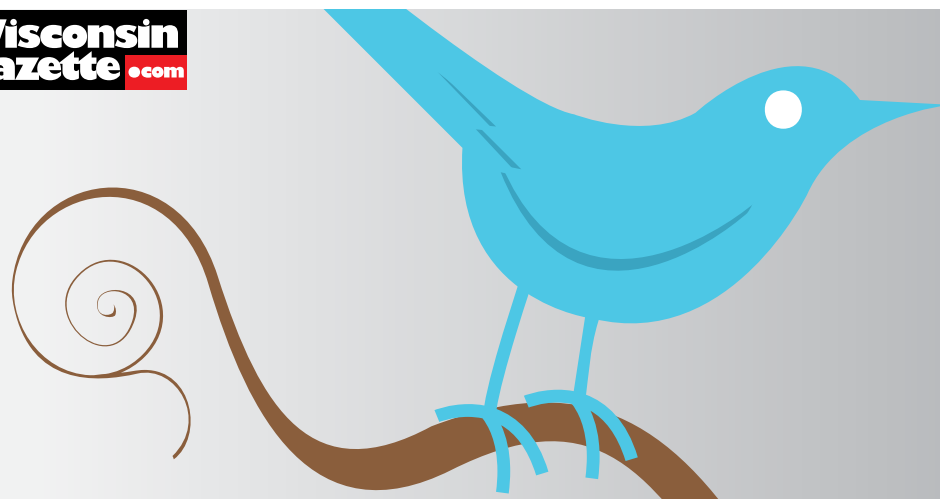
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Loving tribute to 'Ambassador of Love'

By Harry Cherkinian

WiG Contributing Writer

She was sassy. She was sexual. Yet, she could be very serious at the uptick of her feather boa. And all with an attitude that was as forceful as it was playful.

Pearl Bailey was an all-around entertainer for many of her 72 years, starring on stage (where she was best known for her turn as Dolly Levi in an all-black version of "Hello Dolly") as well as screen and television. And now the woman dubbed America's "Ambassador of Love" takes to the stage once again in "Pearl Bailey...By Request," which opened in The Rep's Stackner Cabaret last weekend.

The 75-minute tribute features 15 of Bailey's most requested songs of jazz, swing and Broadway tunes set against childhood stories and show business anec-



dotes. Co-written by the show's star Roz White and director Thomas W. Jones II, the show made its debut in Washington, D.C., in 2008. At last week's opening, "Pearl Bailey" was as energetic and vibrant as the multi-colored costumes and flamboyant hats and shoes that were among Bailey's trademarks.

White captured many of Bailey's signature moves and sounds, from the deep, throaty voice to the sexual innuendo and take-no-prisoners directness for which the star was known.

Bailey was a diva before the term was coined, yet she could move easily within a range of emotions, allowing her vulnerability to bubble up

from beneath her tough exterior. White deftly showcased this range, jumping from the take-charge "A Woman's Prerogative" to the ballad of "Frankie and Johnny," a story of doomed love that had the audience in the palm of her hands. "When love don't work, Smith and Wesson will," White quipped after the song.

Bailey was known for audience participation, and this show also literally pulls in — men onto their feet to dance with the performer. At the heart of this production's strength is the talented trio of local veteran musicians backing White: music director and pianist William Knowles, bassist Don Linke and drummer Dave Bayles.

"Just tell me how you like my personality," cooed White early on, while settling in with



PHOTO: JAY WESTHAUSER

Don Linke, Roz White and William Knowles in "Pearl Bailey ... By Request" at The Rep in Milwaukee

the crowd.

The response? Just fine, Pearly Mae. Just fine.

"Pearl Bailey... By

Request" runs through Feb.

28 in The Rep's Stackner Cabaret located in the

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Located in the Knickerbocker on the Lake hotel, the Knick is a hip, attractive restaurant that draws an equally hip and attractive clientele.

But you won't find attitude on the menu here. When we waddled in one cold morning for a blow-out brunch before our New Year's diets began, everyone from the hostess to the servers was friendly and eager to please.

Shortly after being shown to our table, our server stopped by to check in and take coffee and cocktail orders. Normally, I'm not much of a drinker early in the morning, but the Queen Mary caught my eye: a 22-ounce tower of spicy tomato juice garnished with blackened shrimp, celery, a cherry pepper, pickle and olive. It was delicious and guaranteed to burn off any morning fog. Other unusual brunch cocktails include the "Manmosa," a combination of Absolut ruby



red grapefruit vodka, orange juice, Champagne and pineapple vodka.

The extensive brunch menu features all the usual suspects — omelets, pancakes and basic egg dishes.

However, it was the more unusual dishes that caught our eyes. Crab hash combines crispy hash browns with crabmeat and onions, then tops it off with two eggs any style. I thought the potatoes could have been crispier, but was overruled by my spouse and our friend Carrie.

I opted for the breakfast pasta, and I think I've found a new favorite dish. Fettuccine pasta is tossed with scrambled eggs, onions, tomatoes and bacon, then topped with Parmesan cheese and breadcrumb crumbs, making for a hearty and satisfying meal. There was just enough grease to this dish to make it the perfect hangover remedy. A few grinds of black pepper were all it needed.

Our friend Carrie is one of those sporty lesbians who can eat just about anything and still stay thin (hate her for that!). She tried one of the daily specials, a Brie omelet. Fluffy eggs were sautéed with slivers of crisp asparagus and topped with a huge slab of melted Brie. The dish came with toast and a side bowl of fruit topped with yogurt and honey. Carrie found the dish delectable, but too rich to finish — which might give a hint as to how she stays so fit.

A neighboring table got another of the day's specials — French toast bites. The mound of marshmallow-sized pieces of egg bread dipped in cinnamon and sugar looked too good to resist, so we decided to split it as a dessert. The dish was pure heaven, topped with whiskey butter and maple syrup. We each ate about three cubes and took the rest home for another day.

The Bottom Line:

Brunch will run about \$15 a person, including tax, tip and non-alcoholic beverage. Add another \$10 for a specialty cocktail.

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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,

mikeysmilwaukee.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.woodys-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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Jan. 14, Thursday

Elvis-heads unite and delight when The Northern Lights Theater at Potawatomi Bingo Casino, 1721 W. Canal, hosts a "Tribute To The King" starring Ryan Pelton, tonight and tomorrow night at 7:30 p.m. Info: 414-847-7922.

Jan. 15, Friday

Forward Theater 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. Info: 608-258-4141.

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

High Noon Saloon, 701A

On stage

By Gregg Shapiro

E. Washington in Madison, welcomes Dustin Zahn at 10 p.m. Info: 608-268-1122.

Renaissance Theaterworks' production of "Blackbird" by David Harrower, directed by Susan Fete and featuring Carrie Coon and Brian Mani, opens tonight and runs through Feb. 7 at Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway. Info: 414-291-7800.

Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, has The Maze, Vega Star and Hayward Williams at 8 p.m. Info: 414-276-7288.

Sexy Ester and The Pretty Mama Sisters, Mike Droho and the Compase Rose and Fermata performs at 10 p.m. at The Frequency, 121 W.

Main in Madison. Info: 608-819-8777.

Jan. 16, Saturday

Hotel Milwaukee, the comedy-variety radio program that aired on Wisconsin Public Radio from 1994-2002, tapes a reunion show before a live audience, followed by performances by Katie Todd Band, Jim Liban, Terry Coffman, Tom Schwark and John Will Balsley, plus the house band with pianist Dean Lee and jazz singer Adekola Adedapo at 7:30 p.m. in Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. 4th. Info: 414-286-3663.

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

Jayne Dawicki and Ari Herstand play Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, at 8 p.m.

On stage next page

Rants, Raves & Other Remarks

HEY DOLL

Barbie's actual name is Barbara Millicent Roberts. It's true. I found it on the Web.

UMM...

Marriage = 1 man + 1 woman. Everything else = Not.

BEDDY BYE

I truly believe in a luxurious bed too. Want to see?

KIDS SAY...

My 5-year-old niece asked me about the origins of children. She says she wants to have two, but she says if she has to have them the way she thinks they are had, she might change her mind. I totally understand.

2009

The last year had to be the absolute worst year of my life. Now, don't we need hope? And change?

HELLO 2010

And a happy little ol' new year to ya'll.

NAUGHTY OUGHTS

From the Washington Post: For most of the past 70 years, the U.S. economy has grown at a steady clip, generating perpetually higher incomes and wealth for American households. But since 2000, the story is starkly different. The past decade was the worst for the U.S. economy in modern times, a sharp reversal from a long period of prosperity that is leading economists and policymakers to

fundamentally rethink the underpinnings of the nation's growth.

THANKS GEORGE

OK, now we have some history to judge. Can we all agree t h a t George W. Bush was the w o r s t president ever? Even Richard Nixon. Because Nixon was smart and knew what he was doing. Bush was a puppet.

!@#?*

TELL MAMA

You thought you had found a good girl/One to love you and give you the world/Now you've found that you've been misused/Talk to me, I'll do what you choose, I want you to...

FORECAST

Tomorrow: Cold and gray. June: Sunshine and pride.

CALLING THE COMIC

Hey, where's the writer with the Tiger Woods jokes? Come back. Isn't there a sex tape to laugh about?

TMZ TERRIFIC

TMZ.com is better than drugs.

TELL MAMA

That girl you had didn't have no sense/She wasn't worth all the time that you spent.

Something on your mind? Go to www.wisconsin Gazette.com. Now.

On stage

On Stage from 18

Info: 414-276-7288.

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, welcomes The Goodyear Pimps with Axiom and Perverse Engineer at 10 p.m. Info: 608-819-8777.

Jan. 17, Sunday

Stiemke Theater's production of "Almost, Maine" runs through Feb. 7 at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, 108 E. Wells. Info: 414-224-9490.

The 26th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration in Uihlein Hall in the Marcus Center For the Performing Arts, at the corner of Water and State, includes local performing arts groups and others interpreting the theme "People Must Work Together," at 1 p.m. Info: 414-273-2787.

Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, hosts the Sunday night Song Swap featuring Kevn Kinney (of Drivin' N Cryin') and Sammy Llanas (of BoDeans) at 8 p.m. Info: 414-276-7288.

The Upwelling, Floral Terrace, Collide and Scope perform at 8 p.m. at The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison. Info: 608-819-8777.

Bowerbirds, Sharon Van Etten and Peter Wolf Crier are at High Noon Saloon, 701A E. Washington in Madison at 8 p.m. Info: 608-268-1122.

Jan. 18, Monday

Country favorite Phil Vassar performs at 8 p.m.

tonight through Wednesday night at The Northern Lights Theater at Potawatomi Bingo Casino, 1721 W. Canal. Info: 414-847-7922.

Jan. 20, Wednesday

The Rave, 2401 W. Wisconsin, presents Nick Jonas & The Administration, with Diane Birch, at 6:30 p.m. Info: 414-342-RAVE.

At 10 p.m., Peace Of Mind Orchestra plays The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison,

with Venice Gas House Trolley. Info: 608-819-8777.

Jan. 21, Thursday

Out singer/songwriter Brandi Carlile performs at 8 p.m. at The Pabst, 144 E. Wells. Info: 414-286-3663.

The Milwaukee Adworkers present The Battle of the Advertising Bands at 7 p.m. in Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell. Info: 414-276-7288.

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, has Brighton MA with Elsinore, Flight at 9 p.m. Info: 608-819-8777.

Jan. 22, Friday

The Riverside, 116 W. Wisconsin, presents No Reservations: An Evening with Anthony Bourdain at 8 p.m. Info: 414-286-3205.

Heather Moran presents "Rosie! A Tribute to Rosemary Clooney," tonight and tomorrow night at 8 p.m. at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, 19805 W. Capitol Drive in Brookfield. Info: (262) 781-9520.

Copperbox performs at 8 p.m. in Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell. Info: 414-276-7288.

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, has Meteorade with Rescue School and The Selfish Gene at 10 p.m. Info: 608-819-8777.

Robert Gordon and The Gang They Couldn't Hang perform at 9 p.m. at The Northern Lights Theater at Potawatomi Bingo Casino, 1721 W. Canal. Info: 414-847-7922

HOLY F*** is at the Majestic, 115 King in Madison, at 10 p.m. Info: 608-251-2582.

High Noon Saloon, 701A E. Washington in Madison, welcomes Tea Leaf Green and Elmwood at 9:30 p.m. Info: 608-268-1122.

Jan. 23, Saturday

The Pabst, 144 E. Wells, presents singer/songwriter Michelle Branch at 8 p.m. Info: 414-286-3663.

Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. 4th, hosts the Pablove Benefit Concert featuring Fever Marlene, The Gufs, The Lackloves, Maritime, Mike Benign, Old Man Malcolm, Pet Engine and Truth in Fiction at 7 p.m. Info: 414-286-3663.

Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, welcomes Ryan Magner at 8 p.m. Info: 414-276-7288.

The Hood Internet, The New Loud and OCD Automatic are at High Noon Saloon, 701A E. Washington in Madison at 10 p.m. Info: 608-268-1122.



On Jan. 21, out singer/songwriter Brandi Carlile performs at 8 p.m. at The Pabst, 144 E. Wells, Milwaukee. Info: 414-286-3663.

Jan. 24, Sunday

Bay View Brew Haus, 2535 S. Kinnickinnic, has The Squeezettes at 9 p.m. Info: 414-481-8060.

Majestic, 115 King in Madison, presents Set Your Goals with special guests The Swellers at 7 p.m. Info: 608-251-2582.

Jan. 26, Tuesday

"Rent," featuring Adam Pascal and Anthony Rapp from the original Broadway production and film adaptation, opens tonight and runs through Jan. 31 at Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison. Info: 608-258-4141.

Langhorne Slim is at Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. 4th, at 8 p.m. Info: 414-286-3663.

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, presents Don Chani and Dr. Dubbist at 9:30 p.m. Info: 608-819-8777.

At 7 p.m. Owl City and Lights perform at the Majestic, 115 King in Madison. Info: 608-251-2582.

High Noon Saloon, 701A E. Washington in Madison, has Whitney Mann and the Cutouts at 6 p.m. Info: 608-268-1122.

Jan. 27, Wednesday

Breakers Broken and Stereotype play The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, at 9:30 p.m. Info: 608-819-8777.

Jan. 28, Thursday

The Milwaukee premier of "Purgatorio" by Ariel Dorfman, directed by Mary MacDonald Kerr and featuring Angela Iannone and David Ceccarini, opens tonight and runs through Feb. 21 at Next Act Theatre, 342 N. Water. Info: 414-278-0765.

Howie Day and Serena Ryder perform at 8 p.m. in Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell. Info: 414-276-7288.

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, presents The Bloodsugars and Miles Nielsen at 10 p.m. Info: 608-819-8777.

Send listings to gshapiro@wisconsinGazette.com.

ONGOING

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

2:30 p.m., first and third Thursdays, LGBT senior adults discussion, Madison Senior Center, 330 W. Mifflin St., Madison. Info: ferington@charter.net.

6 p.m., third Thursdays, same-sex parents group, OutReach, 600 Williamson St., Madison. Info: 608-255-8582, www.lgbtoutreach.org.

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

5:30 p.m., second and fourth Fridays, Pozitive Lite

HIV/AIDS group, OutReach, 600 Williamson St., Madison. Info: 608-255-8582, www.lgbtoutreach.org.

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.

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.

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

12:30 p.m., third Thursday, Retired Old/Older Lesbians (ROLLers), Madison. Info: 608-219-7751.

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@wisconsinngazette.com.

THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

THURSDAY

Jan. 14

Read WiG.

FRIDAY

Jan. 15

6 p.m., WanderWomyn Social/Outdoor Group, Mona's Chat and Dance, Milwaukee area. Info: debydoo2@yahoo.com.

SATURDAY

Jan. 16

2 p.m., WanderWomyn Social/Outdoor Group watches UWM vs. UW Green Bay basketball. Info: debydoo2@yahoo.com.

7 p.m., WanderWomyn Social/Outdoor Group roller derby game (see below). Info: debydoo2@yahoo.com.

7 p.m., Brew City Bruisers Opening Bout, Milwaukee County Sports Complex, 6000 W. Ryan Road, Franklin.

7 p.m., GAMMA game night, Milwaukee. Info: www.milwaukeeegamma.com.

8 p.m., Shaia's second annual Beach Blanket Bingo Hafa Belly Dance Party, Milwaukee Gay Arts Center,

703 S. Second St., Milwaukee. 8 p.m., Madison Gay Video Club, "Redwoods" and "Reckless." Info: www.mgvc.org.

SUNDAY

Jan. 17

1 p.m., Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday Celebration "People Must Work Together," Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, 123 E. State St., Milwaukee. Info: www.marcuscenter.org.

1 p.m., New Year, New You goals-setting program, LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin, 1456 Junction Ave., Racine. Info: 262-664-4100, www.lgbtsewisc.org.

MONDAY

Jan. 18

Martin Luther King, Jr.'s birthday.

6 p.m., domestic violence/assault resources, OutReach, 600 Williamson St., Madison. Info: 608-255-8582, www.lgbt-outreach.org.

7:30 p.m., gender identity support group, LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin, 1456

Junction Ave., Racine. Info: 262-664-4100, www.lgbtsewisc.org.

TUESDAY

Jan. 19

7 p.m., SOFFA Support Network drop-in, OutReach, 600 Williamson St., Madison. Info: 608-255-8582, www.lgbt-outreach.org.

7:30 p.m., GAMMA sheephead. Info: www.milwaukeeegamma.com.

"Little House on the Prairie," through Jan. 24, Overture Center, Madison.

THURSDAY

Jan. 21

Read WiG.

6 p.m., Quit Group tobacco cessation program, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 West Court St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-292-3066.

7 p.m., movie night — "Amancio: Two Faces on a Tombstone," LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin, 1456 Junction Ave., Racine. Info: 262-664-4100, www.lgbtsewisc.org.

FRIDAY

Jan. 22

7 p.m., GAMMA dining out night. Info: www.milwaukeeegamma.com.

SATURDAY

Jan. 23

7 p.m., Equality Illinois gala Justice for All, Hilton Chicago, 720 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Info: 773-477-7173, www.equalityillinois.org.

MONDAY

Jan. 25

7:30 p.m., GAMMA bridge night. Info: www.milwaukeeegamma.com.

TUESDAY

Jan. 26

"Rent," through Jan. 31, Overture Center for the Arts, Madison.

WEDNESDAY

Jan. 27

6:30 p.m., Q Cinema International Film Group watches "Fire," OutReach, 600 Williamson St., Madison. Info: 608-255-8582, www.lgbt-outreach.org.

SAVE THE DATES

Cream City Foundation hosts a fundraiser Feb. 6 featuring Marvin Hamlisch and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, 6:30 p.m. at Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, 929 N. Water St. Advance tickets are \$50 or \$75 at the door. Call (414) 225-0244 or go to creamcityfoundation.org.

The ACLU of Wisconsin's Bill of Rights Celebration is set for 6 p.m. Feb. 20 at the Hotel Intercontinental in Milwaukee. The event features dinner, a reception and a keynote speech by Air America correspondent and Wonkette founder Ana Marie Cox. RSVP: Feb. 13. Info: mecks@aclu-wi.org or 414-272-4032, ext. 18.

COMING UP

Jan. 29, 7 p.m., movie night — "Love Actually," LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin, 1456 Junction Ave., Racine. Info: 262-664-4100, www.lgbtsewisc.org.

Jan. 30, 12:30 p.m., Blue Moon Careers Pathing Group, LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin, 1456 Junction Ave., Racine. Info: 262-664-4100, www.lgbtsewisc.org.

Jan. 31, 2 p.m., God and Gays One Act Play Festival, Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. Second St., Milwaukee.

Info: 414-383-3727.

Feb. 2, 7 p.m., Share-A-Bration open house at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. Second St., Milwaukee. Hosted by Joseph Pabst, Bill Serpe, Michael Lisowski, Gary Gussick and Craig Bodoh. Info: 414-460-3253.

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REAL ESTATE

Mortgage 101

New game, new rules for buying a new home

By Kerrie Kennedy
WIG Staff Writer

It's the classic catch-22. Real estate prices are at historic lows, making it the perfect time to buy. But most people can't buy without getting a mortgage, and today, that's no easy feat.

The lending landscape has changed so profoundly that it seems like the only people qualified to get a loan these days are the ones who don't need one.

While the process of obtaining a mortgage has become arduous, the good news is it's not impossible. There are a number of strategies buyers can employ in order to obtain a low-interest loan.

Here are some of the things to consider:

Credit Score. There's just no getting around it: your credit score will affect your interest rate. In fact, it will affect your ability to obtain a mortgage in the first place. According to Wisconsin Mortgage Corporation vice president John Inzeo, the absolute rock bottom score needed in order to qualify for a mortgage is 620.

"The minimum used to be 580, but now, even on an FHA loan, you'll need to have a score that's 620 or higher," Inzeo says. "But even that doesn't guarantee that your loan is going to be approved."



While the process of obtaining a mortgage has become arduous, the good news is it's not impossible.

In order to determine your credit score, pull copies from all three reporting agencies: Trans Union, Equifax and Experian. The middle score is the one that will be used to underwrite your loan.

If your score is below 620, there are a number of things you can do to bring it up. Start paying your bills on time and pay off credit card balances so that they're under 40 percent of your limit, says Gary Novel, president of the kreditguru.com.

Check your credit report to make sure you don't have any collection accounts — unpaid parking tickets, medical bills and utility bills tend to be the most common culprits — and don't apply for any new credit, since that lowers your score.

And though it may be tempting, don't close any credit cards when you pay them off.

"The more credit you have

available to use and the less of it you actually use, the better it is for your credit score," Novel says. "Just because you have credit, doesn't mean you have to use it."

Employment history.

In the days of easy money, self-employed professionals could simply state — and in some cases, overstate — their income in order to obtain a mortgage. No longer. "The days of stated income loans are gone, and we've moved to a more of a 1980s lending style, for those of us who have been around that long," Inzeo says. "You'll need to show two years of stable employment and a strong two-year income history that's verifiable."

Overall debt. Just how much house can you afford to buy? The answer is not only determined by how much money you make — but also by how much you owe. "Your total hous-

ing expenses — the principal and interest of your loan payment plus the escrows required for your property taxes and homeowners insurance — really shouldn't be more than 28 percent of your gross monthly income," Inzeo says. "The second ratio is 36 percent of your gross monthly income for your housing expense plus any other debt." If payments on all your loans will total more than 40 percent of your income, brace yourself for rejection. On the other hand, compensating factors might include such things as cash reserves or a strong credit history.

Down payment. No down payment loans? A thing of the past. Buyers should not only expect to fork over at least 20 percent for a down payment, they'll need enough cash to cover closing costs as well.

"The two biggest obstacles

'The cash needed to purchase a home affects a buyer's overall ability to qualify for home financing.'

for buyers today are down payment and closing costs," Inzeo says. "The cash needed to purchase a home affects a buyer's overall ability to qualify for home financing."

Cash reserves. You need more than just a down payment to obtain a mortgage these days. You also need some cash in the bank. Buyers need to show they have cash reserves equal to at least two months of mortgage payments (including property taxes and insurance). Even if a buyer can afford to put down more than 20 percent, it's often better to have a down payment that's balanced by reserve funds, Inzeo says. "Especially for first time homebuyers, I would rather see them have six months of reserves set aside. You have to maintain a house, and that's expensive."

Loan amount. In general, the more money you're trying to get, the tougher it is. "Jumbo loan financing is very limited today because of the concern for values," Inzeo says. "Lenders are very skittish, because they don't know if those higher-end homes will hold value." While it's not uncommon for lenders to seek two appraisals on a jumbo loan, the recent U.S. housing report may help lessen some of the concerns. "What we're seeing is a better understanding, especially in the Midwest, of where the market's strengths and weaknesses lie," Inzeo says. "The Midwest will typically lead housing out of a cycle like

this. We have more stability than many areas."

First-time home-buyer loans. First-time homebuyers who are buying a home or condominium can obtain a loan backed by the Federal Housing Administration for up to \$410,000. These loans offer several benefits: credit scores are not taken into consideration as much and the minimum down payment is just three and a half percent. While these loans do carry mortgage insurance, it's at a reduced rate and interest rates are whatever the prevailing marketplace rate is, no matter what your credit score.

Borrowers should be aware that their closing costs will be higher with an FHA loan — 1.5 percent of the loan amount is paid at closing for mortgage insurance (about \$6,000 on a \$400,000 loan). But these fees can be financed into the loan or negotiated with the seller, who can legally pay between three and six percent towards closing costs.

It can't last. Current interest rates are at 40-year lows, but most experts say it can't last. "(These are) unprecedented times in terms of interest rates, but the Fed has signaled that by mid-2010, they will begin to back off the monetary policy," Inzeo says. "By the end of 2010, early 2011, we'll start to see rates increase to around six, six and a quarter range. The big question mark, he says, is whether we'll begin to see inflation as a result of all the capital that's been put into the market. If that happens, we could begin to see rates increase faster, in 2011 or 2012. Until then, the triple bonus of newly affordable real estate, low interest rates and a tax incentive make this an incredible time to invest in real estate."

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showing, www.eastmore.com

Help Wanted

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Wisconsin Gazette is seeking freelance newspaper reporters to cover the LGBT community in Milwaukee, Madison and southeastern Wisconsin. Interested? And experienced? Send a resume, three clips, availability and interests to WIG at managingeditor@wisconsin gazette.com.

Madison sales rep

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PERSONAL FORECAST

ARIES: You keep fooling yourself into thinking you're behind this, but you're not into it at all. Did you really believe trying to institute normal would ever work for you? Step out of the box and be who you are.

TAURUS: You have built up too many levels of resistance to be open to anything but your own input. As much as you think this is working, it must be fully apparent that it keeps you totally separate from yourself and others.

GEMINI: You may be doing what's right for you, but the ripple effect has rocked more than one person. Don't hold yourself back, but be sure to weigh all of your choices thoughtfully.

CANCER: Before you dive into this, don't assume that others want to go along with it. Their needs don't look anything like yours at the moment. It's OK to rearrange the scenery.

LEO: Reruns of things that didn't go well the first time have you praying that was then and this is now. Don't get too involved in sentiments that blind you to the fact that some things never change.

VIRGO: You try too hard on so many levels. And it's a shame, because the real you has way more to give than the self you've given all your power to.

LIBRA: It may be best to wait until others clear up their confusion. Someone

Stargaze

BY MINERVA

doesn't have the capacity to follow through, and you can't do this without their support.

SCORPIO: You know what you want, but what you need could be very different.

Chances are things will not turn out in your favor. If this doesn't go the way you expect it to, don't waste too much time trying to force it.

SAGITTARIUS: Too much overhead and a lot of responsibility make you wonder what it would cost to just follow your spirit. Something is calling you to dump it all and go searching for a totally different way of life.

CAPRICORN: Choices that were made about three years ago bear directly on your current situation. If things are confusing, pause to reflect on what was going on back then. Whatever you do, don't make the same mistake again.

AQUARIUS: The ravages of time suggest that you would be better off if you didn't keep refusing the lesson. You may be right about a few things, but your biggest blind spot keeps you from seeing how wrong you are about others.

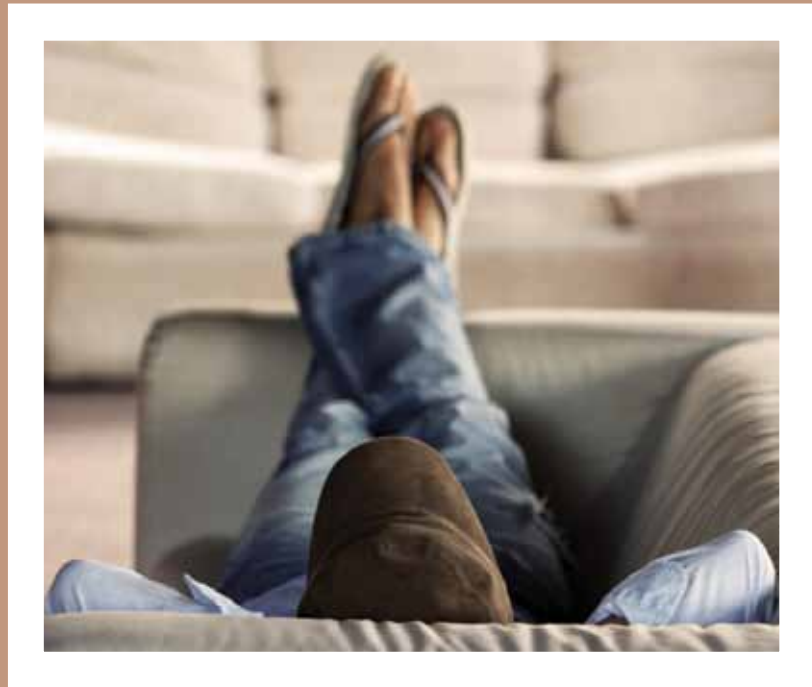
PISCES: Check in with yourself one more time before you go for it. If there's even one ounce of mean spiritedness underlying any of your choice, the whole situation will blow up in your face.



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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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