

Derby days

Cruising and bruising: Milwaukee's Brewcity Bruisers take command of the roller rink.

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THE VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR WISCONSIN'S LGBT COMMUNITY

January 28, 2010 | Vol. 1, No. 6

LOVE WE DO

Making Valentine's Day our own

By Louis Weisberg

WIG Staff Writer

From the jewelry counter to the Hallmark shop, same-sex couples are surrounded by idealized images of heterosexual love. But people like them are almost invisible — or, when they're not invisible, often controversial.

Despite this unwelcoming environment, the love that once dared not speak its name is thriving. Just ask the same-sex Wisconsin couples WIG spoke with about Valentine's Day:

MARIA & JENNIFER CADENAS

As executive director of Cream City Foundation, Maria Cadenas promotes the visibility of same-sex couples by coordinating the "Gay Neighbor" campaign, which features pictures of same-sex couples and their families on billboards and public transit. Cadenas' life reflects that of the couples on the billboards — she has a spouse and a

child.

This Valentine's Day, Maria and Jennifer Cadenas, who had a civil union ceremony in 2003, will have 13-month-old Alejandra in tow if they go out to celebrate their relationship. But, "We might just buy a cake and stay home," Maria says, noting the perils of dining out with an infant.

Although Alejandra is a new addition to their relationship, the Cadenases will continue practicing a personal tradition they've observed since their first Valentine's Day together: They will create handmade cards for each other.

"Mine tend to be very short," Maria says. "She puts glitter on hers and uses colorful markers."

In addition to Jennifer, Cadenas remembers her friends on Valentine's Day.

Love page 9

From top left: Jennifer, Alejandra and Maria Cadenas, Mark Pocan and Phil Frank, John Becker and Michael Knappen, Genia Stevens and Andrea Kleinheksel.



GRAPHIC: JASON SMITH

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LGBT groups send aid to Haiti

By Lisa Neff

Wig Staff Writer

International and national LGBT and HIV/AIDS groups are exporting hope, not homophobia, to Haiti.

Organizations such as the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Campaign, New York's Aid for AIDS and Houston's Rainbow Relief

are providing alternatives to donating to faith-based organizations with poor records on LGBT rights. They're focusing their efforts on supporting healthcare in the Caribbean country, which was devastated Jan. 12 by a magnitude 7.0 earthquake.

"The earthquake has been catastrophic for every sec-

tor, including Haiti's LGBT community," said IGLHRC Haiti page 9

Coast Guard crewmembers airlift a Haitian girl to a local hospital for treatment on Jan. 18.

PHOTO: U.S. COAST GUARD/ETTA SMITH



LGBT news with a twist



WIGWAG

By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg

SHE SAID

Meghan McCain, daughter of Cindy and John McCain, has long supported same-sex marriage and been vocal about her position. In mid-January, she endorsed NOH8, a gay rights group opposed to Proposition 8. The ballot measure passed by California voters in 2008 bans same-sex marriage. In a photo on her Twitter site, she wears silver duct tape across her mouth and "NOH8" on a cheek.

AND SHE SAID

Cindy McCain, wife of John McCain, also supports same-sex marriage. In a photo on the NOH8 Web site, she wears duct tape across her mouth and "NOH8" on a cheek. The gay rights campaign said Mrs. McCain offered to help. Meghan McCain Tweeted with pride: "I couldn't be more proud of my mother. ...I think more Republicans

need to start taking a stand for equality."

BUT HE SAID

John McCain, however, said through his U.S. Senate office that he still opposes legalizing marriage for gays and lesbians. "I respect the views of my family, but remain opposed to gay marriage and believe the sanctity of marriage is only defined as between one man and one woman," read the senator's statement. McCain in 2008 backed a ballot measure amending the Arizona Constitution to ban same-sex marriages.

HALF-PINT'S DAY

Gov. Jim Doyle proclaimed Jan. 19 as "Laura Ingalls Wilder Day." Melissa Gilbert, the actress who portrayed rambunctious Laura "Half-Pint" Ingalls Wilder in the "Little House on the Prairie" TV series — and who is now portraying

WORD OF THE DAY

The word of the day is "discrimination." The dictionary defines "discrimination" as "treatment or consideration of, or making a distinction in favor of or against, a person or thing based on the group, class or category to which that person or thing belongs rather than on individual merit." Discrimination sounds rath-

er unjust. But Honolulu's Roman Catholic Bishop Larry Silva said, "Not all discrimination is unjust. Some is quite justified, because it is based on reality and truth." And therefore, Silva said, it is all right to discriminate against gays and lesbians and deny them equal rights.

BANKROLL ON THE 'BOWL

The word was that the anti-gay Focus on the Family was suffering big money woes, but Focus can still rely on the kindness and wallets of some wealthy benefactors. The organization is buying a 30-second spot during the Super Bowl for a commercial starring 2007 Heisman Trophy winner Scott Tebow and his mom. SB spots sell for more than \$2.5 million.

IDOL SIGHTING

American Idol Adam Lambert (well, he should

have won) visited Chicago's Boystown Jan. 13 while he was in the city taping "The Oprah Winfrey" show. After dining at Pingpong, Lambert stopped in at Roscoe's Tavern around 11 p.m., just in time to catch the gay bar's weekly Drag Race, according to justenjusten.com. Apparently Lambert, who was accompanied by a small entourage of about five people, behaved very un-diva like.

COLD WEATHER, HOT TEMPER

A man sprayed Mace in the face of a Florida woman at Mayfair Mall on New Year's Eve, apparently in retaliation for a perceived insult she'd directed at his cross-dressing companion. But according to the Wauwatosa, Fla., police report, the woman claimed that she had said nothing to provoke the attack — that she'd merely complained to her friend

about the cold weather. Then, she said, the "man wearing a dress" pushed her and the other man attacked her with the Mace. For the record, the high temperature in Milwaukee on New Year's Eve was 31 degrees.

GAYS IN OUTER SPACE?

The Christian right isn't happy about the blockbuster movie "Avatar," which fundamentalists claim glorifies pantheism, puts down military imperialism and criticizes capitalism. They bristle at the movie's suggestion that humans are not entitled to do whatever they like with nature. And one conservative poster on the blog republicanoperative.com gave "Avatar" the ultimate right-wing insult: it's gay. "Looks pretty gay to me, and I refuse to watch it," he wrote. "The aliens look fake, and the eyes look gay."

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> Heroes & Villains

HEROES

Perry v. Schwarzenegger is the official name of the case challenging the constitutionality of California's Proposition 8. But just as the real defendant is not California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, who actually supports same-sex marriage, the real plaintiff is not Kris Perry or her partner or the male couple listed in court documents. It's the American Foundation for Equal Rights, which provided the impetus as well as the money behind the landmark trial that is underway.

And it took a lot of money to hire lawyers of the stature of Theodore Olson and David Boies. The organization's money is rumored to come largely from gay entertainment mogul David Geffen and other progressive Hollywood elites, including Steve Bing and Rob Reiner. All of the people behind AFER, both named

and unnamed, are heroes in our book.

VILLAINS

Don't laugh. The Observer, a student newspaper at the University of Notre Dame in South Bend, Ind., published "The Mobile Party" cartoon Jan. 13 depicting two characters engaged in a sitcom-style conversation.

Character One: "What is the easiest way to turn a fruit into a vegetable?"

Character Two: "No clue."

Character One: "A baseball bat."

The cartoonists say the original punchline — and they meant the big laugh-getter not a blow to the gut — was "AIDS."

The response to the cartoon was immediate, on campus and off campus. The Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation demanded an apology and the newspaper responded

by retracting the cartoon and opening its opinion pages to explore the issue. The newspaper editor resigned. The editor in chief dropped the cartoon. And the university president issued a statement: "The university denounces the implication that violence or the expressions of hatred toward any person or group of people is acceptable or a matter that should be taken lightly." The cartoonists, meanwhile, apologized.

And the villains here? The cartoonists, of course, who are responsible for their work. But also the Catholic university administration, which has repeatedly rejected the adoption of a non-discrimination policy and repeatedly stonewalled requests for club status from the school's unofficial gay-straight alliance, AllianceND.

Share your heroes & villains. www.wisconsin-gazette.com.

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MILWAUKEE GAZE

BC Bruisers hit the rink for new season

By Todd Wellman

WiG Contributing Writer

"Boom. Boom. Pow!" No, this isn't the hit Black Eyed Peas song or Adam West throwing punches in the "Batman" TV series. These are the sounds of Milwaukee's Brewcity Bruisers taking command of the roller derby rink.

The Bruisers launched into its fourth season Jan. 16 amid a World Wrestling Federation atmosphere bolstered by a capacity crowd at the Milwaukee County Sports Complex.

Fans waved homemade signs and pockets of diaphanous wore coordinating colors.

The pompom-wielding Beerleaders (read: cheerleaders) kept the fans at full boil, helped along by the booming voice of emcee Gloria Hole (aka Stephanie King), who

CHECK OUT A BOUT

Go to www.brewcitybruisers.com/bouts.

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urged the audience, "The more you cheer for them, the drunker they get."

According to Sexi Mexi (aka Melina Rodriguez) of team Maiden Milwaukee, the league has gained a reputation in the roller derby world for its standout production values — and opening night did not disappoint. It included energizing music, a half-time show featuring the hip hop and break dance



PHOTO: BRUCE BERNA

Capacity crowds are turning out for the Brewcity Bruisers roller derby.

roller skating moves of Break Sk8 (think a more technical version of the choreography from Madonna's Confessions tour) and projections of pictures and names at the intro-

duction of each player.

Everything and everyone in this league has a clever sobriquet, with team names such as Crazy Eights, Shevil Kneivils and Rushin'

Rollettes. A cute male referee is named Sloppy Joe. The Shevil's roster includes Grace Killy and Becky the Butcher. The Maidens boast Habeas Kickass. And the

Eights have Kat Scratch Fever and Jenerous Beatings.

As the Jan. 16 bout began, a gaggle of refs stationed themselves in the center of a fluorescent, taped-off racetrack. The offense and defense stood ready at their respective lines. Then the opening whistle blew for the initial jam, the first of many 2-minute maximum innings.

The defense players took off from their more forward placement on the track. There was one pivot position per team at the lead and three blockers each in the pack. The second whistle sounded, and the only two offensive players on the track launched their attack from the rear.

Each of the attackers is known as a "jammer," and she's visible by a helmet with a star. Her goal is to shove

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As the founding editor of the Capitol Hill based politics and lifestyle blog Wonkette, Ana Marie Cox has been covering Washington politics for over a decade. As Air America's National Correspondent, she is a regular presence at White House press briefings and presidential news conferences, and was a member of the McCain campaign press corps. Ana Marie has been an outspoken advocate on ACLU issues such as first amendment rights (particularly the journalist shield law), marriage equality, repealing don't ask, don't tell, and net neutrality.

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'OPEN' for business

Madison group for LGBT professionals grows

By Marcelle Richards

WiG Contributing Writer

Out professionals in Madison now have an in. The establishment of the Out Professional and Executive Network offers the infrastructure and visibility for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and allied professionals to make connections and build support on the work front that many once had to find on their own.

Kim Nemechek, an OPEN director at large and real estate broker for Bunbury Realtors, appreciates the visibility of other out professionals that OPEN makes possible.

"It's nice to know who those people are in your community," she said, noting the group has allowed her to meet people she would not have met otherwise.

A similar sentiment seed-



PHOTO: MARC KOROBKIN

Brian Thompson, UWM Chancellor Biddy Martin, J. James Tye III, Marty Fox and D.J. Johnson

ed OPEN's inception during a conversation between co-founders Patrick Farabaugh and J. James Tye III. They subsequently held a few small gatherings, each time inviting guests to invite guests,

which rippled into OPEN's formation.

From the initial meetings, 15 business leaders stepped forward to navigate the group's first year, with a mission to engage in "profession-

al development, education, public service, networking and presenting extraordinary social events."

OPEN's chartered membership has risen to about 70, and the organization's

Facebook following is approaching 400 people from both the private and public sectors — from executives to people just starting out in their careers.

"We've managed to bring together a coalition of professionals who've all demonstrated considerable leadership across a wide range of industries," Farabaugh said. "Together we're developing what I feel will become a crucial resource for our membership and for companies that identify the value in creating safe and open workplaces."

One tool used to promote that goal is the Corporate Diversity Initiative Report, produced by OPEN vice president Marty Fox, a retired Alliant Energy Center executive, and the Madison LGBT magazine Our Lives. The report recommends

OPEN as a way to encourage internal and external support between LGBT employees and their employers.

"I believe OPEN will play a role in making Madison an even more vibrant community by building a stronger connection between our LGBT leaders and our business community," Fox said.

OPEN may also act as a template for other cities. Farabaugh said people in Rockford, Ill., have sought out the group to facilitate creating a similar group there.

The first OPEN Annual Dinner takes place March 10, featuring Rebecca Ryan of Next Generation Consulting, who will present the keynote address on "Building Our Next City: How the LGBT Community can Cultivate the Creative Class," at the Edgewater in Madison.

FRONTRUNNERS GIVES \$500 TO CREAM CITY FOUNDATION

Every Saturday after FrontRunners/Walkers completes its weekly run/walk, members gather for breakfast. When the bill and tip are paid, leftover dollars and cents are pooled to contribute to a Milwaukee non-profit group.

The group's most recent beneficiary, Cream City Foundation, received a \$500 gift Jan. 16.

"This is a tremendous honor," said CCF executive director Maria Cadenas. "The members of FrontRunners/Walkers took something as simple as collecting change from a joint outing to make a donation (that's) five

times our average gift size!"

CCF plans to use the funds to support its LGBT Youth Homelessness Initiative. "An estimated 24 percent of all homeless youth identify as LGBT, (and) a donation of this size is invaluable in helping us get that message out," said CCF president Stacey Herzing.

"We hope this helps Cream City as they continue in their efforts to create equality for all LGBT people, including our youth," said FrontRunners/Walkers member Dan Lagerman.

For more information about Front Runners/Walkers, visit ullr-wolf.com/frontrunnersmke/welcome. — Louis Weisberg

'It's total chick power'

Derby from 4

through the defensive wall to receive points by passing the opposing team's players.

While there is no outright fighting during a jam, the Jan. 16 audience reacted enthusiastically to well-timed body checks and to offenses that sent skaters to the penalty box — which in past seasons was presided over by guest drag queens.

Lesbian-identified skater Pound Anya (aka Joey Zocher) said only about 10 percent of the "80 really racy women" are out lesbians.

But, she added, this also is an LGBT-friendly sport.



PHOTO: BRUCE BERNA

The Brewcity Bruisers roller derby

"We're treated like everybody else and we're very open," Zocher said. "People talk about boyfriends and girlfriends."

The group skates in the gay Pride parade and, if a gathering is held at a lesbian bar, no one has qualms about

going, Zocher said.

Zahra Kiarang, a two-year volunteer, said LGBT people should be fans because, "It's total chick power. Awesome gals go out there and rough it up a little bit. Professional sports are all men and this is a chance to see women."

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{ Editorial }

Potentially devastating

The U.S. Supreme Court dealt a potentially devastating blow to democracy with its ruling to roll back restrictions on corporate spending in federal campaigns. The 5-4 decision, with conservative justices forming the majority, could unleash a torrent of corporate-funded attack ads in upcoming elections.

In their ruling, the conservative justices said essentially that corporations are entitled to the same free-speech rights as individuals. That might sound good in principle, but corporations with millions to spend on behalf of politicians who support their interests are not the equivalent of ordinary citizens.

In fact, corporations are not individuals at all, but rather government-chartered entities with unique benefits and obligations that go far beyond those of individuals. They are treated differently under a multitude of laws, including regulations concerning their "free speech" about the products and services they offer.

The recent ruling could be particularly bad news for progressive and LGBT citizens. If there's any doubt about who will benefit from this decision, consider the differing reactions from leaders on opposing ends of the political spectrum.

"Sadly, the majority of justices have sent the message that money, power, and influence rule the day," lamented U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., an out lesbian and a political progressive.

The progressive and LGBT-friendly Wisconsin Democracy Campaign blasted the ruling as "a bastardized version of democracy." The Wisconsin Public Interest Research Group called the High Court's action a case of "judicial activism" that "turns back the clock on over 60 years of precedent."

But leaders on the far right hailed the ruling. Officials of Focus on the Family, Family Research Council, Concerned Women for America, Wisconsin Right to Life and other conservative activist groups were gleeful in their praise.

The right is rejoicing because its leaders know a tsunami of unrestricted dollars could now flow into the coffers of neo-cons who support the corporate agenda. Remember that for decades neo-con candidates have used the trifecta of "guns, God and gays" to spur uneducated voters into supporting politicians who oppose their economic interests.

The Court's decision seems to effectively overturn laws in Wisconsin and 23 other states that restrict corporate involvement in campaigns. In Wisconsin, where Democrats hold a fragile majority, corporate involvement could turn the political tide toward conservatism in 2010.

> TAKE ACTION!

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is calling for comments on its Achieving Health Equity draft plan, which is intended to identify and address health disparities. In the 2,000-page document, lesbian, gay, and bisexual individuals are mentioned twice, while transgender individuals are not mentioned at all. In comparison, the ethnic group closest in size to the LGBT community is mentioned 93 times.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Go to minorityhealth.hhs.gov/npa/templates/browse.aspx?lvl=1&lvlID=31%20, click on "Comment on National Plan for Action" and urge HHS to include LGBT citizens. The plan will be available for comment until Feb. 12.

{ Letters }

A BAD CHECK

No longer content to simply pretend that he has frozen the tax levy, when it has actually increased by nearly \$45 million during his tenure, Milwaukee County executive Scott Walker upped the ante during his State of the County address by making an arbitrary and irresponsible bet when he promised to lower the tax levy next year. This may say more about his perception of his political prospects than his management ability. Given the state takeovers and service deterioration that Milwaukee County has experienced, it's clear that the county executive's managerial track record is lackluster.

There is no need to propose a responsible budget if you plan to skip town for a new job. The impending fallout will not manifest until later, when taxpayers suffer the increasing consequences of service cuts, deferred maintenance and broken promises.

Walker's \$200,000,000 check to taxpayers, an insincere metaphor about sav-

ings, is really an example of "Enron-like accounting" since it is based on paper gains not yet realized but projected forward and multiplied for effect. When this check bounces, the rhetoric will fall flat.

Cutting hundreds of jobs and doubling furloughs for deputies as the county executive has done erodes service quality and makes our community less safe. These are not characteristics of leadership; they are policies of long-term decline. The comparison in business is a CEO who manages based on the next quarter's performance and personal opportunity to benefit while undermining the company's long-term fundamentals. Far from being actual fixes, these are short-term maneuvers that bear no relation to the real demand for county services.

Despite the six-month track record, Walker misleads the public again when he claims success on the use of pension obligation bonds. This \$400 million "borrow-and-invest" scheme is far more complex and risky than

his comparison to refinancing a home. It is a high stakes bet based on arbitrage. Further, short-term performance during a market surge is no indication of long-term performance.

Finally, the County Executive forgot to credit President Barack Obama and Congress for providing the financial stimulus, which is the basis of his Milwaukee County Works program. Walker's plan to borrow very aggressively in 2010 and utilize more than \$40 million of one-time federal stimulus funds is an exceptional turnaround from his stance less than one year ago.

It is good to hear the county executive singing positively about Milwaukee County, but citizens must look beyond the rhetoric to see the peril of short-term promises. Simply put, it must be an election year.

Milwaukee County Supervisor Theodore Lipscomb, 1st District

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

WiG Publishing, LLC. © 2010

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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.

Not tying the knot

There are tons of issues related to dating in your 20s, but should getting married really be one of them?

My brother celebrated his 18th birthday this month and he plans on marrying his 18-year-old girlfriend within the year. He's already purchased the ring, though neither of them has finished high school yet.

I have no doubt they love each other, but why the rush?

I've been in love and I've been engaged, but now, at 23, I've realized that my 20s are only going to come around once. I want my 20s to be my 20s because, honestly, I wouldn't want to burden anyone I really care about with all of the mistakes I'm making and lessons I'm learning. That just adds bad weight to a relationship.

Let's say a young person does get seriously involved with his or her partner and they spend years together. There's still a huge chance they'll break up before they're 30, leaving both past their prime with nothing but a broken spirit and possibly a kid. Divorce rates in the United States are always sky high, and they get even higher for couples who have been together for less than 10 years.

I remember an episode of "Oprah" that aired a few years ago. It featured the cast of the explosive "Sex and the City" movie. Oprah Winfrey was asking the women if they could go back and change anything about their lives, what would they do.

Sarah Jessica Parker said she would've stayed single throughout her 20s instead of diving into relationships. The rest of the cast generally agreed that your 20s are the years when you can be selfish about your time and your growth as a person, and it's acceptable because it's necessary. I've got to say that I agree.

Of course, we're all going to get into rela-

Opinion
BY ANGEL SEVILLA

tionships, because that's what humans do. The 20s, though, just aren't an ideal time to try and share your life with someone. There's too much personal stuff going on.

In gay relationships, I'm always surprised when I have to deal with someone my age or older who is closeted. That's a huge burden on the partner who is out, because now he or she has to go through the whole closeted lifestyle all over again. The couple can't hold hands in public, can't meet friends or family. The whole relationship is essentially a secret.

For teens and twentysomethings, coming out can sometimes be a hard situation to deal with, possibly even directly conflicting with home life if the closeted person is living with parents.

I have sympathy for these people, but I'm not going to get involved with them. No one wants to go back into the closet once they've come out. Once you're 30, though, you can pretty much assume that anyone your age is out and, if not, you'll be old enough and hopefully mature enough to handle the situation.

I think there should be an amendment to marriage laws, and not the amendment the religious right advocates. Aside from making gay-marriage universally legal, there should be an expiration date on the contract. Ten years down the line, if two people feel like renewing, they can have another wedding with a big banner that reads, "We still love each other!"

But for twentysomethings, well, they should take their studies and careers seriously and leave long-term romance on the backburner. There's plenty of time for that later.

A contractual agreement

I've fallen behind in my reading lately, so I am only now getting to "Uncommon Sense" by Gary Becker and Richard Posner. As some readers may know, Becker is a professor of economics at the University of Chicago and Posner is a judge on the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals and a lecturer at the University of Chicago Law School.

The book reprints some of the essays from their blog on a wide variety of topics — from doping athletes, file sharing and capital punishment to CEO compensation and eminent domain.

But no doubt the most interesting to many readers will be the essays on gay marriage.

Posner suggests ending the special status of "marriage" and letting contracting parties choose the form of partnership that works best for them. There could be a "default" contract for couples who did not want to bother with the details of

such contracting.

It could be up to religious sects whether to recognize such contracts and offer ceremonies.

Posner points out that marriage has taken different forms over the centuries, from the purchase of a husband (dowry) or a wife ("bride price") to the arranged marriages of children, temporary marriage (often a cover for prostitution in some counties) and polygamy. So the arguments that marriage has always been as it is now lack merit.

While this seems a significant change, Posner points out that marriage is moving toward contract, as exemplified by pre-nuptial agreements and no-fault divorce.

In light of such considerations such, Posner says, "I imagine that if the homosexual-rights lobby dropped marriage from its agenda and put all its effort into lobbying for civil unions, many states would soon recognize them

and eventually the federal government would follow suit."

Becker and Posner sometimes disagree, but in this case Becker agrees. "I have long argued that heterosexual unions should (also) be based on contract... If married heterosexual couples also had to base their relations on contract, gay couples may not feel strongly they suffer from discrimination if they cannot be considered legally 'married.'"

Both also prefer legislative enactments rather than court decisions that might produce a strong backlash against the courts.

Although both men take advantage of the book's publication to append some "afterthoughts" to their essays, they do not do so on gay marriage. However, things have changed a bit in the four and a half years since the first publications of these essays on the Web.

More states have legal-

Opinion
BY PAUL VARNELL

ized gay marriage, as have more foreign countries. And Washington state now allows full civil unions, lacking only the word marriage.

David Boies and Theodore Olson are arguing a lawsuit seeking not to allow gay marriage but to disallow legislative or voter approved prohibitions of gay marriage. They seem quite optimistic about the outcome, although I cannot share their optimism.

Support for gays and gay marriage or civil unions continues to rise by one-half to 1 percent a year. More heterosexual couples are choosing to live together without being married. The offer of a contract-based "civil union" to heterosexual couples could have a clarifying effect on their opinions about marriage — gay and straight.

A question of fairness

Gay marriage is not like abortion.

This might seem obvious — one is about keeping a life from starting, the other is about joining two lives together — but in fact, gay marriage is compared to abortion a lot.

People lump same-sex marriage in the same polarizing issue category as abortion and gun control all the time. It's one of the issues, it seems, that defines someone as a liberal or conservative, or that defines a state as red or blue.

The Washington Post stated in a headline in 2004 that gay marriage is "the new abortion."

And often, legal experts and talking heads will predict the outcome of a U.S. Supreme Court gay marriage battle by looking at *Roe v. Wade*. That decision was a disaster, they say, because the Court's opinion protecting the right to an abortion was far ahead of public opinion. The country was heading toward making abortion legal anyway, the theory goes, until

Opinion
BY JENNIFER VANASCO

the Court made a big deal about it and caused a backlash that we're still suffering from.

But gay marriage is not abortion.

In a New Yorker article on *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, the Proposition 8 trial that's underway in San Francisco, Margaret Talbot writes that researchers who "have studied public opinion on gay rights, believe that in five years a majority of Americans will favor same-sex marriage — the result of generational replacement and what (one researcher) calls 'attitude adjustment.'"

She goes on to say, "The generational divide does not produce such results for all social issues. On abortion, for instance, younger Americans tend to be less supportive of unfettered rights. Nor does gay marriage seem to be a life-cycle issue — one that

people become more conservative about as they age."

Also, when people change their minds about gay marriage, they tend to do it in only one direction — become approving. Abortion can change minds either way.

Why is this? Because intuitively, people understand that abortion (or gun control) is fundamentally different from gay marriage.

Abortion and gun control are both privacy issues.

People who want an abortion or want to own a gun (or who don't want to wear a seatbelt or get their kid immunized) are people who want to make a personal choice without government interference or regulation.

In a world without a government, they would be able to make these choices unhindered.

Also, they apply to everyone equally. Either every woman can get an abortion or no one can.

Gays and lesbians who want to get married are simply asking to be regulated in the same way as straight

couples. We are asking that the laws apply equally to us.

Yes, we can opt out of the system altogether. We can get married in a church without the state's involvement or not marry at all, but live together as a couple. That would be a private choice, and that is the sort of choice already addressed by the overturning of sodomy laws by the Supreme Court in *Lawrence v. Texas*.

But what we want is for the law to apply to us. We want to be regulated in the same way as anyone else. We want the state to sanction our unions. We want to abide by the state's tax laws for couples.

The reason that people (even conservative people, like Dick Cheney) move toward acceptance of gay marriage is because eventually they recognize that the issue is not a moral question — as abortion is — but instead is about a fundamental issue of fairness.

Gay marriage is not abortion. Let's not predict failure just because we think it is.

Prop 8 trial continues in California

By Lisa Neff

WIG Staff Writer

"This case is about marriage and equality. Plaintiffs are being denied both the right to marry, and the right to equality under the law," said attorney Theodore Olson of the American Foundation for Equal Rights.

With those words, Olson opened his attack on the constitutionality of Proposition 8, the ballot measure banning same-sex marriage in California that voters approved in November 2008.

In the federal case *Perry v. Schwarzenegger*, Olson and attorney David Boies represent two same-sex couples — Paul Katami and Jeff Zarrillo and Kris Perry and Sandy Stier — who want to marry.

In 2000, Olson and Boies were adversaries in a significant case before the U.S.

Supreme Court — Olson represented George W. Bush and Boies represented Al Gore in the dispute over counting Florida ballots in the presidential election.

Observers in U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker's courtroom in San Francisco said the attorneys worked well together — like a married couple — in the first weeks of the trial, which is expected to continue through this week.

A glance at the first weeks:

- The court viewed the video deposition of William Tam, a pro-Prop 8 activist, who wrote an e-mail during the ballot initiative fight that stated: "They lose no time in pushing the gay agenda — after legalizing same-sex marriage, they want to legalize prostitution. What will be next? On their agenda list is: legalize having sex with

children."

- The defense dropped four people from its witness list, leaving only two. Attorneys said people were reluctant to testify, fearing publicity.

- Zarrillo, Katami, Perry and Stier testified. "The word 'marriage' has a special meaning. ... If it wasn't so important, we wouldn't be here today," Zarrillo said. "I want to be able to share the joy and the happiness that my parents felt, my brother felt, my friends, my co-workers, my neighbors, of having the opportunity to be married. It's the logical next step for us."

- "I want to marry Sandy. I want to have a stable and secure relationship with her that then we can include our children in," Perry testified. "And I want the discrimination we are feeling with

Proposition 8 to end and for a more positive, joyful part of our lives to begin."

- Harvard history professor Nancy F. Cott challenged the defense position that procreation is the "central and ... defining purpose of marriage." She said, "I would certainly agree it is one of the purposes, but certainly not the central or the defining purpose. It's a surprise to many people to learn that George Washington, who is often called the father of our country, was sterile."

- Yale professor George Chauncey testified about the history of discrimination. Prop 8, he said, played on stereotypes used historically to portray "homosexuals as perverts who prey on young children, (who) entice straight people into sick behavior."

- University of California

'I want to marry Sandy.'

professor Letitia Peplau testified that there is no evidence to suggest that marriage equality would harm others.

- San Francisco economist Edmund Egan testified that Prop 8 is a drain on government budgets, and that legalizing same-sex marriage would generate significant revenues.

- Cambridge University professor Michael Lamb testified, "We have a substantial body of evidence documenting that (children) being raised by same-sex parents are just as likely to be well-adjusted as children raised by heterosexual parents."



PHOTO: DIANA WALKER

Paul Katami and Jeff Zarrillo are two of the plaintiffs in the Prop 8 trial. The trial is in its third week in a federal courtroom in San Francisco.

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FROM THE COVER

Wisconsin
Gazette .com

'The level of distress is indescribable'

Haiti from I

executive director Cary Alan Johnson, who visited the country in 2009.

The Haitian government, as of Jan. 23, estimated that 200,000 people died, 250,000 suffered injuries and some 2 million were homeless in a nation of 9 million.

As the focus in Haiti shifted from rescuing people from rubble to caring for the injured and feeding and sheltering the homeless, com-

munity groups at the international, national and local levels focused on raising money and supplies to fend off epidemics, treat the wounded and care for the sick.

The Pan American Health Organization said hospitals and mobile clinics needed more surgeons, nurses, supplies, and better sanitation and water.

GLBT and HIV/AIDS activists shared concerns for Haitians living with HIV/AIDS — and their inability

to access treatment. About 120,000 Haitians — a conservative estimate — are living with the disease.

SEROvie, which provides HIV/AIDS services to the GLBT community in Haiti, was hosting a support group when the earthquake struck. "The sound is unforgettable," said SEROVie director Steve La Guerre. "I can't even describe the horror as the ceiling and the wall of the conference room started to fall."

La Guerre said 14 men participating in the group died, two participants survived. "Light a candle for these souls and for Haiti," he said, adding that SEROVie needs food, clothes "and any type of help."

IGLHRC responded, raising about \$10,000 in the first days following the quake. Aid for AIDS collected unused HIV drugs, as well as antibiotics, antivirals and antiallergics. Also, the Metropolitan Community Church estab-

HOW TO HELP

International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission: www.iglhrc.org.

Metropolitan Community Church Disaster Relief Fund: www.mccchurch.org. — L.N.

lished the Disaster Relief Fund to help the MCC congregation in the neighboring Dominican Republic, which has a number of Haitian members.

"The level of distress is indescribable," said the Rev. Tania Guzman, pastor

of the MCC church in the Dominican Republic.

"What we will need is both the spiritual and the physical support to rebuild lives and communities. There are no walls to tear down here; only the work of building up hope again.

Embracing romance

Love from I

"In Mexico, Valentine's Day is also Friendship Day — "El Dia de Amor y Amistad" — and it's a chance to call your friends and say how much they mean to you as well," Cadenas says.

JOHN BECKER & MICHAEL KNAAPEN

John Becker and Michael Knaapen got married four years ago in Toronto during spring break from UW-Steven's Point. Their first Valentine's Day together was a modest event.

"We were living in the dorms and we didn't have

much of our own space," Becker says. "Michael made a card and bought some candy and trinkets and decorated my room while I was gone. It was a sweet gesture. It was unexpected."

This year, Valentine's Day will be less modest, but still frugal. They're living in Milwaukee now, where Knaapen is taking pre-med courses and Becker, who's a musician and singer, is looking for work.

"We're going to combine celebrating Valentine's Day with our anniversary (March 22)," Becker says. "We'll probably have a nice dinner, and we like to surprise each

Love page 10

ROMANCE 101

What makes for a great Valentine's date? WiG asked Greg Halpen, a gay dating expert based in Syracuse, N.Y.

First of all, Halpen advises, forget the hype about what constitutes a romantic evening. "Do something that's special and intimate and very mindful of each other," he says.

When it comes to romance, money can't buy love, he adds. "Leave a secret love note on the pillow with a little Hershey Kiss before you go to work," Halpen says. "Create a little treasure

hunt in your house. Leave little tokens or clues that lead to a love note with a rose or a card that's redeemable for two kisses or a special evening in the bedroom with candlelight."

According to Halpen, the key to holding on to romance is to take intimacy to new levels. He says, "(Couples) become stuck as to what steps to take to explore more with each other, to go deeper, to spice it up. They need to be more creative."

On the Web: www.thegayguyslovecoach.com

— L.W.

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'It was sweet'

Love from 9

other with something like a note on the bed or a box of chocolates or flowers."

Becker says he refuses to let the heterosexism in society put a damper on his relationship.

"As a musician, I perform at weddings, and it's slightly bittersweet, because you're reminded every time that we're denied that kind of public affirmation of love in our own state," he says.

GENIA STEVENS & ANDREA KLEINHEKSEL

"I finally like Valentine's Day," says Genia Stevens. "To me, it used to be just a stupid holiday, because I never had a person I was in love with before."

After meeting Andrea Kleinheksel a little over a year ago, Steven's attitude changed.

"I remember telling (Genia) that after this Valentine's Day, you're going to love Valentine's Day," Kleinheksel says.

She was right.

For their first Valentine's Day, Stevens warned Kleinheksel that she didn't like spending money on flowers, because they die. So Kleinheksel made paper flowers and wrote a poem that she framed and left on Stevens' dresser.

But Stevens has come to embrace romantic gestures like flowers and candy. In fact, she sent both to Kleinheksel at the school where she teaches. Her colleagues gave her a good-natured ribbing, Kleinheksel says.

"I hadn't gotten flowers in 10 years," she says.

Stevens and Kleinheksel live in Beloit, where they became well-known locally as a couple after the Beloit Daily News profiled them on the front page for a story on the state's domestic partner registry. But for Stevens, who hosts the podcast SistersTalk Radio, being out is a way of life.

This holiday, they are going to Atlanta, where they plan to enjoy an elegant dinner and an evening on the town.

"That is our gift to each other," Stevens says. "We love to travel!"

MARK POCAN & PHIL FRANK

This Valentine's Day, Mark Pocan and his spouse Phil Frank plan to be on a plane traveling home to Madison from South Africa. They originally wanted to marry there in 2006, but instead tied the knot in Toronto before a honeymoon in Bali and Indonesia.

It's perhaps ironic that Pocan, who's an openly gay state representative from Madison, had to travel out of state to get married.

As co-chair of the Assembly's Joint Committee on Finance, Pocan wields a lot of power in Madison. But when it comes to romance, he's an ordinary citizen.

"One Valentine's Day we rented a room at a little hotel here and decorated it," Pocan says. "Another year, I took lessons from a masseuse, so I could do a real nice massage."

But, "birthdays are the days that we tend to go more overboard on," he adds.

FOR A HEART-Y APPETITE

Long before Viagra, men were trying to find ways to perk up their sex lives. In ancient times, there were many foods thought to put people in the mood. The old saying, "The way to a man's heart is through his stomach," may be based somewhat in fact — and apply to women as well.

Some foods, such as liquor, lower inhibitions. Others, such as chocolate, release endorphins, chemicals in the body that bring on a feeling of well-being. Some foods are high in zinc, necessary for sperm production. And some foods thought to act as quasi-aphrodisiacs are:



- Almonds have been a symbol of fertility throughout history. The aroma is thought to induce passion in a woman.

- Aniseed was used as an aphrodisiac by the Greeks and the Romans, who believed that sucking on the seeds increased sexual desire.

- Avocados derive their name from the Aztec term

"Ahuacuatl," which translated means "testicle tree." The fruit hangs in pairs on the tree.

- Bananas, both the fruit and the flower of the tree, have a suggestive shape. The fruit is rich in potassium and B vitamins, necessities for sex hormone production.

- Chocolate contains chemicals thought to affect neurotransmitters in the brain and a substance related to caffeine called theobromine.

- Coriander, the seed of the cilantro plant, is an aphrodisiac that dates back to the tales of the Arabian Nights.

- Fennel is a source of natural plant estrogens. The

Egyptians used it for libido enhancement.

- Garlic is said to stir sexual desires. However, both partners need to partake, unless of course, one of them is a vampire.

- Ginger stimulates the circulatory system, and a little more blood circulating in the areas of desire couldn't hurt.

- Nutmeg was highly prized by Chinese women as an aphrodisiac. In quantity, nutmeg can produce a hallucinogenic effect.

- Oysters have a reputation as an aphrodisiac that dates back to the second century A.D.

— Rick Karlin

Romance and remote-control

Open the wine, plate the strawberries, exchange the cards, and then cuddle up on the couch for some romance.

"BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN"

This Oscar-winning, ground-breaking film, adapted from Annie Proulx's short story, is so beloved that to this day it remains a cultural touchstone with regard to same-sex relationships — on and off screen. Featuring breathtaking performances from lead actors Jake Gyllenhaal and the late Heath Ledger, it stunningly depicts love's endurance and is one of the great romantic stories of the 21st century, gay or straight. (Lee's gay-themed "The Wedding Banquet," from 1993, is also



a wonder to behold.)

"CHRIS & DON: A LOVE STORY"

Guido Santi and Tina Mascara's loving documentary tribute to writer Christopher Isherwood and visual artist Don Bachardy, who were together for three decades, is a true love story. And what makes it even more special is the fact that Chris and Don were togeth-

er and visible as a couple at a time when such a thing still bordered on the scandalous. And yet their partnership was celebrated and honored. (Designer turned director Tom Ford's film adaptation of Isherwood's "A Single Man," starring Colin Firth and Julianne Moore, was one of the best films of 2009.)

"DESERT HEARTS"

Released in 1986, a landmark year for LGBT film (including titles such as "Parting Glances" and "My Beautiful Laundrette"), "Desert Hearts" is still considered the pinnacle of lesbian movies. Based on the novel by lesbian writer Jane Rule, "Desert Hearts" unfolds on a Reno dude ranch following the divorce of Vivian (Helen

Shaver). While there, Vivian encounters Cay (Patricia Charbonneau) and some unexpected feelings as they embark on a passionate affair of the (desert) heart.

"GO FISH"

Before she acted as one of the co-creators of "The L Word," Rose Troche made a little indie film called "Go Fish" and turned the lesbian movie audience on its head. Filmed in black and white, with a cast of actors and non-actors (read: friends of the director), "Go Fish" is a free-flowing story of the desire to find a mate that captures the lesbian zeitgeist of the mid-1990s. Oh, and did I mention that it's funny? Yes, that's right — it's a lesbian rom-com. — G.S.

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The man in blue

An interview
with actor
Michael Cudlitz
aka **Officer**
Michael Cooper



By Gregg Shapiro

WiG Staff Writer

After being dropped by NBC, the gritty Los Angeles cop series “Southland” has resurfaced at TNT. That’s great news for the series’ fans — “Southland” is absorbing and one of the harder-hitting dramatic series on television.

Michael Cudlitz portrays John Cooper, a veteran cop who is the voice of wisdom and a source of stability in unstable situations. Cooper also is gay, a subject that’s treated with respect and realism in the series.

I spoke with Cudlitz when he was in Chicago for a fan-appreciation screening of “Southland.”

Gregg Shapiro: Has playing a police officer in “Southland” had any effect, one way or the other, about your opinion of police and law enforcement?

Michael Cudlitz: Absolutely. I had no idea what they did. We think we all have an idea of what it is to be a police officer. You

think, “Oh, it’s dangerous, and this and that.” The training that we did for the show (included) some ride-a-longs. (Co-star) Ben (McKenzie) was giving me a hard time about this, because he says I’m addicted to them. ... I’ve done a total of eight or 12, I think. Because my character has been in the force so long, he would have transferred from many different divisions. They only keep you for about four years and then, depending on where you are in your career, (that) determines into what division you transfer. A lot of guys like to retire out of West L.A., but when they’re younger they want to go into South Central and do the heavy crime suppression stuff. ... Prior to all of this, I thought that you went through boot camp, you were a patrol officer and then, if you were smart and lucky, you became a detective. It has nothing to do with that. It’s your choice. You can choose to stay a patrol officer. You are not out-ranked by a detective. You are out-paid by a detective.

GS: So it has nothing to do with your experience.

MC: It has nothing to do with that. There are minimums that you have to do to go into it. But if you show a certain

expertise in something, they can pull you as a rookie into assisting in a special group or task force. You may be a really good young guy or woman and they want to use you undercover in a gang unit. You can then move into detectives very quickly.

GS: So the police definitely earned your respect.

MC: Yes!

GS: I’m glad that you mentioned the fact that Cooper’s been on the job for a long time, because he comes across as the voice of reason, responsibility and experience, and at the same time, he peppers it with a great sense of humor.

MC: I think a lot of what you see is that gallows sense of humor is a coping device. It’s like the old TV show “M*A*S*H;” the idea of breaking the tension in that humorous way is the only way you can deal with it. You see it, day in and day out, and you can’t process it as, “These are just normal people.” No, they’re not normal people. There are horrendous circumstances, people doing horrendous things

Cover page 14

On the big screen

"THE LOVELY BONES" Paramount/ DreamWorks

Before he became the Oscar-winning director of the box office blockbuster "The Lord of the Rings" trilogy, Peter Jackson made an exceptional little film called "Heavenly Creatures," starring future Oscar winner Kate Winslet. If anything, it proved that he could create an intimate cinematic experience as effortlessly as he was able to craft special-effects fantasies.

Unfortunately, with his film adaptation of Alice Sebold's highly regarded novel "The Lovely Bones," it's clear that Jackson has lost some perspective.

Set in the 1970s, "The Lovely Bones" is narrated by 14-year-old Susie (Saoirse Ronan), who was murdered by neighbor Mr. Harvey (Stanley Tucci). The story follows her as she navigates her way to heaven. Part of getting there involves let-



Susan Sarandon stars in "The Lovely Bones," now in theaters.

ting go of her surviving family and potential boyfriend Ray (Reece Ritchie), all of whom are devastated by the loss. Susie's parents Jack and Abigail (Mark Wahlberg and Rachel Weisz) each react differently to the tragedy. Jack obsesses over the murder

and wants to become an active participant in the investigation, becoming a nuisance to Detective Fenerman (Michael Imperioli). Abigail basically shuts down, eventually temporarily leaving the family to become a migrant worker. Her departure brings

the one spark of life to the story, with the arrival of hard-living Grandma Lynn (Susan Sarandon, who is a much-needed breath of fresh air and a source of momentary comic relief).

Ultimately, the movie functions as a supernatural

Film By Gregg Shapiro

murder mystery, with a few highly charged moments of suspense. One in particular, involving Susie's sister Lindsey (Rose Mclver) snooping in Harvey's house and discovering an incriminating piece of evidence, is especially effectual.

But there are a multitude of problems with the film. The book's devoted legions are already up in arms over the movie, particularly the way in which Susie's murder is handled. And the acting is all over the place. Have there ever been two more miscast actors than Wahlberg and Weisz? The special effects feel like castoffs from "What Dreams May Come." While it's admirable that Jackson would want to take on such a project, he might be better off with an author whose work is more suited to him, such as Tolkien.

'GLEE' GETS GLAAD NOD

For the fourth year running, ABC leads nominees for awards from the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation.

The network earned eight nominations for the 21st annual GLAAD Media Awards, with "Brothers & Sisters," "Grey's Anatomy," "Private Practice" and newcomer "Modern Family" among the contenders.

GLAAD also announced Cynthia Nixon will be honored with the Vito Russo Award, which is named after a founding member of GLAAD and is presented to a gay media professional who has made a difference in promoting equal rights for the gay community.

—WiG



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All you need is love

By Jody Hirsh

WIG Contributing Writer

On one starry Friday night in the mythical unincorporated district of Almost, Maine, the residents meet, confront, love, lose and find each other in what playwright John Cariani describes as a kind of "Midwinter Night's Dream." The setting is so cold and remote that one character speaks of going south to Vermont for the warmer weather.

The play unfolds as 19 characters, including nine couples, learn about relationships, love, serendipity and loss in a dizzying eight scenes in which four actors play all the roles. In *Almost, Maine*, love is quirky — sometimes exhilarating, sometimes sad and always challenging. The message of the diverse, comical, and often wildly physical stories is that no one is immune to the complexities of love. Men and women — gay and straight alike — are

Theater
WIGOUT

The pace and timing of this theatrical mosaic is masterful.

enmeshed in romantic adventures showing that, indeed, there is someone for everyone; yet the play suggests that people often make mistakes that can end a relationship or miss out on one.

In "*Almost, Maine*," the whole is greater than the sum of the parts. In the last scene of the show, Dave, pursuing the tomboyish Rhonda, gives her a gift of an abstract painting he's created. "I did it with a bunch of little blocks of colors, see," he tells her, "and if you look at the blocks of colors, it's just colors, but if you step back and look at the whole thing, it's not just little blocks of colors, it's a picture of something." Just so, the stories presented are diverse, but if you step back and look at them, they form

a universal picture of the joy, and the pain, of love.

Directed by company member Laura Gordon, the pace and timing of this theatrical mosaic is masterful. Set designer Susannah M. Barnes has fashioned an inventively simple set that presents an array of locales in *Almost, Maine*, and lighting designer Barry G. Funderburg has created enchanting effects in this frozen north, including a magical Northern Lights display. The four actors — Steve Haggard, Elizabeth Ledo, Gerard Neugent and



PHOTO: JAY WESTHAUSER

Steve Haggard and Elizabeth Ledo in "*Almost, Maine*" at the Milwaukee Rep through Feb. 7.

Deborah Staples — have realized the residents of *Almost, Maine*, with perfection.

"*Almost, Maine*" runs

through Feb. 7 at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Stiemke Theater. For more information, call 414-224-9490 or visit www.milwaukeeeerep.com.

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E-mail managingeditor@wisconsin-gazette.com, tell us what you think!

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January 29 ~
February 14, 2010

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GOTTA DANCE

The Cream City Squares, Milwaukee's square dance club, will offer lessons beginning Feb. 14 at Lake Park Lutheran Church, corner of Park and Stowell.

The club will host a drop-in at the church at 1 p.m. Jan. 31. For more information, call 414-461-5359 or go to iagsdc.org/creamcity.

Shoreline-Milwaukee also offers a dance opportunity at Hot Water/The Wherehouse, 818 S. Water St., at 7:30 p.m. the second and fourth Fridays.

For more information, call 414-747-0388 or go to www.shoreline-milw.org.

—WiG

'TNT has embraced it'

Cover from 11

Cover
WiGOUT

to each other. And how do I say, "Oh, it's OK"? You don't. You go, "that guy's a fucking idiot."

GS: Cooper's got some great lines.

MC: The best! I love how Ann (Biderman) writes for John. She's a genius.

GS: "Southland" also makes good use of an ensemble cast, including Regina King, Ben McKenzie and C. Thomas Howell...

MC: ... Michael McGrady, Kevin Alejandro, Shawn Hatosy. I've said this before and it bears repeating, you could take any three people and make another show and it would be phenomenally acted.

GS: There's a scene at the end of the pilot episode, where John is in a gay bar and he sees the male hustler who had been busted earlier in the day, and they start to have a conversation. It's the first indication of John's personal life, and it's handled with great subtlety.

MC: And the camera pulls back, and you're like, "Hey!" There's more of that. It's handled the same way that it's handled meeting someone for the first time in real life. Not in some bullshit TV-land way. The same way that people don't walk in and scream, "Hi! I'm heterosexual." John doesn't walk in and say, "Hi, I'm gay."

GS: Will there be a love interest for John?

MC: Yes. John was previously married to a woman. He's still dealing with that, and he's close to his ex-wife. It's a very realistic relationship. He's still figuring out everything. He's definitely gay, there's no question about that. But he's figuring out his relationship stuff. There are really amazing family issues

that come up with John. There's a history of abuse and relationships in his life that have not been what you expect. It's very interesting the way he and Ben Sherman — they're almost polar opposites when you first meet them and, as you get to know them, you realize how much they are similar. The relationships do unfold, and you get to know them in a very realistic way; and you are left to interpret, as an audience member, what you've just seen. You're never beaten over the head with anything. There's not going to be a big coming-out episode for John, a very special "Southland." I don't know if it's something that's never been done before, but it's definitely not the way that these relationships are handled on television, and it's about time that it is. But there's always a long way to go with these kinds of hot-button issues with the general society. (It's good) to be having this discussion about this kind of gay character on a major network as one of the regulars, not a superficial character.

GS: "Southland" is being given a second chance on TNT. But do you remember how you reacted when you first heard that NBC had canceled it?

MC: Oh, yeah! I was pissed off, really pissed off. It was just sort of out of nowhere. We were blindsided, and a lot of people were put out of work. That being said, that's over. Obviously people lose their job and get pissed off — that's a no-brainer. If anyone's confused or surprised that I was pissed off, they're an idiot (laughs). But TNT has embraced it wholeheart-

edly. They have put so much into the launch of this. Worse case scenario: the six episodes that we shot are going to be aired.

GS: Were you aware of the efforts being made by "Southland" fans to save the show?

MC: I was one of the ones who was very aware, because I was active on Twitter. ... We had finished filming, they were still airing episodes, and we were still doing press to promote the first seven (episodes). I had about 700 followers at that point. The show got cancelled, I said some things on my Twitter that got picked up by The New York Times and The Los Angeles Times, and overnight my Twitter more than doubled because of the fans. I got on and said, "Great! You guys are obviously excited about the show, go post on all these sites, tell people you are pissed off, let them know."

GS: Finally, is there anything you want to say to fans of the show in the GLBT community?

MC: Just keep watching. I think you're going to be very happy. It's a very interesting position to be in. I say you're going to be happy, but it's not going to make everyone happy. At times, within itself, what I'm learning is that it's a very split, (factionalized) community, but all I can say is that the role of John Cooper, from my standpoint, is that I'm very aware of my place in this new arena that I've entered and I'm going to handle the character with love and care.

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Between Lady Gaga and Owl City

Music

By Gregg Shapiro

The ubiquitous Lady Gaga and the swiftly gaining Owl City represented the opposite ends of the electro/dance music spectrum in 2009. As might be expected, they have inspired others to follow them.

"THE LISTENING" Lights, Sire

Lights, performing Jan. 28 at the Majestic, 115 King in Madison, is the female equivalent of Owl City, right down to the religious affiliation. Silly moon/spoon/June rhymes aside, Lights (AKA Valerie Poxleitner), can carry a simple tune. The Christian imagery is subversive: "break off the chains" in "Saviour; the "road" that "drives" a soul in "Drive My Soul"; the water imagery and being taken over in "River"; the "crusade" and "faith" in "Lions!" and so on. So, while opportunities for dancing are plentiful, the whole experience feels less like a nightclub or party than a tent revival.

"LA ROUX" La Roux, Cherry Tree/ Interscope/Polydor/ Big Life

Elly Jackson of La Roux is closer in spirit to Lady Gaga and she probably has more fun — at least in this world — than Lights on the duo's eponymous debut. Along with Ben Langmaid, Jackson gives voice to a dozen songs (including hidden bonus track "Growing Pains") that dab-

ble in new wave revival and modern dance-pop. La Roux seems intent that listeners worship at the altar of the DJ booth and get off their knees and on their feet on "In For The Kill," "Quicksand," "Bulletproof," "Fascination" and "Growing Pains."

"THE BOY WHO KNEW TOO MUCH" Mika, Casablanca/ Universal Republic

When you find a successful formula, it's usually safe to stick with it, and that's precisely what mono-monikered Mika has done with his second album. From the colorful Peter Max-like album graphics to the Scissor Sisters/Elton John/Queen-inspired tunes and Mika's refusal to commit to a Kinsey Scale number, "The Boy Who Knew Too Much" knows how to make listeners move. "We Are Golden," "Blame It on The Girls," "Rain," "Good Gone Girl," "Touches You" and "One Foot Boy" will keep feet busy.

"PRETTY MESS" Erica Jayne (EI)

What Erika Jayne lacks in originality, she makes up for in energy. I can't be the only one who thought of the suggestive 1984 hit by Vanity when I first came across the title of the Jayne's "Pretty Mess." What's more, Jayne sounds like she's trying to replicate the godmothers of modern dance music — gay divorcee Madonna and Kylie Minogue. "Everybody Wants Some" borrows from Depeche Mode and Deelite. "Give You Everything"

and "Beautiful" could be lost Madonna tracks. "Roller Coaster" rides the Kylie rail. The addition of Sheila E. on "Time to Realize" proves the high priestess of percussion still has it, while the Prince-penned "Sex Shooter," featuring Pepper Mashay, shoots blanks.

"EMBERS" Nadia Ali, Smile In Bed

Nadia Ali works an exotic vibe along the lines of Nelly Furtado on "Embers." There's a Middle Eastern element woven into the fabric of "Crash and Burn," as the persistent beat of "People" leads listeners to believe that Ali is sincere when she sings "I won't stop." The loping "Be Mine," the house-y "Fine Print" and the vintage disco clapping beat of "Love Story" sound like Ali is most at home on the dance-floor.

"THINGS HAPPEN AT NIGHT" Ultra Naté, Blufire/ Unruly

A supporter of the disco cause for nearly 20 years, Ultra Naté serves up a steaming six-song platter. A "Baltimore club album," "Things Happen at Night" is a stew of samples, rapid-fire beats, nasty lyrics and an all-around excuse for working up a sweat long between the time when the sun sets and rises. Collaborations with DJ King Tutt ("Faster Faster Pussycat"), DJ Class ("Hey DJ") and "Hero" (disco legend Jocelyn Brown) are all the proof listeners need that Ultra Naté plays well with others.



The Black Eyed Peas' newest release is "The E.N.D."

"THE E.N.D." The Black Eyed Peas, Interscope

The multi-Grammy Award nominated "The E.N.D." solidifies The Black Eyed Peas' transformation from pseudo-hip hop act to

pseudo dance act. Poseurs without a purpose for more than 10 years, BEP appear to have found a safe space amid the club-goers, and tracks such "Boom Boom Pow," "I Gotta Feeling" (did someone say "mazel tov?"), "Rock That

Body," "Out of My Head," and "One Tribe" guarantee that the Peas will be in the black for a long time to come.

What's on your playlist?
Write managingeditor@wisconsinazette.com.

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Cream City Squares, 414-445-8080.

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

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

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

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

Queer Zine Archive Project, 2935 N. Fratney St.

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

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

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

Community

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lesbian Alliance, 315 W.

Court St., 414-272-9442.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Pride Parade, www.pride-parademke.com.

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

WanderWomyn

Outdoors Group, debydoo2@yahoo.com.

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

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

Wisconsin Rainbow Families, 315 W. Court St., Room 112, info@wirainbowfamilies.com.

Business

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

Health

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

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

Diverse and Resilient, 2439 N. Holton St., 414-390-0444, www.diverseandresilient.org.

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

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

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

STD Specialties Clinic, 3251 N. Holton St., Milwaukee, 414-264-8800, www.stdspecialties.org.

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

Religion/spirituality

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

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

Cross Lutheran Church,

1821 N. 16th St., 414-344-1746.

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

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

Lake Park Lutheran Church, 2647 N. Stowell Ave., 414-962-9190.

Metropolitan Community Church, 1239 W. Mineral St., 414-383-1100.

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

Plymouth Church, 2717 E. Hampshire Ave., Milwaukee, 414-964-1513.

St. James Episcopal Church, 833 W. Wisconsin Ave., 414-271-1340.

Sports

Front Runners, 414-332-1527.

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

Metro Milwaukee Tennis Club, 414-616-3716.

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

Milwaukee Gay Volleyball League, <http://milwaukeegayvolleyball.com>.

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

Youth/education

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

Alliance for LGBTQ Youth, 1212 S. 70th St., 414-453-1400, www.cssw.org.

Gay Youth Milwaukee, P.O. Box 090441, Milwaukee, WI 53209, 414-265-8500.

LGBT Resource Center

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

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

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

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

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

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

KENOSHA

Religion/spirituality

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

MADISON

Arts/entertainment

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

Community

OutReach, 600 Williamson St., 608-255-8582, www.lgb-toutreach.org.

Politics

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

Sports

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

RACINE

Community

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



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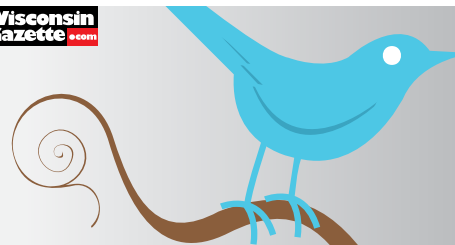
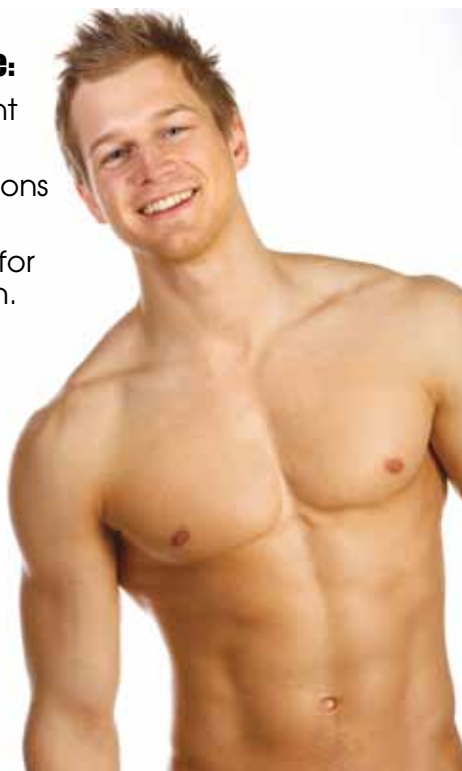
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Cupcake queen Sandy Ploy (left) oversees yet another spectacular IronCupcake challenge.



Seen & heard

By Louis Weisberg

WiG Staff Writer

WiG's staff was saddened to learn that **M's Bar**, 1101 S. Second St., shut down Jan. 17. Just two days earlier, M's hosted Wisconsin Gazette's first **Gayme Show** event, and the place was packed with a lively, friendly crowd. Trivia master **Anthony Torti** tested our knowledge of everything from gay authors to Madonna to LGBT historical events. WiG gave away more than a dozen prizes, including tickets to upcoming attractions at the **Milwaukee Rep**, gift certificates to the **Tool Shed** and **Regency Florist**, garden art from **Samara Studios** and **Scott Malcom's** latest CD. If you missed WiG's Gayme Show, you missed a great time — but don't despair. It will be coming back soon at another location.

At the same time the Gayme Show was teasing our memories at M's, a very different sort of event was unfolding across town at the Milwaukee Art Museum, where **MAM After Dark** presented the annual **Wearable Sculpture Fashion Show**. This year, the focus was on the environment. In their fashion homage to Mother Earth, enterprising designers made clever use of such unlikely materials as garbage bags, computer parts, moss and even live birds. Among the models strutting their stuff was **Dear Ruthie**, who looked stunning in an ensemble that seemed inspired by sock monkeys. Not everyone can pull that off, so hats off to Ruthie.

If you wanted to make a garment out of cupcakes, **Sandy Ploy** would be the person to call. Her wildly popular **IronCupcake** challenges have stretched the limits of the humble pastry by daring competing cooks to use such unlikely ingredients as soda pop, mustard, curry, wasabi and cheese. On Jan. 18, cupcake fans mobbed **MOCT Bar**, 240 E. Pittsburgh Ave., for the IronCupcake's beer challenge. Two dozen chefs sweetly plied their skills with the drink

that made Milwaukee famous, raising cash for the **Wisconsin Brewer's Guild** and the Red Cross' Haitian relief efforts. Next up on the cupcake menu: bacon.

Miraculously, the Jan. 19 fire that decimated **Pizza Man**, 1800 E. North Ave., spared Wisconsin Gazette's flaming red box, which was located just a few feet from the restaurant's front door. We join with the rest of the city in mourning the loss of this cherished institution, which offered not only terrific pizza but one of the best wine lists in the city.

Patriotic carbs



An overhead shot of the crowd at MOCT on Jan. 18 for the IronCupcake beer challenge



"East Meets West" is the title of this get-up.



Dear Ruthie struts her monkeys at the Wearable Sculpture Fashion Show.



WiG's Gayme Show at M's Bar on Jan. 17



Smiling for the camera at WiG's Gayme Show



A Wisconsin Gazette box miraculously survived the Pizza Man blaze.



Pretty people at WiG's Gayme Show

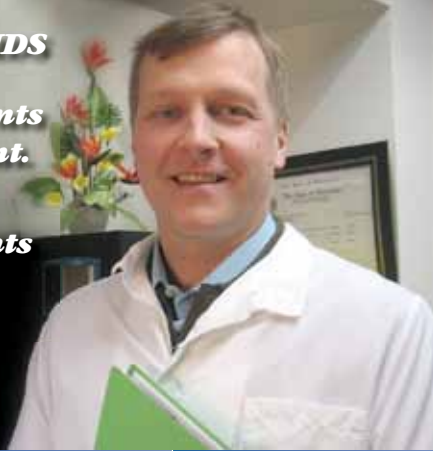
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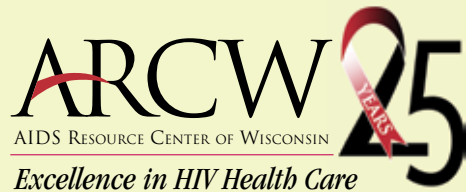


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OUT & ABOUT

MILWAUKEE

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

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

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

City Lights, 111 W. Howard Ave., 414-481-1441. Neighborhood bar.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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.

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.

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Jan. 28, Thursday

Tropical Night Club, 626 S. Fifth, hosts Noche De Divas at 11 p.m. Call 414-630-6055. Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, presents Howie Day and Serena Ryder at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

"Rent" continues at the Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State St. in Madison, through Jan. 31. Call 608-258-4141.

"Pearl Bailey... By Request" runs through Feb. 28 in the Stackner Cabaret at the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, 108 E. Wells. Call 414-224-9490.

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, welcomes The Bloodsugars with Miles Nielsen at 10 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Jan. 29, Friday

Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. Second, presents the God & Gays One

On stage

By Gregg Shapiro

Act Play Festival through Sunday at 7:30 p.m. Call 414-383-3727.

Tropical Night Club, 626 S. Fifth, hosts Divas Night at 11 p.m. Call 414-630-6055.

Skyline Opera Theater's production of "The Marriage Of Figaro" runs through Feb. 14 at the Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway. Call 414-291-7800.

Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, has Southern Tradition, Maple Road and Mathew Haeffel at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

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

The Frequency, 121 W.

Main St. in Madison, welcomes The Arge with The Pointy Birds and Catalogue Babies at 10 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Jan. 30, Saturday

Ben Gibbard & Jay Farrar play Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth, at 8 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

Tropical Night Club, 626 S. Fifth, hosts Noche De Divas at 11 p.m. Call 414-630-6055.

Renaissance Theaterworks presents "Blackbird" by David Harrower, through Feb. 7 at the Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway. Call 414-291-7800.

JT And The Clouds are at The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, at 10 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Jan. 31, Sunday

Tropical Night Club, 626 S. Fifth, hosts Divas Night at 11 p.m. Call 414-630-6055.

On stage next page

Rants, Raves & Other Remarks

RAPPING ROBERTSON

I'd like to take Pat Robertson to a deserted island and turn on a weather machine that would send a tornado, tsunami, hurricane, earthquake, blizzard and hail-storm his way. And then I'd like to make Rush Limbaugh

pay for any recovery effort.

NAME THAT TUNE

When I was a little bitty baby my mama rocked me in the cradle.

THINK HEAT

Turn on the light. Shine it in your face. Close your eyes and think summer — green leaves, blue skies, warm breeze, sand and sun. Doesn't that feel better?

BOOK NOW

The gay travel association's destination of the month announcement arrived in my e-mail today. I'm making reservations

tomorrow. "Whether it's called the Conch Republic, Cayo Hueso, Bone Island or the Southernmost City, Key West is known as paradise to over 500,000 gay and lesbian tourists who visit the island each year. Imagine a subtropical island glowing with the rainbow colors of bougainvillea, royal poinciana and hibiscus blooms, where the year around temperature is in the high 70s. Here two turquoise bodies of water — the Atlantic Ocean and the Gulf of Mexico - lap the shore. From its gay and lesbian nightlife, accommodations and events — to its welcoming community, live-

and-let-live, come as you are attitude — Key West is internationally acclaimed as a top gay and lesbian destination."

KEEPING TRACK

To all you Barack Obama-lovers, I'm keeping track. He m a d e a l m o s t 200 c a m p a i g n promises, and he's doing a good job either keeping or working on a whole lot of them. But if you look at a lot of the political Web sites, you'll notice that his agenda has mostly stalled on LGBT

stuff. I know there's a lot going on in the country and the world, but, as my mom said, a promise is a promise.

WEARY OF WINTER

Hello out there. Is there anything happening? Come out of hibernation. I want to play.

DEATH PENALTY ARGUMENT

I'm hearing a lot of LGBT activists saying it's wrong to enact a law that sentences someone to death just for being gay or lesbian.

But hell, I am not hearing enough LGBT activists saying it is wrong to enact a law that sentences someone to death. Isn't that on the progressive agenda? How come we only sometimes fight half the fight?

NAME THAT TUNE II

We will we will rock you.

!@#?*

Got something to say? Post your rave, rage or whatnot at www.wisconsin Gazette.com.

State-line supper club

INOVASI 28 E. Center Ave., Lake Bluff, Ill., 847- 295-1000, inovasi.US

Having friends in neighboring states can be a bit problematic. With friends in Milwaukee and Chicago, it seems someone is always driving two or more hours to get together for dinner. It's a pain, and, consequently, we don't see one another as often as we like.

So I was happy to learn about Inovasi, an incredible restaurant in Lake Bluff, not too far south of the Wisconsin-Illinois border. Even if we didn't have interstate friendships, I'd make the trip for the innovative (hence Inovasi) take on contemporary American cuisine.

Parking right in front of Inovasi in Lake Bluff's pic-

turesque downtown was a delight for us big city dwellers. Entering the gorgeous bar, we were greeted by a friendly hostess who took our coats and then showed us to our table in the spacious yet cozy dining room. The décor is a tip off to the care with which Inovasi's owners take in all aspects of the dining experience. Even though the restaurant was full (on a Monday night, no less), the sound level never interfered with our conversation.

Inovasi's menu groups dishes into three categories, vegetables, meat and seafood. All of the dishes are meant to be shared, and they are the equivalent of two-thirds of a typical entrée portion. Three of us shared about 10 dishes, and there was plenty left to take home for lunch the fol-

lowing day.

The Tuscan tomato soup was one of the few dishes that was difficult to share — and it was so good that you wouldn't want to anyway. The rustic, chunky soup was rich in flavor, thanks to the use of Italian tomatoes, fresh oregano and extra virgin olive oil. A topping of crispy leeks added a nice textural contrast. The red oak leaf salad also was a step or two above the expected. Delicate leaves of lettuce were topped with Amish blue cheese, homemade bacon and hard-boiled eggs from Inovasi's own chickens. In fact, much of the food served is grown locally on a farm with acreage devoted solely to Inovasi.

Fresh agnolotti (similar to a raviolo) were filled with garlic-infused cheese, more of Inovasi's homemade bacon

and black truffles, served in a spicy citrus sauce. The acid of the sauce provided a perfect complement to the rich cheese. Similarly, goat cheese tempura got a dose of black truffle, and the rich cheese played off a hearty tomato ragout served with brioche croutons and caramelized onions. Even the lowly tater tot got the artisan treatment, topped with Swiss cheese, fresh herbs, roasted hazelnuts, fresh mint and vanilla crème fraiche

One of the most beautiful dishes was the sautéed Lake Huron walleye, presented on canvas and "painted" with four sauces in Jackson Pollock style. This elegant dish was served with a tasty farro verde (a grain similar to couscous) and roasted almond-black olive tapanade. The most outstanding dish,



among an evening of winners, was the pork shoulder, marinated then cooked confit and smoked over a four-day preparation period. Before being served, it was lightly sautéed and served atop polenta drizzled with basil oil. A watermelon radish and red wine reduction rounded out the dish. Absolutely one of the best things I've ever eaten.

You might be tempted to skip dessert, but that would be a mistake. We had a hard time choosing from the menu, which included such temptations as coffee-pistachio mousse with crispy phyllo, pumpkin cheese-

cake, tres leches cake and the house-made sorbet, a delightful apple and Ceylon tea confection.

Inovasi offers a well thought-out and reasonably priced wine list, and wine suggestions for each dish were listed on the menu. There was also a lengthy list of exotic cocktails, most of which were too sweet for our taste.

Inovasi is the perfect destination dining spot and a great place for locals.

The Bottom Line: Five plates, which will provide more than enough for two diners, and a glass of wine or a cocktail will run about \$40 per person, tax and tip included.

Recommend a restaurant for WiG to try. Write manageditor@wisconsinGazette.com.

On stage

On Stage from 18

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, presents The Bears Of Blue River, Time Since Western and The Giving Tree at 8 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Feb. 1, Monday

At 8 p.m., A.A. Bondy and Willy Mason play the High Noon Saloon, 701 E. Washington in Madison. Call 608-268-1122.

Feb. 2, Tuesday

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, welcomes the Nick Oliveri "Death

Acoustic Tour," with acoustic sets by Droids Attack and Helen Money at 9 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Feb. 4, Thursday

Dr. Dog stops by Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth, at 8 p.m. Call 414-286-3663

Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, welcomes GB Leighton at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

Dark Star Orchestra performs at The Pabst, 144 E. Wells, at 8 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

Feb. 5, Friday

Tropical Night Club, 626 S. Fifth, hosts Divas Night at 11

p.m. Call 414-630-6055.

Scott Burns Quartet plays the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, 19805 W. Capitol Dr. in Brookfield, at 8 p.m. Call 262-781-9520.

The Northern Lights Theater at Potawatomi Bingo Casino, 1721 W. Canal, presents comedian Grandma Lee with Tiffany Ellen at 8 and 10 p.m. Call 414-847-7922.

Madison Symphony Orchestra presents violinist Pinchas Zukerman, tonight through Sunday at the Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison.

MAKE A DATE

Cream City Foundation, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra and the Marcus Center partnered to present Broadway Nights, a fundraiser for the LGBT community featuring an appearance by Marvin Hamlisch. Details: Feb. 6 at 6:30 p.m. at the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, 929 N. Water St., Milwaukee. For tickets, call 414-225-0244 or go to www.creamcityfoundation.org.

Call 608-258-4141.

High Noon Saloon, 701 E. Washington in Madison, has Dr. Dog and the Growlers at 9:30 p.m. Call 608-268-1122.

Feb. 6, Saturday

Tropical Night Club, 626 S. 5th, hosts Noche De Divas at 11 p.m. Call 414-630-6055.

Jamey Johnson performs at 8 p.m. at The Pabst, 144 E.

Wells. Call 414-286-3663.

The second annual Great Midwestern Bluegrass Bash begins at 9 p.m. at the Majestic, 115 King in Madison. Call 608-251-2582.

Feb. 7, Sunday

Tropical Night Club, 626 S. 5th, hosts Divas Night at 11 p.m. Call 414-630-6055.

Feb. 9, Tuesday

The Northern Lights Theater at Potawatomi Bingo Casino, 1721 W. Canal, presents Cowboy Mouth's Annual Rock and Roll Mardi Gras at 8 p.m. Call 414-847-7922.

Feb. 10, Wednesday

James Lee Stanley performs at 8 p.m. in Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell. Call 414-276-7288.

Calendar

WHAT'S GOING ON?

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@wisconsin gazette.com.

THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

THURSDAY

Jan. 28

5:30 p.m., STD Specialties Free HIV/STD testing, M's in Milwaukee. Info: 414-264-8800.

FRIDAY

Jan. 29

7 p.m., Single Me Out Social Club movie night, "Love Actually," LGBT Center SE Wisconsin, 1456 Junction Ave., Racine. Info: 262-664-4100.

8 p.m., Volleyball, Milwaukee GAMMA, Beulah Brinton Center. Info: milwaukeekeegamma.com.

SATURDAY

Jan. 30

12:30 p.m., Moonlighting Career Pathing Group, LGBT Center SE Wisconsin, 1456 Junction Ave., Racine. Info: 262-664-4100.

8 p.m., Strap-On Sex 101, The Tool Shed, 2427 N. Murray Ave., Milwaukee. Info: 414-906-5304, www.toolshedtoys.com.

SUNDAY

Jan. 3

1 p.m., LGBT square dancing, Lake Park Lutheran Church, corner of Park and Stowell, Milwaukee. Info: 414-461-5359, www.iagsdc.org/creamcity.

TUESDAY

Feb. 2

Risk and Resiliency for LGBTQ Youth seminar, The Pyle Center, 702 Langdon St., Madison, with Diverse and Resilient executive director Gary Hollander. Info: 608-263-7023.

6 p.m., Share-A-Bration, Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. Second St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-383-3727.

THURSDAY

Feb. 4

9 p.m., STD Specialties Free HIV/STD testing, Woody's in Milwaukee. Info: 414-264-8800.

FRIDAY

Feb. 5

7 p.m., STD Specialties Free HIV/STD testing, Kruz in Milwaukee. Info: 414-264-8800.

8 p.m., Volleyball, Milwaukee GAMMA, Beulah Brinton Center. Info: milwaukeekeegamma.com.

SATURDAY

Feb. 6

10 a.m., Winter Community Breakfast, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St. Info: 414-292-3066.

10 a.m., Equality Wisconsin Voices of Faith workshop, Unitarian Universalist Church in Brookfield. Info: equalitywi.org/news.

6:30 p.m., Broadway Nights benefit for Cream City Foundation, Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, 929 N. Water St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-225-0244, www.creamcityfoundation.org.

7 p.m., Monthly Party, Milwaukee GAMMA. Info: milwaukeekeegamma.com.

8 p.m., Madison Gay Video Club watches "Shank" and "Focus: The Story Begins." Info: www.mgvc.org, 608-



PHOTO: COURTESY MGAC

Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. Second St., hosts "A Hint of Homosexuality: Gay and Homoerotic Imagery in American Print Advertising" through Feb. 26. Info: 414-383-3727.

244-8690.

Orchid Quest 2010, through Feb. 7, Exhibition Hall at Alliant Energy Center, Madison.

MONDAY

Feb. 8

6:30 p.m., Financial Literacy

SAVE THE DATE

OutReach Mardi Gras Party, 5-9 p.m. Feb. 16 at The Cardinal Bar, 418 E. Wilson St., Madison. Info: 608-255-8582.

Castaways MC of Milwaukee Valentine's Day Beer/Soda Bust, 3-7 p.m. Feb. 14, Kruz in Milwaukee. Info: castawaysrdcapt@aol.com.

Cream City Squares dance lessons, 1 p.m., Feb. 14, Lake Park Lutheran Church, Park and Stowell, Milwaukee. Info: 414-461-5359, iagsdc.org/creamcity.

101/Fostering and Adopting a Child, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-292-3065.

7 p.m., Gay Reading Group discusses "Kiss of the Spider Woman," Outwords Books, 2710 N. Murray Ave., Milwaukee. Info: 414-963-9089.

9 p.m., STD Specialties Free HIV/STD testing, Fluid in Milwaukee. Info: 414-264-8800.

TUESDAY

Feb. 9

7 p.m., Lesbian Reading Group discusses "Photographs of Claudia," Outwords Books, 2710 N.

Murray Ave., Milwaukee. Info: 414-963-9089.

7 p.m., Milwaukee GAMMA board meeting. Info: milwaukeekeegamma.com.

WEDNESDAY

Feb. 10

Noon, Milwaukee GAMMA Blue-Plate Special Lunch. Info: milwaukeekeegamma.com.

6:30 p.m., Yard Sales/Thrift Shops, Ebay: The Environmental Awareness Program, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-292-3065.

Want to see your event listed? Send details to managingeditor@wisconsin gazette.com.

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REAL ESTATE

Mad about Madison

By Kerrie Kennedy

WiG Real Estate Writer

Where is the gay neighborhood in Madison? It's a question that Keller Williams real estate agent Devery Cash is used to hearing — and one that he's grown used to answering.

"It just doesn't exist," Cash says. "There is one neighborhood outside of town, the Jennifer Street area, that tends to be a little more lesbian, but frankly, we don't have any area in Madison that's considered a gay neighborhood. We're all interspersed here."

At a time when gay men and lesbians in large cities across the country are choosing to live outside traditional gay neighborhoods, leaving many gay enclaves struggling to remain relevant, Madison seems like a model city for the future.

"This is a very open and accepting community. We just don't have to have separate bars or separate neighborhoods. I guess we've always been a little ahead of the curve here," Cash says.

Cash moved to Madison seven years ago from Mobile, Ala., where he was living a closeted life. He came out when he got to Madison and never looked back. "I have never felt frowned upon here," he says. "I've always felt comfortable."

And yet, to outsiders, Madison may not seem like it has a thriving gay community. Not only does it lack a gay neighborhood, there isn't much of a gay bar scene. There are currently four gay bars in Madison, but even those aren't strictly gay. "A lot of straight people go to the gay bars to dance," Cash says. "We tend to mingle everywhere here."

With just over 200,000 residents, Madison is surpris-



PHOTOS: DEVERY CASH

The Capitol Building (left) and a wintry Madison street scene

'This is a very open and accepting community.'

ingly small.

"The majority of people live within the beltline, so we're a very tight community here," Cash says. Madison's small size might help explain why its LGBT population is well integrated into nearly every sector of the community. An estimated nine churches in Madison call themselves "open and affirming." The local fire chief is an out lesbian, and numerous LGBTs hold positions in public office. Madison native Tammy Baldwin was not only the first woman elected to Congress from the state of Wisconsin, she also was the first-ever openly gay non-incumbent to be

elected to the U.S. House of Representatives.

A liberal college town whose residents range from hard-partying students (hence, the nickname "Madtown") to socially conscious activists, sports fans to artists, environmentalists to politicians, it's easy to see why Madison is a good place for LGBTs to live.

"Because of the liberalism of the university, we draw a highly-educated population here," Cash says.

Although the Madison real estate market has been hit by the economic downturn, the city hasn't been affected severely.

"Short sales and foreclosures represent maybe five percent of the market here," Cash says. "We've seen a slight decrease in prices and the number of sales are down about 10-15 percent over our peak years. We like to say it's been more of a correction."

The biggest change in Madison's real estate mar-

ket over the past five years is in the downtown market. A major influx of new-construction condominiums has brought new vitality to the area, as well as new residents. "It's no longer limited to just college students," says Cash, who lives downtown. "This is a very appealing area for the LGBT community." According to Cash, new-construction condominiums in downtown Madison range in price from about \$175,000-\$300,000.

Brimming with restaurants, boutiques, bookstores, museums and theaters, Madison's downtown is pedestrian-friendly and just eight blocks from the University center. The State Street area — within five blocks of any point downtown — is closed to traffic and offers abundant shopping. The new Overture Center is a venue for concerts, symphonies and theater. The Winona Terrace Convention Center, two blocks from the capital, ensures tourist traffic

on a regular basis. Capital Square serves as the site for art fairs, concerts, Taste of Madison and the local farmer's market (every Saturday from Memorial Day through November).

Vital, thriving, open-minded and safe—the city's low crime rate means you can walk just about anywhere at night without worrying — it's easy to understand why Madison is an appealing place for so many people, especially gays and lesbians.

While Madison is consistently ranked near the top of

the best cities to live in the country, it's not without at least a couple of drawbacks. "The taxes are definitely high here," Cash says. "For every \$100,000 you spend on a home, you pay close to \$2,000. We're certainly not a diverse city as far as our population goes, and because there is some money here, housing tends to be expensive."

And all that open-mindedness? Occasionally, it gets on the nerves. "Just about everybody's a tree-hugger here," Cash says.

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Shoreland Manor, 1029 E. Knapp St., downtown High-Rise, 1 block from lake front bike trail, center of East Town night life, 1 bdrms starting at \$630/mo, includes internet & cable, options to customize your space, call Greg at 414-759-1154 for your personal

showing, www.eastmore.com

Help Wanted

Are you the next
Brenda Starr?

Wisconsin Gazette is seeking freelance newspaper reporters to cover the LGBT community. Send a resume, three clips, availability and interests to WiG at managingeditor@wisconsin-gazette.com.

U.S. Census Workers

Earn good pay working for the US Census Bureau! For Milwaukee County residents, office jobs pay at least \$11.25 an hour and field positions pay at least \$15 an hour. Weekly pay & paid training. Temporary, part-time & full-time, work with flexible hours. Help your community have a successful census. Call the toll-free jobs line at 1-866-861-2010 to schedule the required 30 minute basic skills test at a time and location convenient to you. More information, including a practice test, is available at: www.2010censusjobs.gov

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Wisconsin Gazette is looking for a

ad sales rep in the Madison area. Must have experience in marketing and customer support and work independently. Call (773) 331-7432.

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Adult Fun

STRAP-ON SEX 101

Saturday, January 30, 8 p.m. Want to learn the ins-and-outs of dildo and harness use? All genders are welcome; we will discuss strap-ons for many types of bodies and uses! Bring your questions. \$10 per person. Register at www.toolshedtoys.com or by calling 414-906-5304.

WiG'S TAIL-WAGGER

COURTESY OF THE WISCONSIN HUMANE SOCIETY

Sadie is a gorgeous shepherd mix available for adoption at the Wisconsin Humane Society. She is a social and friendly 8-year-old. She loves to take walks with the WHS volunteers. Could Sadie be the canine companion for you? Meet her today at WHS, located at 45th and Wisconsin Avenue in Milwaukee.



Sadie, a shepherd mix

Tango's Tip: WHS invites low-income cat guardians to have their cat spayed or neutered on Spay Day, which is Feb. 23. Spay Day USA is a national day of action to reduce animal overpopulation and thus prevent animal suffering. Please call 414-431-6132 to schedule an appointment.

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PERSONAL FORECAST

Stargaze

BY MINERVA

ARIES: The more willing you are to get over yourself the better this will go; it's always that way.

TAURUS: Patterns that have more to do with past lives are raking you through an experience that is totally surreal.

GEMINI: It's not your job to judge; you're only task is to get through it with enough flexibility and humor to find the lesson in it.

CANCER: If you feel like you're in the Twilight Zone, it's because you're paying off a big chunk of dues all at once. Is it any wonder everything's coming down with no let up? Get used to it; it ain't gonna change.

LEO: You aren't as sure about this as you would like to be. Trust your instincts. The risks of being taken in are too high for you to be trading what you're worth for a hill of beans that's about to be flooded out.

VIRGO: Dropping out for a while would help to clarify your perspective. Too

this ride. In the end, you'll have to come back and deal with yourself.

CAPRICORN: Now that you're out of the box, you can go anywhere. What you thought would shake everything down has opened up a whole new realm of possibilities. Release the past. Don't let anything pull you back into it.

AQUARIUS: If you thought your life was never going to change, guess again. Who knew that the fates would put you in this position? Lesser mortals would have a problem with it, but you seem to be doing just fine.

PISCES: You're fed up with people and their games. Lately others have been running you ragged with guilt trips up the wazoo. Tied to this post, it'll be a while before you wake up and free yourself from this codependent role.

many things have converged, and you have a few questions to unravel. Out of all of them the relationship issue is on top of the stack.

LIBRA: If most people shirk responsibility, you have a tendency to take on too much. Half of what's going on doesn't even belong to you. With the weight of the world holding you down, how will you ever get anywhere?

SCORPIO: This could be another trip down the bunny trail. What you didn't see coming looks like a big disillusionment. Others will most likely teach you one of those lessons that would be easier if you weren't so stuck on them.

SAGITTARIUS: Before you get sick of being an escape artist, you'll have to find out the hard way that there are certain things you can't run away from. Enjoy

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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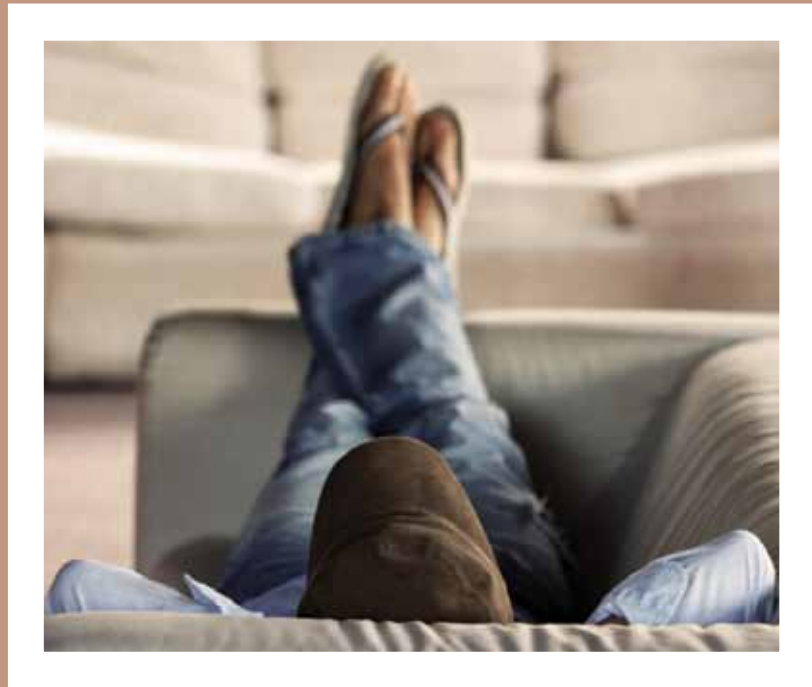
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