

In WiGOUT!

Out dancer Marc Petrocci takes flight in the Milwaukee Ballet's "Peter Pan." Page 21



THE VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR WISCONSIN'S LGBT COMMUNITY

Racing against the right

Jim Sullivan faces another anti-gay candidate

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

Although there are higher profile races on the ballot in Wisconsin this year, it's the contest for a state Senate seat in Wauwatosa that could have the greatest impact on the state's LGBT residents.

State Rep. Leah Vukmir, a Tea Party activist, is challenging moderate Democrat Jim Sullivan in the 5th Senate District in November. Vukmir's victory would set the stage for Republicans to regain control of the Legislature, according to political analysts, putting socially conservative lawmakers

FYI

HRL-PAC is holding a fundraiser for Jim Sullivan from 6-7:30 p.m. May 17. For information, call 414-455-5292 or go to www.hrl-pac.org.

POLITICAL ANALYSIS

Van Hollen.

Most recently, she voted against a law to curb the predatory practices of payday lenders. Sullivan authored the Senate version of the bill.

Vukmir's legislative record helped earn her a place on Milwaukee Magazine's list of the state's 10 worst legislators last year. The political group One Wisconsin Now has branded her "Wisconsin's Michelle Bachmann-in-training."

Vukmir also has been outspoken about her fundamentalist Christian vision for Wisconsin. Several months ago, the homepage of her campaign website featured numerous biblical quotations, but they've since been removed.

Vukmir declined WiG's request for an interview.

Sullivan page 5

ers at the helm of the state's legislative agenda.

Both parties have identified Sullivan as the No. 1 legislative target in 2010, and his race with Vukmir is expected to draw big bucks from coffers on both sides of the aisle.

The darling of talk radio host Charlie Sykes, Vukmir has routinely taken positions reflecting his radical-right agenda. She opposed the "Compassionate Care for Rape Victims Act" and was one of only 14 Assembly members to vote against funding to eliminate the state's DNA crime lab backlog. The latter vote put her to the right of ultra-conservative Attorney General J.B.

IT'S OFFICIAL!

The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center is relocating to the Blatz Boiler House, 225 E. Highland Ave. A Hard Hat Party is scheduled at the new site for Sunday, June 27. Look for details in WiG's May 20 issue.



OUT AT RIVERDALE HIGH

A gay character is joining Archie and the gang in September. WiG columnists Paul Varnell and Angel Sevilla examine the cultural implications of this comic-book outing on page 9.

AP PHOTO

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inside and online at wisconsin Gazette.com

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Nation to have full slate of out candidates

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The season is under way, with less than 200 days of play to go before the championships — the November mid-term elections.

There are players suiting

up in red and blue, and a few stars have changed their game plans, including a big leaguer in Florida who has gone to free-agent status — Charlie Crist — and a veteran in Arizona who is trying to reshape his image — John

McCain.

Among the rookies in play for U.S. House seats are two openly gay candidates. They're part of a slate of 88 LGBT candidates endorsed so far by the Victory Fund in this election cycle. VF hopes

ultimately to break its record of 111 endorsements.

At the local level, the Victory Fund is supporting candidates for judge, school board, auditor, recorder of deeds, city council, sheriff, county supervisor and coun-

ty commission, county clerk, mayor, register of wills, treasurer and district attorney.

The fund has endorsed 46 candidates for state office, including two candidates for lieutenant governor — Richard

Candidates page 6

LGBT news with a twist

**WIGWAG**

By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg

COLBERT TO GRAHAM: MAKE A SEX TAPE

Stephen Colbert told his television audience that U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham should combat rumors he's gay by releasing a straight sex tape. Colbert even suggested a title – "Graham Slam."

The controversy surrounding Graham, an anti-gay Republican from South Carolina, began during a late April Tea Party rally in Greenville, when activist William Gheen told ralliers that being gay had prevented Graham from embracing their far-right agenda, including their opposition to a climate change bill.

"Barney Frank has been more honest and brave than you," Gheen said rhetorically to Graham, who was not present.

Graham did not respond to the allegations, but he abruptly withdrew his support for the climate change

bill under attack by the tea partiers.

GAY CARD TRICK?

The old tactic of dragging out an opponent's sexual skeletons for political gain is being turned on its head in the City of Brotherly Love. In a left-leaning Philadelphia area, anchored by what locals affectionately call the Gayborhood, state Rep. Babette Josephs has accused her Democratic primary opponent of pretending to be bisexual in order to win votes.

Gregg Kravitz, who's currently in a relationship with a woman, countered that Josephs' statements were "dishonest and disgusting."

LA VIDA RICA

Ricky Martin is negotiating with a major publisher for his memoirs, which would provide details about his life as a gay man, according to

El Nuevo Día. The newspaper reported that Martin would receive a preliminary payment of \$20 million for the deal, including rights to a film about his life.

Martin came out to his fans in March on his Facebook page.

MARTIN'S EX-LEADING MAN?

Since Martin's venture into Outland, tabloids have linked the pop star with several men, including model Eduardo Verastegui, who in 2008 supported Republican John McCain's presidential bid and the anti-gay constitutional amendment in California known as Proposition 8.

Verastegui taped a public service announcement pitching for Prop 8, which

banned same-sex marriage in California, saying the measure "helps families and kids."

OUT AT RIVERDALE HIGH

A gay character is joining Archie Comics' Riverdale High. Slender, blond, good-looking Kevin Keller attracts the eye of Veronica, who pursues him. But Kevin just isn't interested. "It's nothing against her! I'm gay!" he tells Jughead.

Jughead doesn't have much reaction to Kevin's outing. He decides to wait and let Veronica figure it out for herself.

OUTSIDE ROOSEVELT HIGH

Officials in Casper, Wyo., politely asked homeowner Chris Trumball to remove the message he painted on his fence, which sits along the route teenagers travel to Roosevelt High School

each day. The message reads "Leviticus 20:13, To be gay equals death."

Trumball declined to remove the message.

The city's code enforcement officer said it couldn't force Trumball to remove the message, a reference to the Old Testament passage that reads, "If a man lies with a man as one lies with a woman, both of them have done what is detestable. They must be put to death; their blood will be on their own heads."

So administrators at the nearby school decided to use the situation as a tool to teach about free speech and differences of opinion.

GOODBYE YELLOW BRICK ROAD

Meinhardt Raabe, who was believed to be the last remaining Munchkin from "The Wizard of Oz," has gone over the rainbow. The

94-year-old was laid to rest last month in his Jefferson County, Wis., hometown.

Raabe parlayed his 13-second role as the corner of Munchkinland into a lifelong avocation, appearing at Oz festivals around the country. He also worked for 30 years as a spokesman for the Oscar Mayer Co.

We're assuming that he was thoroughly examined prior to burial and found to be not merely dead, but really most sincerely dead.

DEADLINE DRAMA

WiG was on its way to the press May 5, when some celebrity somewhere in the celebsphere was due to come out in a big way.

PR guru Howard Bragman – who helped Mitchell Anderson, Amanda Bearse and Dick Sargent find their way out of the closet and into The Advocate – was engineering the coming out event.

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WEDNESDAY MAY 26 • TURNER
TOOTS & THE MAYTALS

FRIDAY MAY 28 • TURNER
JOSH ROUSE

SAURDAY MAY 29 • TURNER
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Bill could bring more than \$1 million in new AIDS funding

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

A measure approved by the Wisconsin Legislature could bring more than \$1 million annually in new federal HIV/AIDS money to Wisconsin. The dollars will supplement the state's funding for the care and treatment of Medicaid patients.

After two years of stagnant funding and with a record number of people in Wisconsin living with HIV/AIDS, the resources provided by the HIV Medical Home Bill are badly needed, said Bill Keeton, of the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin.

"We were getting to a point where we were trying to figure out how we were going to continue to provide services," Keeton said. "This is a new way for us to get new federal dollars for HIV-

'This is a new way for us to get new federal dollars.'

positive Medicaid patients."

Among the strategies under consideration by ARCW was putting new patients on a waiting list.

Only ARCW and AIDS Network are eligible for the funding. Those agencies provide a fully integrated care model that includes core medical treatment as well as such "wrap-around" services as prevention, mental health care and case management. This "one stop" approach allows for better coordina-

tion of services and results in better outcomes for patients, Keeton said.

Money resulting from the HIV Medical Home Bill will be allocated by the Department of Health Services through Mike Johnson life care and early intervention service grants beginning as early as January 2011.

Current state law limits funding to under than \$3.6 million.

The bill was unanimously recommended by Senate and Assembly committees and passed both houses on a voice vote April 22. Rep. John Richards, D-Milwaukee, was the Assembly sponsor and openly gay Sen. Tim Carpenter, D-Milwaukee, sponsored in the Senate.

More than 7,000 Wisconsinites are living with HIV/AIDS, with 443 new cases reported in 2009.

State eliminates written consent for HIV testing

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

Under terms of a new law, Wisconsin health care providers no longer need to obtain written informed consent before testing patients for HIV. Instead, providers will routinely offer the test to patients and then order it unless patients explicitly decline.

The new law brings Wisconsin in line with federal guidelines established in 2006 by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, said Bill Keeton, of the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin. His organization was involved in crafting the legislation.

"The goal of this new law is to make sure that people

are being tested for HIV as part of their annual physicals and routine health care," Keeton said.

The new law contains a provision mandating that health care services cannot be denied to patients who refuse to be tested. "We were very careful to ensure that the consent for HIV-testing still rested with the individual," Keeton said.

Although the CDC testing guidelines met with resistance when they were introduced in 2006, Keeton said there was little opposition to the Wisconsin law. Keeton said written consent had proven to be a barrier to testing, due to the time and paperwork involved.

Gary Hollander, execu-

tive director of Diverse and Resilient, said the new law could help to normalize HIV testing, but he's worried about abuses that might occur as a result of reduced documentation, especially in hospital settings.

The new measure also enhances penalties for inappropriate disclosure of a patient's HIV status. The fine for negligent disclosure is increased from \$1,000 to \$2,000, from \$25,000 to \$50,000 for intentional disclosure and from \$100,000 to \$200,000 for intentional disclosure for the purpose of financial gain.

"I think making the fines bigger may have the salutary effect of a deterrent," Hollander said.

GET IT OUT THERE!

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



PHOTO: JIM SULLIVAN FOR SENATE

“When Democrats are in charge, a lot of legislation that’s hurtful to the gay community never sees the light of day,” says state Sen. Jim Sullivan.

‘His is a key race’

Sullivan from I

ON THE WEB
www.sullivanforsenate.com

For Sullivan, a supporter of LGBT equality, running against Vukmir is in many ways a replay of his 2006 race, when he narrowly defeated far-right incumbent Tom Reynolds. Also a religious fundamentalist, Reynolds was so obsessed with anti-gay fervor that he tried recruiting a gay Senate page into an ex-gay ministry.

“For whatever reason, that was a big part of (Reynold’s) world view,” Sullivan says. “To me, it was him indulging in his idiosyncrasies. This is a position of public trust, and you’re supposed to represent all of your constituents. Leah’s clearly coming from the same place. She’s somebody who’s decided she can make her way in politics by hewing to a hard-right ideological line.”

The LGBT community’s support was vital to Sullivan’s victory, and it will be again, says Dennis Kohler of HRL-PAC. In addition to endorsing Sullivan, the group is staging

a May 17 fundraiser for him. “We want to maintain a pro-equality state senate, and Jim Sullivan is a good candidate who’s very supportive of pro-equality legislation,” Kohler says. “His is a key race in maintaining our pro-equality majority. I’m hoping LGBT individuals and our allies will support this race any way they can.”

Sullivan says he’s relying on the community’s support in what is shaping up to be another tough race. “I hope the leadership that I’ve provided over the past four years has warranted that support,” he says.

He adds, “When Democrats are in charge, a lot of legislation that’s hurtful to the LGBT community never sees the light of day.”

Sullivan voted against the budget that contained Gov. Jim Doyle’s provision to create a domestic-partner registry in Wisconsin, but only because it gutted funding for a regional transit system and

delayed reconstruction of the Zoo Interchange, he says. He believes the subsequent closure of the interchange’s Highway 45 bridge due to excessive damage vindicated his concerns.

Despite his vote on the budget, Sullivan says same-sex couples have a “fundamental right” to the same legal benefits and responsibilities as heterosexual couples.

Sullivan worries that Tea Party radicals such as Vukmir have marginalized moderate Republicans and intimidated Democrats into inaction. As a result, he says, the Legislature failed to pass a bill promoting clean energy jobs at a time when Wisconsin should be working to cultivate renewable energy sources.

In addition to the new payday lending law, Sullivan was behind legislation mandating transparency in health care costs, strengthening penalties for drunk driving and cutting taxes on retirement accounts. He was named Legislator of the Year by the Wisconsin Professional Police Association.

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Teens face kidnapping, attempted murder charges

From AP and WIG reports

Defense attorneys claimed April 26 that a reported attack on a lesbian teenager in eastern Kentucky was staged and they described the target as a willing participant.

Attorneys for two 18-year-olds charged in the case said the teens committed no crime, the Lexington Herald-Leader reported. The

defendants, Ashley Sams and Corinne Schwab, pleaded not guilty.

Schwab's attorney, James Baechtold, said there are some "distinct falsehoods" in what alleged victim Cheyenne Williams has told authorities.

Defense attorneys have asked for a preliminary hearing in the case. Sams' attorney, Sharon Allen Gay, said she looks forward to the truth about the case com-

ing out.

Judge Henria Bailey Lewis will decide at the hearing whether to dismiss or amend the charges or send the case to a grand jury.

Williams told authorities that Sams, Schwab and a 17-year-old classmate assaulted her April 16 and tried to push her off a cliff. The 17-year-old's name and the charges against her have not been released because

she is a juvenile.

Sams and Schwab face charges of kidnapping and attempted murder.

Williams' mother says the attack was a hate crime, motivated by the fact that her daughter is gay.

A Kentucky gay rights group, Kentucky Equality Federation, has offered to help pay legal expenses if Williams' family wants to push for a hate-crime des-

ignation or pursue a civil lawsuit.

The detective handling the case said he would not characterize the alleged attack as a hate crime. It appeared the incident started as a prank but escalated to the point that Williams was frightened and suffered minor injuries, Det. Joie Peters said.

The incident is one of several anti-LGBT incidents reported this spring involving

teenagers or young adults.

In San Francisco, three men in their 20s recently pleaded guilty to charges of negligent discharge of a BB gun with a hate-crime enhancement. The men were arrested earlier this year after training the gun on people they identified as gay.

For news updates visit www.wisconsin Gazette.com.

More than 100 LGBT candidates

Candidates from I

ON THE WEB

For more information on LGBT candidates for office in 2010, go to www.victoryfund.org.

At the state level, a Victory Fund goal is to have at least one openly LGBT legislator serving in each capitol. To that end, Dison, said, "primary races in Ohio and Louisiana will be very important."

In Ohio, where the primary was taking place as WIG went to press, Nickie Antonio, a Democrat for a House seat, was campaigning to become the state's first out lawmaker.

In Louisiana, Thomas Robichaux is campaigning for a House seat – and to be the first openly gay legislator elected in the state. His primary is in August.

At the federal level, the

fund is supporting five out candidates. There are three incumbents – Wisconsin's Tammy Baldwin, Colorado's Jared Polis and Massachusetts' Barney Frank. And there are two non-incumbent gay candidates for Congress – Palm Springs, Calif., Mayor Steve Pougnet, a Democrat challenging Mary Bono Mack, and Providence, R.I., Mayor David Cicilline, a Democrat running for Patrick Kennedy's seat.

"We of course ... understand how important it will be to build our representa-

tion in Congress, and the election of Pougnet and Cicilline would take our numbers there from three to five openly LGBT members," said Dison.

Cicilline faces former Rhode Island Democratic chairman Bill Lynch in the primary. State house minority whip John Loughlin is the likely Republican nominee.

"Having managed Providence for the past eight years, Mayor Cicilline knows what Congress needs to do to help cities emerge from a harsh recession and to put Americans back to work," said VF president Chuck Wolfe.

"I'm running for Congress to take to Washington what I know about getting hard things done," Cicilline said. "That's what mayors do every day – solve difficult problems. We cut costs, resolve complex problems and look an impossible challenge in the eye and just figure it out."

"We know how to work across party lines and build coalitions to get things done."



COURTESY PHOTO

Steve Pougnet is running for Congress in California.

I intend to bring these critical skills and perspectives to Washington."

California's Pougnet decided to run for Congress after serving two years as a mayor and many years on the Palm Springs City Council. His campaign raised more than \$300,000 in the first quarter of 2010 and to date has raised \$850,000.

"The outpouring of support our campaign has received from people all across this district show just

how much people here are looking for real, committed leadership," Pougnet said.

The candidate has picked up endorsements from the California Teachers Association, California Nurses Association and the California State Federation of Labor.

"Voters have a clear choice in this election," Pougnet said. "My opponent backs the very policies that drove our economy off a cliff, supporting Wall Street and the insur-

ance industry, rather than the people she represents. As mayor I have worked hard to create jobs and restore fiscal discipline and I pledge to do the same in Congress."

In the mid-term elections, voters will cast ballots for all 435 U.S. House seats and for 36 of the 100 U.S. Senate seats. Generally, the president's party loses congressional seats in the first mid-term, and polls suggest the Democratic Party does face a challenge.

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Union bill advances

From WIG and AP reports

Hawaii lawmakers unexpectedly resurrected civil unions legislation in late April, sending a bill to the governor on April 29.

Republican Gov. Linda Lingle hasn't said whether she'll reject it or sign it into law but her office said that she will carefully review the bill.

The House voted 31-20 in favor of the legislation, which had been stalled but was unexpectedly revived on the last day of this year's legislative session. The Senate passed it in January.

The measure would grant same-sex couples the same rights and benefits that the state provides to married couples, but not "marriage."

If approved, Hawaii will become one of six states — along with California, Nevada, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington — to grant essentially all the rights of marriage to same-sex couples without authorizing marriage.

Five other states and the District of Columbia have legalized same-sex marriage: Iowa, Vermont, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Connecticut.

The Aloha State has been a battleground in the gay rights movement since the early 1990s.

A 1993 Hawaii Supreme Court ruling nearly made Hawaii the first state to legalize same-sex marriage before voters in the state overwhelmingly approved

the nation's first "defense of marriage" constitutional amendment in 1998.

The measure gave the Legislature the power to reserve marriage to opposite-sex couples. It resulted in a law banning gay marriage in Hawaii but left the door open for civil unions.

This year the issue has proven divisive in Hawaii with religious groups arguing that civil unions are a step toward legalizing same-sex marriage. During one of the biggest-ever state rallies, several thousand people protesting the measure rode buses to the Hawaii Capitol last year following Sunday church services.

The gay and lesbian community urged lawmakers to act on their principles rather than back down in the face of public pressure from opponents threatening to vote them out of office.

Civil-union supporters wearing rainbow-colored leis, or flower necklaces, jumped and screamed for joy outside the House chamber following the vote.

"Hawaii is the Aloha State, and this vote shows that the greater community has love and acceptance for everyone," said supporter Van Law.

Disappointed civil union opponents wearing red "iVote" buttons as a warning to legislators this election season quickly departed the Hawaii Capitol, with only a few lagging behind.

"Civil unions are a step

down the very slippery slope toward legalizing same-sex marriage," said Rachel Nakasaki, a fundamentalist Christian.

Hawaii's civil union legislation appeared to be dead in January, when the House didn't take a vote on the measure and postponed it indefinitely out of fears that Lingle would veto.

The issue was revived Thursday after every other bill introduced this year had been acted on. Democratic House Majority Leader Blake Oshiro made the motion to reconsider the bill, although the House fell three votes short of the two-thirds majority needed to override the governor.

The bill was written so that civil unions would be available to both same-sex and opposite-sex couples to avoid claims of discrimination.

"Equality feels really good," said Suzanne King, who said Hawaii would recognize her Massachusetts marriage to her partner as a civil union if the bill becomes law. "It allows us to strengthen our family."

If Lingle vetoes the bill, it's unlikely lawmakers would return to the Capitol to try to override her. They lack enough votes, and it's an election year in which legislators are hesitant to take stands on contentious social issues unless they're forced to, as they were during the April 29 roll-call vote.



PHOTO: AP PHOTO/NORMAN SHAPIRO-THE HONOLULU ADVERTISER

Honolulu residents Kat Brady, left, Henry Cheng, and Vincent Rosa, right, celebrate the passing of the civil union bill in Hawaii's House of Representatives late April 29. The House voted 31-20 in favor of the measure, which passed the Senate in January. The bill is now headed to Hawaii's governor.



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{ Editorial }

SINS OF OMISSION

The state Legislature missed at least two opportunities to pass important common-sense laws. Proposals to legalize medical marijuana and to empower victims of pedophiles to sue their abusers never made it to either the Senate or Assembly floors. Clearly election-year cowardice among Democratic leaders played a role in both sins of omission.

There is more than enough evidence showing that marijuana helps chronically ill patients, including those with HIV/AIDS and those struggling with the debilitating effects of chemotherapy. Denying them access to life-enhancing therapy is the worst sort of government intrusion into both health care and the private lives of citizens.

Yet the very right-wing activists who screech the mantra "keep government out of health care" opposed this law. Instead of taking on the hypocrisy of Tea Party activists such as state Rep. Leah Vukmir, Democrats let the bill go up in smoke.

It is outrageous that lawmakers in the state with the highest rate of drunkenness in the nation and the least punitive laws against drunk driving continue to deny patients access to medically prescribed marijuana. Even Michigan, the state with the second highest number of right-wing militias in the nation, has legalized medical pot.

The Child Victims Act withered on the same vine of election-year politics as the medical marijuana law. The act would have removed the statute of limitations for civil action against the sexual abusers of children, and it would have created a three-year window allowing victims to sue if the previous statute had barred their cases.

Backers of this bill said similar legislation brought to light 300 previously unknown pedophiles in California and 70 in Delaware. Since the average perpetrator preys on 80 to 100 victims over the course of a lifetime, the "window" legislation in those states likely prevented the abuse of thousands of children.

A law targeting child abusers should be a no-brainer. But not when lobbyists from the state's powerful Roman Catholic Church are fighting against it for reasons that are as painfully obvious as they are morally reprehensible.

Rather than fight the church in an election year, Democrats gave pedophiles another free pass, even as abuses in Wisconsin are in the international headlines. The inaction on this bill takes political pandering to new lows.



"I now pronounce you legally meaningless man and same sex partner."

{ Letters }

UN-CHRISTIAN CHAPLAINS

As a longtime advocate for equal rights for all citizens, regardless of race, religion, gender, or sexual orientation, I am deeply troubled by the views expressed in today's letter from a group of retired military chaplains to President Obama and Defense Secretary Gates. It is so fraught with illogical reasoning, one almost does not know where to begin in discussing its content.

The chaplains claim that their religious freedoms would be threatened if gays serve openly in the military. Yet, repealing "don't ask, don't tell" in no way would hinder chaplains from voicing their personal moral convictions and theological doctrines. The chaplaincy should represent the diversity of faiths in the military, not simply one point of view.

Similarly, the chaplains argue that this would impact their "ability to counsel"

because "service members seeking guidance regarding homosexual relationships will place chaplains in an untenable position." By this logic, we also should ban all service members whose gambling habits, treatment of spouses, and views on abortion, politics, or the economy are not in line with those of the chaplains.

As a Baptist minister, I frequently counsel people whose beliefs on a number of subjects are not exactly in line with the religious or moral values that I embrace.

Such a challenge in counseling comes with the territory of being a clergy member.

If forced to interact with gays in the military, this group of chaplains says they will be presented with a moral conundrum. Yet, Jesus said we are to love other people as he loved us — the love of Jesus was inclusive beyond measure and graceful beyond imagination. The

views expressed by the chaplains are the antithesis of the themes of love and inclusion commended and demonstrated by the Christ from whom they form their religious identity.

Repealing DADT is a step forward in equality and justice for all citizens. When chaplains find the government's pursuit of these goals to be a threat to their values, we must ask whether something is askew with their values.

*The Rev. Dr. C. Welton Gaddy,
President, Interfaith Alliance*

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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.

Comic relief

The history of fiction in comic books has never strayed too far from reality. The topics covered in comics have always paralleled our real current history in the United States. When we were at war with the Japanese it was unmistakably apparent that all of the villains in comic books at that time happened to be Japanese. When the Depression swept America and we needed someone to inspire hope the comics gave us heroes like Captain America and Superman. It is for this reason that I'm not surprised about Archie Comics revealing that it will introduce its first openly gay character in September. Archie Comics co-CEO Jon Goldwater says he wants to keep "the world of Archie Comics current and inclusive."

If you've read my column before you know that I hate separating us from heterosexuals by using terms like "gay community," but this is honestly awesome, especially for the gay community. The character AC is introducing will be named Kevin Keller, and in his first issue he will win an eating contest as well as win the interest of a beautiful female character. His dilemma will lie in figuring out how to let her down gently.

I just think of all the young gay kids who will have a cool gay role model in this new character. It may not seem like a huge deal especially because he isn't the title character, but to some young gay kid out there it'll mean a lot. I appreciate the fact that we're being acknowledged even in this small way.

Kevin Keller isn't the first gay comic character. The Watchmen graphic novel featured a lesbian hero who was murdered in a hate crime and in the last couple of years Detective Comics decided to bring back Batwoman, a character that had been killed off in 1979, but this time she was introduced as a "lesbian socialite."

Opinion
BY ANGEL SEVILLA

When this revelation was made it was met with lots of mixed opinions and reviews from Batfans. Some people didn't want Batwoman to be gay. I want to know why.

What's the difference with whether she's a lesbian? She's a comic character; she isn't even real. If a person can't handle a comic book character coming out of the closet then it makes me wonder how that person would handle a real person being openly gay. Not well, I'd assume.

I read an article that said parents feared that the new openly gay Archie character might make their kids gay. I have a question for these people: Would you turn gay by reading about a gay person? If you're truly straight, then I doubt it.

Chip Alfred of the LGBT organization Equality Forum said, "Kids should be introduced to gay characters. If they aren't, they don't understand them and that breeds hatred and intolerance."

I agree with Alfred. People fear what they don't know or understand, and sometimes their misinformation isn't completely their fault.

Including gay characters in comics and other forms of popular entertainment is a small but important step forward in the fight for gay rights. I'm happy to know that larger entities like comic production companies are taking it upon themselves to make homosexuality more commonly accepted, instead of just turning away and ignoring a struggle that they don't have to stand up for.

For news updates visit
www.wisconsinazette.com.

Funny pages come out of the closet

The "Archie" comic book series will introduce an openly gay character in September. This is a valuable step forward, but it also inserts a bit of realism into the adolescent world of Archie, Veronica, Betty and Jughead.

It will be interesting to see how each of the other characters reacts to the gay character and how the character develops. With any luck, he will be reasonably self-possessed and not just a bundle of stereotypes.

We can expect that there will be denunciations predicting the end of Western Civilization from the usual suspects and some efforts to mount a boycott, but they will not have much impact. Comic book stores carry comics with a side variety of themes already and I assume the comic book company has anticipated this possibility and may welcome it as a useful bit of publicity. I know I will be heading down to my

This character could encourage young, closeted gays to become more comfortable with themselves.

local comic book store to buy a copy.

The new character will hardly be the first openly gay character in comics. There have long been gay characters in the superhero genre. But this may be a first gay character in a comic ostensibly reflecting the reality of young people's daily lives. Gay may become the new black.

If this character is presented appealingly, he could encourage young closeted gays to become more comfortable with themselves and take a few tentative steps out of the closet. For young people who still do not know anyone gay, it may help undermine some stereotypes about us.

Homosexuality or bisexuality may be fashionable for young women, but it is far from that for young men. It would be nice if there were gay or gay/straight clubs in lots of schools, but there are still relatively few. If you want a sympathetic insight into the difficulties of being gay in high school, I recommend a book by Brett Hartinger called "The Geography Club." The club is not really about geography, of course.

Maybe someone should write a self-help book for young gays, but no one has yet. (I would be glad if someone corrects me on this.) All they have is young adult

Opinion
BY PAUL VARNELL

fiction, but there is by now a good deal of that. Ask your local librarian, as I did.

It will be interesting to see if the new comic deals only with adolescent problems or touches on real-world issues such as anti-gay prejudice and violence, as well as HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases. No doubt the comic cannot get too heavy or preachy, else it would lose its audience. But it could at least touch on serious subjects.

For news updates visit
www.wisconsinazette.com.

Extra steps down the wedding aisle

Jenny and I are getting married.

The problem is where.

Oh, not where we're having the wedding. That's easy. Our wedding will be held in the church we attend, a 100-year-old Lutheran Church on the Upper West Side of New York, with well-worn wooden pews and slightly peeling paint.

Our church welcomes all and marries all (as does the Lutheran denomination now), which is probably why it's so vibrant, with children scratching out drawings during the sermons and straight and gay couples of all races mingling during the social hour.

Our minister, when we asked her to officiate at our wedding, was thrilled. "Oh!" she said, clapping her hands. "I've been wanting to marry a gay couple! This is great news!"

So our wedding will be in a church.

But our marriage is a different story.

New York state recognizes gay marriages performed in other states and countries

Opinion
BY JENNIFER VANASCO

where they are legal – so once we are married somewhere, anywhere, we will be considered married at home.

We had been hoping that New York would go all the way and legalize marriages performed here, as well. And that looked likely for a while. There was strong support in the state legislature and the governor put his support behind the bill.

And then came last June, when the legislature careened into a circus, the governor lost all credibility and – well, suffice it to say that it's doubtful our minister would be able to say "By the power of the state of New York I now pronounce you spouses for life" even if we waited until next year. Or 2012. Or 2013.

So we can't get married officially in New York.

We could get married in Washington, D.C., where

Jenny's father is a judge. That would be perfect, except that he has yet to accept that Jenny is a lesbian.

And for a time we thought about Iceland. Iceland will likely get marriage equality this June, and Jenny has always wanted to go there. It's a small country. For a few days we thrilled each other by imagining jetting off to Iceland after our wedding to get officially married by their lesbian prime minister.

"Why not?" we thought. "Why shouldn't she officiate?" It's a small country. It would be good publicity, at least to the well-traveled gay set.

And then we imagined waving around a marriage certificate in Icelandic should we ever have to prove that we are married, say, in Arkansas, and shuddered.

There are other choices: Spain. New Hampshire. Massachusetts. Iowa. Each has its own draws and drawbacks.

Straight couples do not have this issue. They do not have to figure out the logistics of both a wedding and

a marriage. They don't have to decide both who will see them walk down the aisle and who will see them officially tie the knot. They do not have one outfit for the minister and one for the judge who signs the papers.

But we do.

In the end, we'll probably do the easy thing: Connecticut. It's right over the border on the MetroNorth. We don't know who of our friends and family will be able to make it – we're already asking them to fly in from all over the country during the week instead of a weekend, so asking them to tack on an extra day seems wrong.

But what is really wrong, of course, is that we should need to perform an extra step at all.

We can't just walk down the aisle. We also have to drive, ride or fly across state lines.

But we will do it, because at the end of the day, beautiful as it will be, we don't just want a wedding. We want to be married.

For news updates visit
www.wisconsinazette.com.



PHOTO: AP PHOTO/GREGORIO BORGIA

DOGGIN' THE VATICAN

A dog looks out of a pouch as gay rights advocates demonstrate in central Rome April 24. Activists demonstrated in support of survivors of clerical abuse and to protest Vatican Secretary of State Tarcisio Bertone's recent comments relating pedophilia to homosexuality.

Military discharges at record low

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Discharges under the military's gay servicemember ban reached a record low in 2009, according to statistics from federal agencies.

The Department of Defense reported 428 discharges under the "don't ask, don't tell" ban and the Department of Homeland Security reported another 15 discharges under DADT for the U.S. Coast Guard.

Representatives with the watchdog group Servicemembers United noted that discharges tend to decline during wartime and the nation is currently involved in two conflicts — the war in Afghanistan and the war in Iraq.

Also, according to SU, the true number of gay and

lesbian servicemembers discharged was likely higher in 2009.

Through freedom of information requests filed last year, SU learned that the statistics for discharges under DADT are compiled by the Defense Manpower Data Center, which does not use information from the military Reserves or National Guard.

"The annual discharge numbers have been underreported," said SU's Alexander Nicholson, who was serving in the U.S. Army as an interrogator when he was discharged under DADT.

"Policymakers, the media and the American public rely on these numbers to make decisions and judgments about the costs of this pol-

Military page 11

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What they said!

"If somebody walks in to me and says, 'I'm a gay person; I want a job in your office.' I would say, 'That's inappropriate' and they wouldn't be hired, because that would mean they are promoting their agenda. The gay and lesbian lifestyle (is) unacceptable, lest there be any question about that."

Mark Neumann, Republican candidate for Wisconsin governor, in a 1997 speech. Neumann has pulled even with his Republican primary opponent Scott Walker in recent polls

"I don't believe this allegation. If Lindsey Graham found men sexually attractive, why would he hang out with Joe Lieberman?"

Stephen Colbert, responding to rumors about U.S. Sen. Lindsey Graham that were started by a South Carolina Tea Party activist

"Let me be very clear about this: If some guy tried to kiss me when I was 17, I would have flattened him. I most certainly would not go on a retreat with the so-called abuser, unless, of course, I liked it."

Catholic League President Bill Donohue arguing that a case involving a Chilean priest and a young man in his parish constituted a "homosexual relationship" rather than abuse

"He witnessed the impact that all of this coming out and being who we are can have on one's life. He had a front-row center seat, because it was his family that was directly affected."

Robyn Deane, the transgender sister-in-law of Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell, criticizing the governor's opposition to an anti-discrimination law protecting LGBT people

"I can tell you if there were any homosexuals in that group, they were taken care of in ways I can't describe to you."

Dr. Ron Kirkland, a Vietnam vet running for Congress in Tennessee, addressing a Tea Party rally



NATIONAL GAZE

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Final Prop 8 hearings scheduled

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

A federal judge will hear closing arguments June 16 in the landmark trial over California's constitutional amendment banning same-sex couples in the state from marrying.

Perry v. Schwarzenegger was first taken up by Judge Vaughn Walker in a U.S. District Court courtroom in San Francisco in January. The trial then went on hiatus through the rest of winter and early spring.

"The scheduling of final arguments is an important step forward in this historic trial, but it is far from an end point in our nation's centuries-long war against bigotry and discrimination," said Rick Jacobs of the California-based Courage Campaign, which has closely monitored the trial and is at the forefront of the campaign to repeal Proposition 8.

Jacobs promised a "historic new initiative" this year

on the freedom to marry in the state.

"Ultimately," he said, "the promise of full equality for all Americans will remain unfulfilled until the American people are able to hear all the evidence."

Before final arguments, the defenders of the voter-approved amendment — nicknamed Prop 8 for its place on the November 2008 ballot — are expected to file a motion to strike certain evidence introduced during the trial. The defense has indicated its intent to strike e-mail messages and campaign memoranda written by certain Prop 8 supporters, as well as the testimony of Hak-Shing William Tam.

The defense, a coalition called Protect Marriage, maintains that the entering of certain documents and Tam's testimony as evidence during the trial violates the freedom of association guarantee in the First Amendment.

Tam, a conservative from

San Francisco involved with the American Return to God Prayer Movement, was called as a hostile witness by opponents of Prop 8 to talk about his work during the Prop 8 campaign, which involved spreading a message linking homosexuality with pedophilia.

Just before the trial began, Tam asked the court to excuse him from the case.

He wrote, "I am fearful for my own safety and the safety of my family. In the past I have received threats to my life, had my property vandalized and I am recognized on the streets due to my association with Prop 8 ... and now that (the case) is going to trial, I fear that I will get more publicity, be more recognizable, and the risk of harm to me and my family will increase."

A deadline for motions in the case is May 7.



PHOTO: DIANA WALKER

David Boies, an attorney for the plaintiffs, and Chad Griffin, of American Foundation for Equal Rights, on the first day of the Prop 8 trial

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E-mail managingeditor@wisconsin Gazette.com

The 17-year total is 13,425 discharges

Military from 10

icy. The Reserves and the National Guard have been especially active since Sept. 11, 2001, and their numbers have swelled. So it is highly probable that the discharge numbers from these two additional activities are significant," Nicholson said.

The Defense Department's reported 17-year total for DADT discharges is 13,425 servicemembers.

Nicholson called those discharges "unfair terminations" that turned lives "upside down."

Later this month, hundreds of LGBT veterans are expected to lobby Congress to repeal DADT — action the president called for in his State of the Union address in January.

A lobby day will take place in Washington, D.C., May 11,

and LGBT veterans also will contact congressional members from their hometowns through a massive letter-writing campaign coordinated led by Servicemembers Legal Defense Network.

The lobbying push was timed to occur just before

the U.S. House Armed Services Committee takes up its defense authorization bill. Markup is scheduled for May 19. Markup for a U.S. Senate defense authorization bill is expected the week of May 26.

LGBT activists have said

that the best method for repealing DADT this year is to include a provision in the defense authorization bill.

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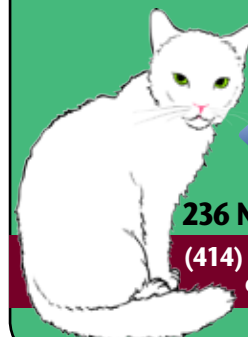
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Texas court hears state's appeal in gay divorce

From AP and WiG Reports

A lawyer for a Dallas man trying to divorce the man he married in Massachusetts told a Texas appeals court during arguments in late April that his client is entitled to a divorce because he had a valid marriage.

But the Texas Attorney General's Office argued before the three-judge 5th Texas Court of Appeals panel that the marriage isn't recognized by Texas, so they cannot get a divorce. Jimmy Blacklock, an assistant Texas solicitor general, said the men's union could only be voided.

"The parties lack standing to file a divorce case because they're not married," he said.

The Dallas men wed in 2006 in Massachusetts, where gay marriage is legal, and sep-

arated two years later.

Attorney General Greg Abbott appealed a Dallas state district judge's ruling in October that granted a divorce to the men and said the state's same-sex marriage ban violates equal rights guaranteed by the U.S. Constitution.

Abbott is also appealing an Austin judge's ruling this spring that granted a divorce to two women married in Massachusetts.

Jody Scheske, who represents the Dallas man listed in court records only as J.B., said his client doesn't want to overturn the state's marriage ban, but only wants to end his own marriage.

"He is not seeking to enter into a same-sex marriage; he's seeking to end a marriage that was valid," Scheske said.

'He is not seeking to enter into a same-sex marriage; he's seeking to end a marriage that was valid.'

"The trial courts have the right to hear divorce cases from people who have valid marriages," he said.

Blacklock told the judges that the state's ban on gay marriage doesn't violate the

Constitution and asked them to confirm that voidance is the correct way to dissolve a same-sex union.

"Voidance is the remedy Texas has long provided to dissolve a void marriage," he said.

Scheske said voidance isn't applicable to his client because he has a valid marriage. And, he said, the constitutional issues only arose in the case after Abbott tried to intervene. The judge did not allow the intervention, so Abbott appealed.

"My client's very private matter has become a public spectacle," Scheske said.

The court did not give a time frame for a ruling in the case.

In 2004, Massachusetts became the first state to let same-sex couples get married. Now Connecticut, Iowa,

New Hampshire, Vermont and the District of Columbia also allow them.

Gay and lesbian couples who turn to the courts when they break up are getting mixed results across the nation. A Pennsylvania judge last month refused to divorce two women who married in Massachusetts, while New York grants such divorces even though the state doesn't allow same-sex marriage.

Hiram Sasser, an attorney for the conservative Liberty Institute in Plano, told the court that the issue of same-sex marriage should be determined by the people. And he said Texans have already spoken on the issue.

In 2005, Texas voters passed a constitutional ban on same-sex marriage by a 3-to-1 margin, even though state law already prohibited

it.

Liberty Institute had filed a friend-of-the-court brief to the appeals court on behalf of the two Republican state lawmakers who co-sponsored the amendment banning gay marriage, state Rep. Warren Chisum and former state Sen. Todd Staples.

Attorney Peter Schulte, who also represents J.B., said J.B. and his partner, known in court filings as H.B., had an amicable separation, with no disputes on separation of property and no children involved. He said the couple simply wants an official divorce.

"But for the actions of the attorney general," Scheske told the court, "my client would already be divorced and there would be one less same-sex marriage in Texas."



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Court hears secret signatures case

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The U.S. Supreme Court will decide later this year whether releasing the names of petitioners in an anti-gay ballot drive protects their right to anonymous political speech or violates a state's commitment to transparent and open government.

The High Court heard arguments April 28 over signatures on petitions calling for a referendum against an expanded domestic partnership law in Washington.

The central issue is broader than gay rights. The Court must decide whether referenda and initiative petitions constitute political speech protected by the First Amendment or a public process similar to legislative workings.

The Justices seemed skeptical of the arguments for keeping the signatures secret in *John Doe v. Reed*.

"The fact is that running a democracy takes a certain amount of civic courage," said Justice Antonin Scalia during the arguments.

The case originated with the battle over Referendum 71, which voters rejected last November.

Proponents of the referendum sought to repeal a law that extended government benefits of marriage to same-sex couples. The measure was nicknamed the "everything but marriage" law because it did not define same-sex partnerships as "marriages."

To place the referendum on the November 2009 ballot, proponents gathered signatures from registered voters, then filed the documents with the secretary of state.

The referendum campaigner, Protect Marriage Washington, also fought to keep the identities of the petitioners a secret, citing concern for the type of harassment alleged to have taken place in California a year earlier with the battle over the anti-gay Proposition 8.

Gay rights advocates in Washington acknowledged that, under Washington's public records act, they sought the names of petitioners for posting on the Web.

Last fall, a federal court ruled against disclosure, saying release of the petitioners' identities would violate their constitutional right to anonymous political speech.

The dispute over the signatures reached the Supreme Court level in October. It has potential ramifications for the 24 states where citizens can place referenda and initiative questions on ballots. Currently, 23 of the 24 consider the petitions — and their signatures — public records.

Attorney James Bopp Jr., who earlier this year won a High Court case easing restrictions against corporations seeking to fund federal elections, argued against disclosure of the signatures.

"The First Amendment protects citizens from intimi-

dation resulting from compelled disclosure of their identity," he said.

Scalia responded that the "First Amendment does not protect you from criticism or even nasty phone calls."

"Oh, this is such a touchy-feely, oh, so sensitive," Scalia said. "You know, you can't run a democracy this way, with everybody being afraid of having his political positions known."

Bopp, who maintained the government could validate petition signatures without making them public, replied, "I'm sorry, Justice Scalia, but the campaign manager of this initiative had his family sleep in his living room because of the threats."

Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sonia Sotomayor also sharply questioned Bopp's argument, based on a transcript from the Court.

Washington Attorney General Robert M. McKenna, representing the state, argued for disclosure of the signatures, saying the state had a legitimate interest in ensuring the petition process was open to the public.

McKenna said keeping petition signatures secret threatened transparency and accountability in Washington government, which has a strong reputation for operating in the sunshine.

Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Samuel Alito Jr. challenged McKenna.

Roberts asked whether "having your name revealed

on a petition of this sort ... have a chilling effect on whether you sign it."

Dozens of organizations joined in the case, filing friend-of-the-court briefs in support of one side or the other.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed a brief arguing against disclosure, claiming people in California were harassed for signing a Proposition 8 petition.

Five LGBT civil rights groups — Lambda Legal, Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, National Center for Lesbian Rights, Human Rights Campaign and National Gay and Lesbian Task Force — filed briefs arguing for disclosure. One brief described claims of "intimidation" in the Prop 8 fight as "trivial."

Also, the Lambda, GLAD and NCLR brief said that the complaints of harassment "reflect a fundamental refusal to accept the legitimacy of speech that disagrees with the complainants' viewpoints, deeming it 'hateful' or 'harassing' simply because they do not like hearing it."

For news updates visit www.wisconsin-gazette.com.

Anti-bullying bill before Illinois governor

The Illinois House of Representatives unanimously passed an enumerated anti-bullying bill April 23 that includes protections from bullying on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity/expression.

The Senate passed the bill last month.

The bill now goes to Gov. Pat Quinn, who is expected to sign the measure and make Illinois the ninth state to enact an enumerated anti-bullying law that includes a list of characteristics most often targeted by bullies. Research has shown that such specific laws are more effective than general anti-bullying measures.

"Illinois schools are about to get safer for all students. GLSEN applauds the Illinois legislature for taking comprehensive action against all forms of bullying and ensuring that all students are protected

under the law," said Gay Lesbian Straight Education Network executive director Eliza Byard. "Such widespread support for an enumerated bill gives us even more hope that Congress will follow suit and pass the Safe Schools Improvement Act so that students across the country will have the same protections that are coming to Illinois schools."

LGBT students in Illinois face extreme victimization, according to GLSEN. The organization's 2007 survey of schools found that 89 percent of LGBT students in Illinois had been verbally harassed in the past year because of their sexual orientation.

The eight other states that have enumerated anti-bullying laws are California, Iowa, Maryland, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oregon, Vermont and Washington.

—L.N.

We want to hear what you think! Send e-mail to managingeditor@wisconsin-gazette.com.

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POLICE SEARCH FOR WOMAN'S KILLER

Police are searching for the killer of a transgender woman in Puerto Rico whose naked, battered body was discovered in her home last week. Activists are pressing authorities to probe the slaying as a possible hate crime.

Ashley Santiago Ocasio, a 31-year-old beauty salon owner with high cheekbones and a flair for fashion, was shot in the head in the central mountain town of Corozal. Her car was missing and there were no signs of a break-in.

The case has grabbed headlines and renewed complaints that Puerto Rico has never invoked a 2002 hate crime law covering crimes based on sexual orientation or gender identity.

In the last five months alone, there have been five instances when the statute could have been used, said Pedro Julio Serrano, a spokesman for the National

Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

"The law is very clear and we're asking authorities to investigate without prejudice," Serrano said.

Sgt. Luis R. Castro, whose homicide division in the neighboring town of Vega Baja is handling the case, said police will investigate it as a hate crime if the evidence warrants, but they have not yet made that determination. There are no announced suspects, and an autopsy is pending.

SON SAYS FRED PHELPS' CHURCH WILL NOT LAST

The estranged son of a controversial Kansas pastor encouraged people to feel sympathy for members of his father's church, "at least for the young children stuck in that situation."

Nate Phelps, 51, spoke in Topeka, Kan., in April, marking his first trip in 20 years to the city where his father, Fred Phelps, runs Westboro Baptist church. He described



PHOTO: CITIZENS AGAINST HATE

Members of the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kan., picket. The son of the Rev. Fred Phelps says the church will not last.

the fear, intimidation and abuse he endured before leaving the family and church on his 18th birthday.

He said that while society is quick to take steps to protect children, it seems "curiously blind" when religious beliefs jeopardize a child's safety. He also predicted that

the group would eventually die out.

Westboro Baptist members, many of them Fred Phelps' children and grandchildren, have conducted anti-gay picketing in Topeka and other cities since 1991. They began picketing soldiers' funerals in recent

years, saying military deaths were the work of a wrathful God who punishes the United States for tolerating homosexuality.

WASHINGTON TAX INITIATIVE TO INCLUDE GAY COUPLES

Supporters of an initiative campaign to tax the earnings of couples making more than \$400,000 annually want to make sure Washington's domestic partners are taxed at the same rate as married couples.

An updated draft of Initiative 1077 was filed with the secretary of state in late April. The initiative was announced by Bill Gates Sr. and others. In addition to making some technical changes, it adds language to ensure that it is consistent with the state's latest expansion to domestic partnerships.

I-1077 would tax couples with adjusted gross incomes greater than \$400,000 annu-

ally, or incomes of more than \$200,000 for individuals. Supporters said that represents the top 3 percent of earners in Washington. It also would cut the state property tax by 20 percent and increase the business-and-occupation tax credit to \$4,800.

LESBIAN STUDENT SEEKS DAMAGES FOR PROM FLAP

The lesbian teenager from Mississippi who challenged her school district's ban of same-sex prom dates is seeking monetary damages, claiming she suffered from public humiliation.

The lawsuit was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union in U.S. District Court in Aberdeen. The Itawamba County School District and school officials are named as defendants.

Constance McMillen, 18, is a senior at Itawamba Agricultural High School in Fulton, Miss. In the lawsuit,

Briefs next page

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Briefs from previous page

her attorneys said McMillen has taken medical leave from classes and wants to transfer out of the school district.

She and the ACLU challenged her school district's rule that banned same-sex prom dates and a stipulation that only male students be allowed to wear tuxedos to the event. In response, the school district canceled its April 2 prom and later announced parents would sponsor another dance. That dance was not sponsored by the school.

The ACLU believes the parent-sponsored dance that McMillen attended was a ruse because only seven students showed up. McMillen said the rest of her peers partied at another location.

BISEXUAL MEN SAY SOFTBALL SERIES DISCRIMINATED

Three bisexual men from the San Francisco area have

filed a lawsuit claiming they were discriminated against during the Gay Softball World Series in the Seattle area two years ago.

The Seattle Times reports that the men filed the case in U.S. District Court in Seattle against the softball tournament's organizer, the North American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance. It alleges that after another team complained, the alliance ruled the three men were "nongay," and took away the team's second-place finish.

The lawsuit accuses the alliance of violating Washington state laws barring discrimination.

Beth Allen, the alliance's attorney, told the newspaper the lawsuit is unwarranted and that the three plaintiffs "were not discriminated against in any unlawful manner."

The lawsuit, however, contends the tournament is a "public accommodation" that is open to the public and uses public softball fields.



COURTESY PHOTO

Gay activists have said the Boom Boom Room at the Coast Inn on Pacific Coast Highway in California is an essential part of Laguna Beach's history and have asked owner Steven Udvar-Hazy to find a way to preserve it.

GAY ACTIVISTS LOOK TO PRESERVE FAMED CALIF. BAR

Some residents of Laguna Beach, Calif., are urging the city to give historic status to a building that housed a famous gay bar where Rock

Hudson once held court for decades.

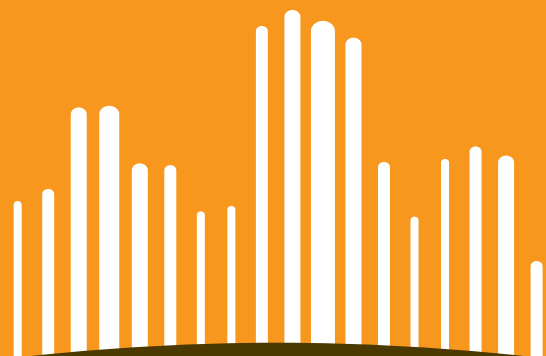
Gay activists have said the Boom Boom Room at the Coast Inn on Pacific Coast Highway is an essential part of the city's history and have asked owner Steven Udvar-Hazy to find a way to preserve it.

Udvar-Hazy bought the property five years ago and closed the bar in 2008.

The city's planning commission approved his proposed renovation on April 14. He plans to turn the hotel into a 10-suite boutique inn with a rooftop pool but no bar or restaurant.

After several hearings, the Laguna Beach Heritage Commission has opted not to give the space, which was built in 1928, a coveted "K" rating, which provides protected status and tax breaks for the owner.

— from AP and WiG reports



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Iranian gays carve out a refuge in Turkey

By Scheherezade
Faramarzi

AP Writer

The salmon-colored building has seen better days. Paint peels from the moldy facades. Pieces of cardboard, newspaper and plastic cover the many missing windows – not worth replacing, because the neighborhood kids, who know this as “the gay building,” will just smash them again.

The two-story building in Kayseri's Fez Kichak neighborhood has become an informal halfway house for Iranian gays fleeing torment in their homeland and hoping to make it to the West.

Homosexuality is punishable by death in Iran, and human rights groups estimate some 4,000 gays have been executed since the Islamic revolution in 1979.

The atmosphere has grown more tense since the arrival in power five years ago of hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who famously proclaimed in a 2007 speech at Columbia University that there are no gays in his country. An official memo sent to government departments last year called on employees to either marry or resign – a step seen as aimed at seeking to weed out gays.

Alireza Naimian is one of the lucky ones. After 2 1/2 years in Turkey, he has won acceptance through the U.N. for resettlement in the United States. Sitting in his ground-floor apartment he describes the event that eventually led

to his flight: One day in 2007, a group of paramilitary Basijis who noticed his long hair as he traveled in a cab in the northern Iranian town of Roodehen detained him, took him to his home and brutally raped him.

“All I wanted was death from God, to die and be free of them,” said the 42-year-old Naimian.

As Naimian speaks, rocks clatter against what's left of one of his windows. Outside, four teenagers run off.

“This building has gained a bad reputation,” he says.

Naimian is one of nine gays living in the shabby apartments, which have frequently changed hands, along with belongings sometimes, as new arrivals hear of the place by word of mouth.

A trickle of gays and lesbians have made their way out of Iran – most through neighboring Turkey, which doesn't require Iranians to obtain a visa. Currently, 92 Iranian gays have refugee status in the country, according to Soghi Ghahraman, director of the Toronto-based Iranian Queer Organization that tracks gays fleeing Iran.

Many are placed by the Turkish government in Kayseri and nearby towns, where they form a precarious community, overshadowed by a larger influx of thousands of Iranians fleeing the political crackdown since June's disputed presidential election. In this conservative region of Turkey, they try to lay low,

fearing harassment as they wait in hopes of resettlement.

“Police here tells us to stay indoors when we report violence against us,” said Roodabeh Parvaresh, a 32-year-old lesbian who has been in Turkey for over two years.

Parvaresh, a nurse, said even staff at a human rights organization that is supposed to care for refugees told her, “Don't make a fuss, you're already enough in the public eye. Why? Because I am lesbian.”

Another lesbian, Hengameh, who refused to give her full name to avoid publicity, said she was severely beaten by two Turkish youths soon after arriving in the country a year ago.

Still, Turkey provides an escape from their lives in Iran, where gays can face threats from every direction – from the state, from co-workers or security officials who harass them or try to blackmail them into sexual favors.

There is no authoritative figure for the LGBT population in Iran. However, recently published data based only on psychological reports of recruits for compulsory military service or for sex change operations put the number of gay men at 200,000 in a country of 66 million, Ghahraman said. Sex changes are legal in Iran, and many gays resort to them as the only way to live with their partners or avoid the harsh penalties.

Last November, authori-

ties said they were preparing to execute three men guilty of homosexuality, but did not give dates. No report of their execution has been made. Over the past three years, 12 minors have been sentenced to death for sodomy, one of whom has already been executed, according to human rights groups. The whereabouts of only four of the remaining 11 are known.

In the summer of 2005, two teenagers were hanged in public in the northeastern city of Mashhad for having same-sex sex. One of them was underage at the time of the offense.

Under Iran's Islamic law, the punishment for same-sex intercourse between two men is death and between two women is 100 lashes for the first three offenses and the death penalty for the fourth. Often convictions are based on forced confessions, human rights lawyers say.

Some judges, though, are more lenient. They “send the accused to be examined for gay encounters, and then release them,” said Ghahraman. Religious guidelines issued by clerics say that “self-inserting a zucchini for pleasure” is not considered homosexuality – so gay men often claim to have done so to escape prosecution on sodomy charges, she said.

But beyond the law, gays face a deep hostility from authorities and, often, their families.

In her first year at univer-

sity, Hengameh sought help from a student counselor. “I thought this phase would pass,” she said. “I thought if it was serious I could do something about it.”

But when she told the counselor she was attracted to women, the official snapped at her, “It's not advisable that you sit with other students in class” and reported her to the university administration. Hengameh was banned for life from further education.

Her mother tried to push her into an arranged marriage in hopes of “curing her,” but relented when Hengameh threatened to kill herself. After she was caught with a woman, Hengameh left the country.

When Ahmad Sajedi, 22, told his mother he was gay, she took him to a psychiatrist who promised to make him “normal” after 10 therapy sessions. The psychiatrist told him his sexual orientation was a sin and the “cost of redemption very high.”

After only the second visit, Sajedi was on the run, not from police but from his father, an army colonel who saw his son's homosexuality as an affront to his religion and a shame to his reputation.

Even in Turkey, the guilt hangs over him.

“When I was a kid, my mother always talked about having a grandchild, a daughter-in-law, talked about my future, that we would live alongside each other, about happiness. ... I've never had a

single happy day in my life,” Sajedi said, bursting into tears.

“I wonder if it would make any difference to God if I were in this world or not,” he said.

Ghahraman, the gay activist in Toronto, says “every gay and lesbian I know has tried at least twice to commit suicide.”

Naimian, the gay man in the apartment building, agrees. Death is what he longed for while being raped.

He was in a car coming back from the supermarket in the afternoon when a green Peugeot cut him off and two heavy young men pulled him out of the car. They taunted him, calling him “pretty woman,” then took him to his house, where one of them threw him to the ground and forced him to perform oral sex on him. “I felt sick and threw up. He started hitting me.” Then one of them slammed his leg in a metal door until it bled as they raped him.

Naimian eventually was forced to sign a document confessing to sodomy. But when he later decided to sue, the men threatened to harm him and his family. Six months later he came to Turkey.

Now he's hoping to make his way to San Diego, where he has relatives and friends.

Looking back at his life as a gay man in Iran, Naimian said: “You have to be a full-time actor to survive there.”

For news updates visit
www.wisconsin-gazette.com.

Athletes from 70 countries bound for Games

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

An estimated 6,500 athletes from 70 countries will participate in the Gay Games VIII in Cologne, Germany, this summer from July 31 to Aug. 7.

German Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle will open the games July 31.

The Games is one of the

largest sporting and cultural events in the world. Organizers compared the 6,500 LGBT people registered for the Cologne competition with the 2,500 athletes who competed in the winter Olympic Games in Vancouver.

The Games are not limited to sporting events — more than 2,000 people are

expected to participate in the band festival, choral festival and cheerleading events, and others are registered for an arts exhibition.

Organizers are expecting the registration number to climb before the deadline arrives May 31.

A majority of the registrants are from the United States and Germany, while

there are no registrants from large swaths of the Southwest Asia and Africa.

PHOTO: WILLIAM CHEUNG
Australian Olympic gold medalist diver Matthew Mitcham will travel to Germany for the Gay Games this summer.



Scott Free is happy again

By Gregg Shapiro
Staff writer

Chicago-based gay singer/songwriter Scott Free has a lot to celebrate. He continues to rack up awards and honors, most recently as 2009 Outmusician of the Year at the Outmusic Awards. His "Happy Again" video hit the Top 10 Videos of 2009 on Logo's The Click List.

Not resting on his laurels, Free is busy preparing for the 10th anniversary performance of his ALT Q festival in Chicago. Since its inception 10 years ago, Free has presented a diverse array of performers, including Jill Sobule, Grant Hart (ex-Husker Du), Tyson Meade (ex-Chainsaw Kittens), Cris Williamson, Dudley Saunders, Ferron, Dylan Rice with Styx's Chuck Panozzo, and even yours truly. Free also is gearing up for his appearance at Milwaukee PrideFest in June.

Gregg Shapiro: How has the ALT Q festival managed to last so long?

Scott Free: The show has gained a reputation for high quality performances, and that's probably what brings in the crowds every year. That's the fun part of the ALT Q festival – the joy of new musical discoveries (laughs)!

GS: What is your process for selecting performers?

SF: Many of the performers have played my Homolatte series – a place where I get to have my own musical discoveries. I also try to have a few music "coups," like bringing in Phranc, who had not played a Chicago gig in probably 15 years. Also, unique performers like Blackberri or Bitch and Animal have always made it a very interesting evening (laughs).

GS: What are a couple of your fondest ALT Q memories?

Interview

WiGOUT

SF: Certainly bringing ... together Ferron and Bitch was a beautiful moment. I also loved Chris Garneau's performance, with his duo of cellos – he pulled out the stops for that show!

GS: This year's ALT Q show has a trans heavy line-up, featuring Actor Slash Model, Namoli Brennet and Coyote Grace.

ON STAGE

Scott Free performs at PrideFest's Rainbow Stage June 13. His ALT Q festival is May 15 at The Old Town School of Folk Music, 4544 N. Lincoln Ave., in Chicago. Call 773-728-6000.

SF: You know, I didn't plan that at all. ... I'm just tapping into the energy of the live, acoustic music scene in the community right now. I have had more trans or genderqueer performers at Homolatte in the past year than I have in the last 10 years. But of course, in the end, it's the talent of the performers that counts.

GS: 2009 proved to be quite a year for you professionally. The video for your song "Happy Again" was in heavy rotation on Logo's The Click List and even made it into its Top 10 Videos of 2009. What did that mean to you?

SF: That was incredible! I charted (there) for about three months, which meant that lots of folks saw the video. I got responses from people all over the country about how much they either liked the song, or were moved by ... the video. Of course, making the Top 10

Videos of 2009 was beyond belief (laughs).

GS: You also received the 2009 Outmusician of the Year Award from Outmusic for your song "Free."

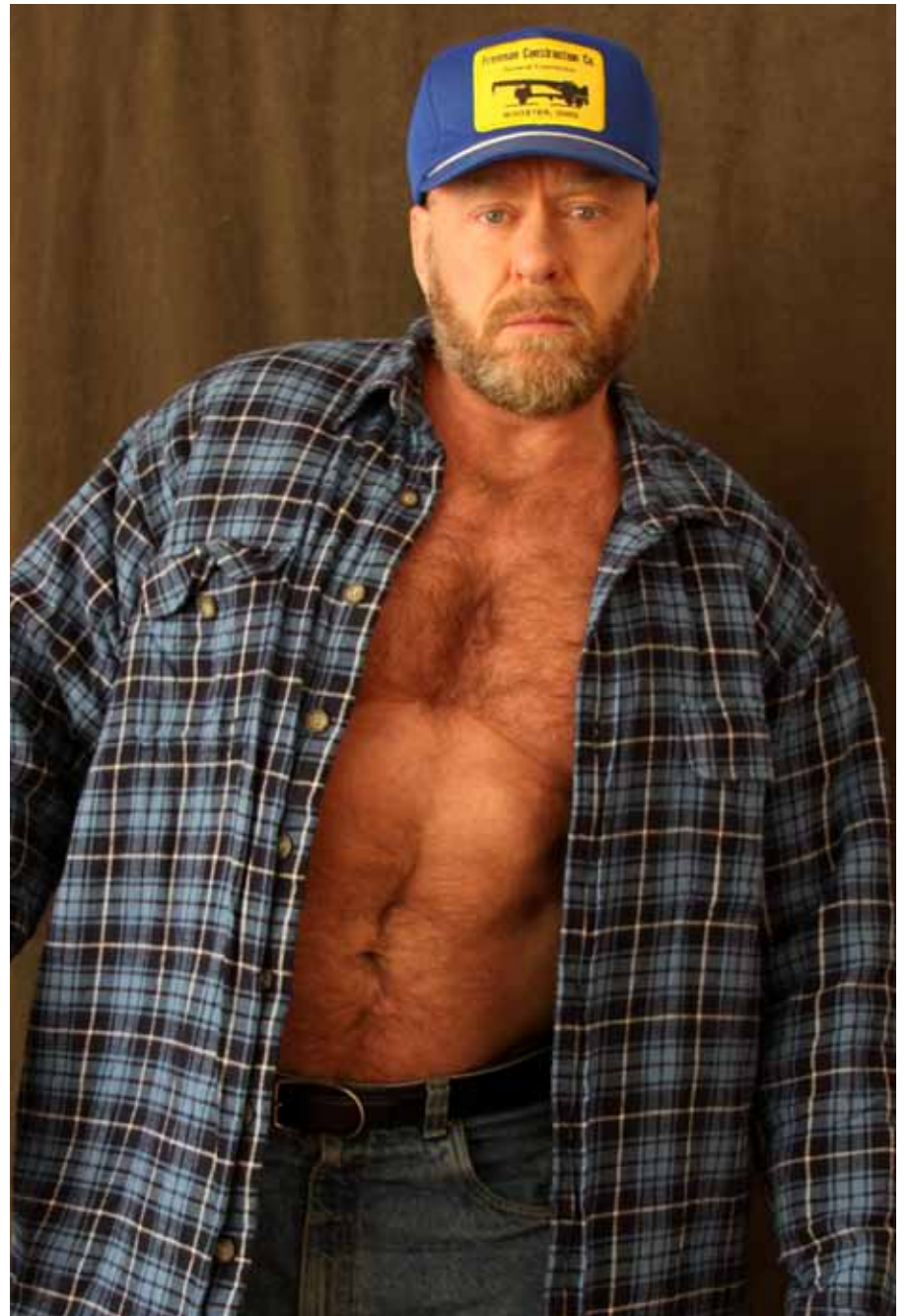
SF: That award is especially gratifying for me. ... It is so satisfying to know that both what you do as an artist and what you do for the community is truly appreciated. ... For us to be successful as artists in the GLBTQI community, we have to be in this together. We have to support each other. I see it so strikingly here in Chicago with Cake Chicago, the Flesh Hungry Dog Show, Sappho's Salon, T-OUT Mic – all of the wonderful live music events that help to maintain a vibrant queer music community.

GS: You will be playing on June 13 as part of the Milwaukee PrideFest line-up, an event at which you are a regular performer.

SF: Milwaukee PrideFest always has an amazing line-up of queer musicians and bands. It is, without a doubt, one of the premier queer live music events in the country. For this performance, I have revived my Scott Free Trio, which ... is actually a punk band (laughs). Jenny Urban is on drums and Marvin Astorga is on bass. I'm thrilled to be performing again in that setting.

GS: Have you begun working on your next album?

SF: I'm only in the beginning stages of writing, but I will say I'm writing two completely separate albums that I may be releasing simultaneously – but that's still a ways off. The next thing that you'll hear from me is a single (and hopefully video) ... with a gay rapper out of New York named Lester Greene. My last CD "The Pink Album (A Pop Opera)" was a very serious project, so it's time to have a little fun (laughs).



After racking up awards in 2009, out singer songwriter Scott Free is looking to the future, including a June 13 appearance at Milwaukee PrideFest.

'In the Balance' at the Walker's Point Center

By Debra Brehmer

Contributing writer

What is it exactly about Joseph Cornell's boxes that make them irresistible? Is it the way they hover in the art museums, so meek and fragile amidst the more aggressive totems of Modernism?

Their remote little collaged worlds, packaged and sealed in boxed constructions, are ultimately private windows that hold graceful calculations of placement and form. They seem to connect us to Cornell's thoughtful, protected psyche in a way that the work of his contemporaries in the 1930s through the 1960s, could not.

Cornell, as a self-taught artist, wasn't alienated from the New York art world, but he did spend much of his time at home in Queens taking care of his brother who suffered from cerebral palsy. His boxes seem to embed things like care, introspection and quietude in the cast shadows and focused, overtly intentional compositional strategies of the found objects.

In Milwaukee, we have the artist Josie Osborne, who has for at least 15 years now plied some of Cornell's ter-

The new space is as perfect as it could be.

ritory. When one artist so firmly represents a kind of art making, it is very hard for another to carry on within that style and not be diminished by the relationship.

But Osborne seems to share Cornell's tendencies with such a temperamental bond and sincere admiration that she has pushed her assemblages into their own realm. She is still holding hands with Cornell, but the connection has somehow come to enhance her work rather than discount it.

Osborne's work is on view in the inaugural show, "In the Balance," at Walkers Point Center for the Arts, through May 29. Amanda Gerken and Heather Wiedeman are also included.

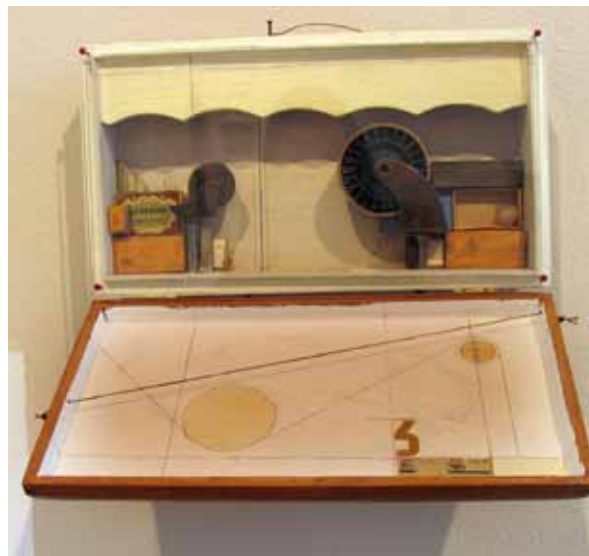
Walker's Point Center for the Arts, after 17 years at its former location on 9th and National, purchased and renovated a building at 839

S. Fifth. The new space is as perfect as it could be. It has been scrubbed, painted and assembled by a devoted group of volunteers (mostly artists).

The place shines. Five-foot-square panels of Baltic birch provide sleek, contemporary flooring, with light pooling down from upper clerestory windows in two adjacent, 300 to 400-square-foot galleries. There's a sanctified, urban cathedral feeling to the rooms.

This inaugural show, fittingly, addresses the theme of space: How three different artists transform more or less flat planes into exhibitions of dimensional time, place and structure. Gerken, an interior architect, makes mostly small abstract paintings that speak loosely of tectonics. Explosive, disruptive energies conjure geological forces, earthquakes, lava flows. Wiedeman's paintings are collaged and layered tactile constructions that present angles, geometries and bits of architecture, suggestive of urbanity.

I like their work, but the new gallery space at WPCA is small enough that any one of these three artists could



COURTESY PHOTO

One of Josie Osborne's boxes on display through May 29 at the new Walkers Point Center for the Arts.

have ably commanded the room. The three together feel crowded and don't add up to a greater whole. Small group shows can enhance our ability to see individual bodies of work through comparison, but that's not the case here.

In a way, the same thing happens to Joseph Cornell's boxes that happens to Osborne's work here. They

don't quite jive with anything around them. At the Art Institute of Chicago's new Renzo Piano Modern Wing, they've reinstalled the Cornell collection in its own self-contained glass vault with dim lighting. We have to experience the Cornell boxes as their own mini-worlds. They are not relational.

Ditto for Josie Osborne's

pieces. Even assembled in their own small groupings, they want to be self-contained. It's just how they work.

The reward of these pieces is their small moments of stasis – like the way two old caster wheels bump up against piles of small wooden shapes in a the piece called "Baggage." Or the way translucent layers create gently worn skins that lightly protect the drawn lines, grids and circles, notations of plans that now exist as fragments. Some of the drawn lines drape over circles, which then become pulleys. A real chain or a string might fall from one, bringing the outside world into the orchestrated world.

The focused consideration that Osborne places on a piece of string or the placement of a slip of paper brings some humor to the pieces. These overwrought decisions are the stuff of our dumb lives: Should I wear the red shirt or the striped one, should I walk the dog now or wait an hour?

Osborne's work demands gentle contact with the viewer. Approach quietly and stay awhile.

Artwatch

KAT MURRELL

It's tucked away on the lower level of the Milwaukee Art Museum. Folded in a corner near 19th-century American painting and decorative arts, it feels like some sort of secret – a rich, earthy-toned hallway with a monumental pot glowing at the end. Passing through, you'll note that the ceiling is an intricate grid of crisp black-and-white lanternslides, many picturing ancient Greek vases and sculptures. History literally hangs over your head.

This hall and adjoining gallery areas comprise "To Speculate Darkly," an installation by Chicago artist Theaster Gates. It's like a

small exhibition, albeit with some big questions to ask. This is very much a collaboration with the past, as the work of Dave Drake, a.k.a. Dave the Potter, makes a prominent centerpiece from which to draw enigmatic speculations.

Drake was an African American slave who lived in South Carolina in the early 19th century. He is known today for his exceptional stoneware pottery, much done on a heroically monumental scale. Drake signed his work and on some examples, inscribed pithy couplets.

But this isn't all about Dave, nor is it about pottery. Additional works include Gates' ink drawings of vases, suggesting Japanese traditions of sumi-e, complete with inscriptions. Other works include transformed

Kohler sinks and a video program featuring fragments of spiritual songs.

What does this enigmatic rebus add up to? The art history slides, vessels by Dave Drake, Japanese-influenced

"To Speculate Darkly," work by Theaster Gates, through Aug. 1 at Milwaukee Art Museum, 700 N. Art Museum Drive, 414-223-0700.

drawing, mass produced sinks and snippets of gospel songs?

There are a number of themes that sit below the surface. Issues of authorship and ownership, of status and race, are suggested but with such complex questions, the surface is barely scratched.

History is messy. And,

it's fragmentary, a fact that can be uncomfortable as we've grown accustomed to answering any question through the magic of Google et al. Most makers of culture have languished in the obscurity of forgotten time, but for artists whose names survive in the new-formed clay of a pot or in lines of ink on paper, an assertive note is left for future generations – I was here, and I made this.

In recent works at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago and the current Whitney Biennial in New York, Gates operates in similarly conceptual fashion. His art is not a matter of answers as much as it is about questions. "To Speculate Darkly" offers reflections, but without resolution.

For news updates visit www.wisconsin-gazette.com.



COURTESY PHOTO

An inscribed clay pot by artist Theaster Gates

Through the keyboard, from the heart

By Harry Cherkinian
Contributing writer

Scott Malcom is sitting on stage at Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, his back to the large picture window looking out onto South Second Street. While he warms up on his keyboard for the evening's show, life passes by behind him. Passersby turn to look at Malcom and the crowd forming to hear him.

"I love how people come and they listen and they enjoy (my songs) so much," he says. "I try to cater to my audience. But I only do it my way."

Inadvertent references to Frank Sinatra aside, Malcom has developed a following singing and playing piano his way. It all began with an impromptu karaoke performance in December 2003 at the now-defunct Mosaic bar on Downer Avenue. The owner liked what he heard, so much so that he told Malcom to pick any night to play. That turned into a steady Friday night gig for Malcom, whose day job is

teaching elementary school. "It was a stab in the dark," he recalls of the spontaneous singing. "I began playing and some of the people in the place started to come back week after week."

Now, six years later, some of the old Mosaic regulars have turned out at MGAC's intimate space to hear Malcom play original works off his CD "Shine" (2005) and his recent second release "Irrational Disposition" (2009). Both are available at www.scottmalcom.com.

Malcom is known to PrideFest attendees for "Stand Up," a song he co-wrote with Tori Fixx, Corky Morgan and Yolanda Roth. "Stand Up" debuted at PrideFest's opening ceremonies in 2009.

As the start time nears, more people show up, all known to the singer/songwriter. "I feel like I'm performing in my living room," he tells the enthusiastic crowd. "You're kind of like family."

Malcom's family also

includes his partner of four years, Steve, a chemist. The two own a home in Bayview. Steve is busy selling tickets and helping out with last-minute needs.

When Malcom started out, he only played instrumentals. There was no singing what-

'I try to cater to my audience. But I only do it my way.'

soever. "I wanted to always sing pop songs, but I never had anything to sing about," he says.

That all changed when his relationship of 12 years ended - the main reason he'd moved to Milwaukee. "Sometimes you have to get your heart broken to write a song," he says.

Has that changed?

"Oh yeah!" Malcom says, breaking into a smile.

For the next two plus hours, Malcom delights his fans with original numbers that many of them know by heart. Some are upbeat, some serious and sad; but no matter the melody, Malcom is as comfortable with the group as they are with his earnest, down-to-earth approach and his rural Georgia accent.

"If I make a mistake, just go with it," he jokes throughout the night. But he rarely does. Instead, he tells stories, usually with a humorous twist, like the time he played the song, "Funny, which is ironically titled since it has quite the opposite effect.

"I was playing this song one night at the Mosaic and four ladies sitting there drinking their beer said, 'you can't ever play that song again,' he says. "They had tears streaming down their face." Which of course, elicits peals of laughter.

This evening Malcom throws in a few cover songs: the Leonard Cohen favor-



PHOTO: FROM SCOTT MALCOLM

The cover of Scott Malcom's latest CD.

ite "Hallelujah," beautifully rendered (channeling Jeff Buckley's arrangement), as well as one of his favorite performers, Madonna and an early hit of hers, "Borderline." Played in a jazzy, free-form style, the song takes on a whole new sound minus Madge's 1980s synth pop

stylings.

By evening's end, the audience lingers to congratulate Malcom before heading back out to the street life on South Second Street.

"I have an awesome career and I get to perform," Malcom says. "I have the best of both worlds."

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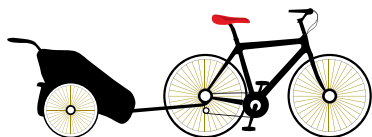
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Theater

Review

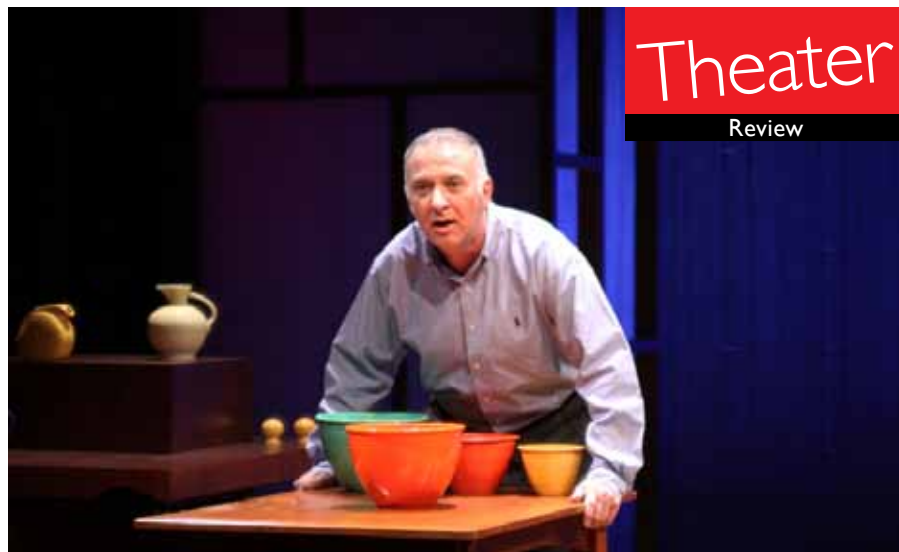


PHOTO: JEAN BERNSTEIN

John McGivern in 'American Fiesta'

Insight served up on colorful Fiestaware

By Jody Hirsh

Contributing writer

With the national debate about same-sex marriage raging throughout America, the current offering of the Renaissance Theaterworks, "American Fiesta," is particularly timely.

Steven, played by Milwaukee icon John McGivern, is a fiftysomething gay marketing mastermind who obsessively collects Fiestaware, the multi-colored Depression Era crockery. He and his partner Leon are planning a Canadian marriage ceremony, much to the chagrin and consternation of his Oklahoma parents: "If you didn't go to Canada ... if you didn't have a ceremony, maybe you'd have fewer enemies!" Steven's clueless but loving mother tells him.

The plot abounds with ironies: Fiestaware was produced in the 1930s as ultra-cheap dishware for working-class families, yet today vintage pieces sell for hundreds of dollars; Steven grew up in conservative rural Oklahoma, but lives as an adult in Austin, Texas, a liberal island in the midst of redneck Texas culture; pristine mint condition Fiestaware is wildly collectible, but it is the chipped, well-worn pieces that tell the stories of all the families the dishes have passed through.

This entertaining, semi-autobiographical play by Steven Tomlinson won the

ON STAGE

"American Fiesta" plays the Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway, through May 23. Call 414-291-7800.

American Theatre Critics Association's 2006 Osborn Award for best play by an emerging playwright. The script presents an intriguing nesting of metaphor within metaphor.

Steven preserves, protects and displays the Fiestaware, while Leon prefers to serve food in it — a potent metaphor for making compromises within a relationship. "Some people learn how to collect things, and some people learn how to share," Steven confides to his audience. "We're lucky when these people marry these people!"

The red and blue colors of classic Fiestaware are symbolic as well of the national political divide. In discussing the uranium and potentially radioactive base of the antique Fiestaware's red glaze, Steven quips that it might really be a conspiracy: The Fiestaware is produced by the working class red states and sold to affluent and artsy collectors of the blue states in order to poison them! In fact, the diversity of the Fiesta colors represents

nothing short of the diversity of American society itself.

Mounting a one-man show such as "American Fiesta" is a daunting task. The amount of memorization alone is intimidating. But McGivern, enriched by the strong direction of Jenny Wanasek, pulls it off, giving us the voices of some 20 characters. McGivern's second performance of the show was a little tentative, but I can only imagine that in continued performances the show will be tighter and more seamless.

The motion graphics design of Tim Chiappetta, the scenic design of Steve Barnes and the lighting design and video integration of Jason Fassl are brilliant touches: animated projections on the rear wall of the set graphically accent the color motifs of the show: the Fiestaware itself, the US political map, the color coded parts of the brain, and even the colors of the Homeland Security alert codes.

Of course, the show itself is social commentary, but it is loving, non-militant and very human commentary. Ultimately, the Fiestaware becomes a metaphor for having a meal together, for co-existence and respect on the personal, family and social levels.

After all, as Steven tells us: That's the magic of Fiesta. The colors always go together.

'Peter Pan' takes flight at ballet

By Harry Cherkinian
Contributing writer

The easiest way to get to Neverland is to follow the second star to the right and then head straight on till morning. But you need to be flying in order to get there.

Marc Petrocci does all that and more as star of the Milwaukee Ballet's upcoming world premiere of the beloved children's classic "Peter Pan."

"Flying is amazing," says Petrocci, who lives on the East Side. "I think the very first time I was pulled up off the ground and I was halfway up, I thought, 'This is high.' But it's totally exhilarating."

The Milwaukee Ballet celebrates the end of its 40th anniversary season with this production, choreographed by artistic director Michael Pink and an original score composed for the ballet's orchestra by Michael Feeney (he and Pink also collaborated on "Dracula"). Members of the Milwaukee Children's Choir as well as dancers from the Milwaukee Ballet

School perform in this production.

Petrocci explains all this while sitting on the couch

ON STAGE

"Peter Pan" runs May 13-16 at the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, 929 N. Water St. Call 414-902-2103 or visit www.milwaukeeballet.org.

in the ballet's lounge, one foot planted on the ground, the other folded underneath his lean, lithe five-foot-nine torso. Even at 25 he looks the part. And as he demonstrates his moves during the interview, the only thing missing is his ability to fly (there's no magic dust handy at the moment).

Born and raised in Ontario, Canada, Petrocci joined the Milwaukee Ballet corps in 2003. Now in his seventh season, he looks back at the roles that helped him prepare for the original Lost Boy:

Mercutio in "Romeo & Juliet" and Puck in "A Midsummer Night's Dream. Mercutio tends to thread the narrative and pull it together, and Puck has obvious implications, with his youthful ambitions.

Petrocci prepared for the role of Peter Pan along with dancer Michael Linsmeier, who dances the role in alternating performances. Training started in August 2009, working with a trainer from the Froedtert Sports Medicine Clinic once a week for 90 minutes a session. While the goal was to prevent injuries, Petrocci says the training has helped him to "feel stronger, more toned and psychologically more confident and gutsy," an important components of Pan's identity.

Then there's the harness, which is attached to ropes to make the magic happen. "It's not heavy, but it is binding. It's quite tricky to get the hang of it," he says.

The challenge is dancing onstage with the harness on. And then there's the in-flight action. Petrocci must use

the lower half of his body while flying and take care to not tangle himself in the ropes, but he's completely dependent on the operator offstage handling the ropes. When Petrocci flies, the other Pan is the horizontal tracking operator and vice versa.

There's also a vertical operator. While most actors and performers have tape marks to hit their spots on stage, Petrocci must hit is marks in the air while staying in character. "The takeoffs help," he says.

"The nature of the dance is what Peter is called to do," Petrocci says. "I have to pace myself with the physical energy and pace myself with the emotion. This role is a chance for me to evolve in my ability to be at ease with being still and have confidence without being kinetic."

For the young artist who had a Billy Elliot-like childhood watching his sister dance before becoming interested in dance himself, this role is chance to expand his



COURTESY PHOTO

Dancer Marc Petrocci gets hoisted during a rehearsal of the Milwaukee Ballet's "Peter Pan."

choices as a performer as well as a dancer.

"Is he going to go back and grow up?" Petrocci asks rhetorically about Peter Pan's fate. "But then he has to make the decision to come back to the Peter Pan that he is."

And that's the Peter Pan audiences come to see and

watch, the forever child, steeped in innocence, mischievous, curious, always up for the next adventure.

"I hope the children have a thousand of those moments when their eyes light up and you can see that they're transfixed," Petrocci says excitedly. "I think there's a lot of magic in this production."

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Group shares lighter side of diversity

Arts

WIGOUT

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

Did you hear the one about the gay ventriloquist, the bisexual corporate trainer, the straight film student and the crusty comedienne?

This joke has many punch lines, all to be revealed when the four team up as The HACK Comedy Tour to perform at Kenosha's Club Icon on May 15. Their disparate brands of humor and ribald wit should make for an entertaining evening.

The troupe's emcee, Flash Gorski, opens the program. She draws on her bisexuality for humor: "I'm the bacon in the LGBT sandwich," she quips, "so I would describe my act as crisp and salty."

A corporate trainer by day, Gorski prefers her night job.

"It's a chick magnet," she says.

After Gorski, the next performer is Robert Francis Curtis, a stand-up comic and a film and theater student at UWM. He riffs and rants on relationships and pop culture — and, for good measure, he throws in some political impressions, including a gangsta-rap version of Sarah Palin.

Next on stage is Christy Watson, a regular at Comedy Sporz. Watson describes her act as "caustic, out-of-the-box observational humor." Unlike some female comics who aim their sarcasm at their spouses and their periods, she says, Watson goes after the world at large.

"I'm the kind of person who thinks all Christmas children's choir music should end in gunshots," she explains.

Watson also does a character named Loretta, a drunken barfly who doles out advice to audience members.

Unlike her castmates,

Watson is a full-time comic.

"I think so differently from a normal person that comedy is the only job that will pay me for being that weird," she says.

The group's maestro, Woodi Bruce, is last on the bill. A pharmacy tech by day, Bruce's real passion is ventriloquism. His dummy alter-egos include a cockroach named Rowdy Roach, a drag queen named Wanda Lemme

ON STAGE

The HACK Comedy Tour performs at 9 p.m., May 15, at Club Icon, 6305 120th Ave., in Kenosha. Call 262-857-3240.

and a cockatoo named Floyd.

Bruce also does a stand-up routine about being gay.

"I tell the audience, 'I'm not gay, I'm vaginally challenged,'" he says. "When I

came out to my mother, she said, 'Well, I'm not paying for your sex change.'"

Bada bing bada boom.

Bruce and Gorski met while doing a benefit for Milwaukee SAGE and they admired each other's work. Bruce liked the fact that Gorski is bisexual, something he says is unique on comedy stages.

"If you Google bisexual comedian, you'll find there are very few," Gorski chimes in.

For her part, Gorski is smitten by the way Bruce takes advantage of his dummies to say things that most comedians wouldn't dare to utter.

Despite their differing approaches to humor, these performers agree that the funniest comedy comes from universal truths.

"As Joan Rivers said, 'I succeeded by saying what other people are thinking,'" Gorski says.



COURTESY PHOTO

Gay ventriloquist Woodi Bruce poses with his alter egos Wanda Lemme and Rowdy Roach.



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Leaping lesbians!

Music

By Gregg Shapiro

CHRIS PUREKA

Out singer/songwriter Chris Pureka has been peddling her brand of moody folk music for nearly 10 years. Think Mary Gauthier, minus the twang. With each album, including the fittingly named and most recent "How I Learned To See In The Dark" (Sad Rabbit), Pureka continues to mature as both a songwriter and performer. Opener "Wrecking Ball" sets the atmosphere with its mournful fiddle, courtesy of Merrill Garbus, and songs titled "Hangman" and "Shipwreck" maintain the aura. But by "Barn Song," the darkness begins to show signs of lightening, although the rhythmic "Broken Clock" casts a shadow. The bouncy "Lowlands" shows a Springsteen influence.

ALLISON MILLER

Renowned for her work as a touring and session musician, drummer Allison Miller steps up with her instrumental jazz effort "Boom Tic Boom" (Foxhaven). Surrounding herself with other outstanding musicians, Miller capably drums her way through a set that includes four originals and four covers. Highlights include Miller's own experimental "CFS (Candy Flavored Sidewalks)" and sexy "Big Lovely," as well as her intimate reading of Hoagy Carmichael's "Rockin' Chair."

HOLLY MIRANDA

Produced by TV On The Radio's Dave Sitek, Holly Miranda's album "The Magician's Private Library" (XL) would be right at home alongside the latest by Gorillaz, Broken Bells or Mumford & Sons. The hot and cool vibe is strong throughout, beginning with the organic shuffle of "Forest

Green Oh Forest Green" and continuing through the dreamy and loose "Joints." "No One Just Us" has a faintly exotic whiff, "Sweet Dreams" recalls '60s pop and "High Tide" surfs sublime. Holly Miranda knows she has the right to make indescribably magical music.

TENDER FOREVER

Tender Forever (a.k.a. Melanie Valera) is an artist with an appreciation for electronic beats. The beats are present on "No Snare" (K) with tracks such as "Like The Snare That's Gone," "Nothing At All," "But The Shape Is Wide" and "When I'm In The Dark and You Take The Light." The feel is organic rather than programmed. Like the tree and grass on the album cover, "No Snare" sounds like a musician going green while keeping things fresh for the listeners.

KATIE TODD AND SHELLEY MILLER

The busy queer music



Katie Todd performs at Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, May 6. Call 414-276-7288.

scene in Chicago is exemplified by Katie Todd and Shelley Miller. Both women can regularly be found performing live throughout the city. The gorgeous title track on "Mumbled Speech" (Level It), the latest disc by Katie Todd, is a perfect example of her near flawless pop ballad songwriting skills. She also shows admirable taste in cover material with her rendition of Leonard Cohen's oft-recorded "Hallelujah."

Shelley Miller, sounding like Chicago's answer to Chris Pureka and Mary Gauthier, returns with her solid and strong "When It's All Gone, You Come Back," on which she strikes the right balance between torch and twang.

GIRL IN A COMA

As original and unusual concepts go, you'd be hard-pressed to find one that can top all-female trio Girl In A Coma's "Adventures In

Coverland" (Blackheart). Consisting of three seven-inch vinyl singles, whose jackets join together to form a game board, the set features Girl In A Coma covering the Beatles ("While My Guitar Gently Weeps"), Joy Division ("Transmission"), Velvet Underground ("Femme Fatale") and Patsy Cline ("Walking After Midnight") and others, all performed in the band's distinctive garage-punk style.

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MARC PETROCCHI. PHOTO: JESSICA KAMINSKI



"Please Give"

Giving it all she's got

An interview with filmmaker Nicole Holofcener

Film

By Gregg Shapiro

Acclaimed filmmaker Nicole Holofcener has made movies with strong and compelling female characters beginning in 1996 with "Walking and Talking," "Lovely & Amazing" (2001) and "Friends With Money" (2006) followed. Her latest, "Please Give," continues the trend. Sisters Rebecca (Rebecca Hall) and Mary (Amanda Peet), have a complex relationship, made even more so by the presence of their grandmother Audra (Ann Morgan Guilbert), who raised them following their mother's suicide. Living next door to Audra are Kate (Catherine Keener) and Alex (Oliver Platt). Kate, who runs a vintage collectibles store with Alex, is having a multifaceted personal crisis.

Gregg Shapiro: Nicole, Catherine Keener has been in all of your feature-length movies. What is it about Catherine that makes for such chemistry?

Nicole Holofcener: Chemistry — it's hard to define why you have chemistry with someone. We just hit it off right away. We have the same sense of humor. Make each other laugh. Feel safe with one another, emotionally safe...

GS: Something else that recurs in your work is that you work with British actors.

NH: Yeah, they're better (laughs).

GS: You're kidding, right?

NH: I'm kidding, but for some reason I'm really drawn to whatever they're doing. I guess it doesn't matter; I don't pay attention to where they're from. A good actor is a good actor and if they can do an accent, great.

GS: Sisters also figure prominently in "Please Give" and "Lovely & Amazing." Do you have a sister?

NH: My sister and I have a really interesting and complicated relationship, and I guess it shows up whether I want it to or not, very often. Whether she wants it to or not, too.

GS: Was Ann Guilbert, from "The Dick Van Dyke Show" and "The Nanny," who you had in mind for Audra in "Please Give"?

NH: No, not at all. She was just put on tape because I was in New York at the time, and her agent sent it in. I auditioned a lot of women for the part, but she was truly the best.

GS: You also deal with unfaithful husbands in "Please Give" and "Lovely & Amazing."

NH: I didn't have an unfaithful husband (laughs).

GS: But it seems like a topic that's always going to be rich

for mining.

NH: Yeah, well, all of our fuck-ups, right? I was considering Keener's character to have an affair, and I wrote it that way for a while, but it just didn't seem right.

GS: So, there's the shop in "Please Give" and the house in "Friends With Money" with the mid-century modern look and some of the interiors, too.

NH: ...It's just really trendy and I am poking fun at it and poking fun at myself because I love that stuff. It seemed like exactly what they would be selling, right?

GS: Definitely! There is a transgendered homeless person in "Please Give" and, of course, the gay thread in "Friends With Money."

NH: I have gay female friends. I mean, I know tons of people, so some of them are gay. I have more lesbian friends, and maybe they will show up in a movie at some point. Except their issues are so similar to mine, I don't know if I would need to separate them out in that way. The transgender (character), she just kind of broke my heart. ... There was a woman who was always outside my friend's apartment. That's what it was based on, and I completely forgot. ... I didn't remember that until right now. In New York, in Chelsea, and that's where I got that idea.



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On stage

By Gregg Shapiro

* Denotes LGBT performer or venue

May 6, Thursday

*Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, presents Katie Todd Band at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire" runs through May 8 at Carte Blanche Studios Theatre, 1024 S. Fifth. Call 262-716-4689.

Boulevard Theatre, 2252 S. Kinnickinnic, presents "It's Your Mother!" through May 9. Call 414-744-5747 or visit www.boulevardtheatre.com.

"Almost, Maine" runs through May 9 at Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison. Call 608-258-4141.

New York City jazz pianist/composer Danny Fox and his trio play Restaurant Magnus, 120 E. Wilson in Madison, at 8 p.m. Call 608-258-8787.

May 7, Friday

* Renaissance Theaterworks' "American Fiesta" by Steven Tomlinson, featuring John McGivern, runs through May 23 at Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway. Call 414-291-7800.

*High Noon Saloon, 701 E. Washington in Madison, welcomes queer guitar virtuoso Kaki King and An Horse at 9:30 p.m. Call 608-268-1122.

Danceworks Performance Company 2 DPC2 presents "Spring Departures" tonight and tomorrow night at 7:30 p.m. at Danceworks Studio Theatre, 1661 N. Water. Call 414-277-8480.

1980s rocker and soap opera hunk Rick Springfield is at The Northern Lights Theater at Potawatomi Bingo Casino, 1721 W. Canal, tonight and tomorrow night at 8 p.m. Call 414-847-7922.

The Pabst, 144 E. Wells, presents comedian Norm MacDonald at 8 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, 19805 W. Capitol Drive in Brookfield, presents singer/songwriter Vonda Shepard of "Ally McBeal" fame at 8 p.m. Call 262-781-9520.

May 8, Saturday

*Suzanne Westenhoefer, Melissa Ferrick and Ronnie Nyles perform a benefit concert for Children of the Fallen, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing trust funds to war's forgotten casualties, the children, at 7 p.m. in Memorial Hall, 72 7th Street in Racine. Call 262-636-9169.

The Historical Mystery Band with Jerry Grillo plays Lulu, 2261 S. Howell, at 10:30 p.m. Call 414-294-LULU.

Oscar-winning actress Mo'Nique brings her Spread the Love Tour to town, with Rodney Perry and Tone-X, at Milwaukee Theatre, 500 W. Kilbourn, at 8 p.m. Call 414-566-1375.

Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, 19805 W. Capitol Drive in Brookfield, presents singer/songwriter Vonda Shepard of "Ally McBeal" fame at 8 p.m. Call 262-781-9520.

Carrie Rodriguez & Her Band performs at 8 p.m. with Tim Easton in the Lower Level at The Pabst, 144 E. Wells. Call 414-286-3663.

Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, has Ryan Magner and Jesse DeSoto, at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth, welcomes Amir ElSaffar and Isthathenople at 7:30 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

Majestic, 115 King in Madison, presents Butch Walker & The Black Widows at 9 p.m. Call 608-251-2582.

May 9, Sunday

*Club 5 Bar, 5 Applegate Court in Madison, presents a live female impersonator show, at 10 p.m. Call 608-277-9700.

Frightened Rabbit performs at 8 p.m. in the Lower Level at The Pabst, 144 E. Wells. Call 414-286-3663.

Barrymore Theatre, 2090 Atwood in Madison, hosts Listen To Your Mother, readings by Madison Writers on Motherhood: the beauty, the beast, and the barely rested, at 3 p.m. Call 608-241-2345.

Ashley Raines and Jeremy Porter are at The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, at 8 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

May 10, Monday

Hal Sparks, who played Michael on "Queer As Folk," brings his stand-up comedy act to The Rave, 2401 W. Wisconsin, at 8 p.m. Call 414-342-RAVE.

Sharon Lynne Wilson



Suzanne Westenhoefer performs at a benefit for child victims of war at 7 p.m., May 8 in Memorial Hall, 72 Seventh St. in Racine. Call 262-636-9169.

Center for the Arts, 19805 W. Capitol Drive in Brookfield, presents "Frankly Music" with Frank Almond at 7 p.m. Call 262-781-9520.

High Noon Saloon, 701 E. Washington in Madison, has Red Elvises at 8 p.m. Call 608-268-1122.

May 11, Tuesday

High Noon Saloon, 701 E. Washington in Madison, presents Murder By Death, Ha Ha Tonka and Linfinity at 8 p.m. Call 608-268-1122.

Disney's "The Lion King" runs through May 23 at Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison. Call 608-258-4141.

May 12, Wednesday

*Out singer/songwriter and lap-steel player and finger-picker extraordinaire Natalia Zukerman and Trina Hamlin play High Noon Saloon, 701 E. Washington in Madison, at 7 p.m. Call 608-268-1122.

May 13, Thursday

*Harbor Room, 117 E. Greenfield, has The Historical Mystery Band with Jerry Grillo at 8 p.m. Call 414-672-7988.

High Noon Saloon, 701 E. Washington in Madison, presents The Knitters featuring members of X at 8 p.m. Call 608-268-1122.

May 14, Friday

*The Frequency, 121 W.

Main in Madison, welcomes Canasta, Clem Snide and Heligoats at 10 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

The Annex, 1206 Regent in Madison, has Devin The Dude at 9:30 p.m.

Fabulous Thunderbirds performs at 9 p.m. in The Northern Lights Theater at Potawatomi Bingo Casino, 1721 W. Canal. Call 414-847-7922.

Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, welcomes The Mike Benign Compulsion, Petty Demons and Ward at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth, presents Ex Fabula at 8 p.m. Call 414-286-3663

Xtring Quaret plays Restaurant Magnus, 120 E. Wilson in Madison, at 9:30 p.m. Call 608-258-8787.

May 15, Saturday

*Tropical Night Club, 626 S. Fifth, hosts Noche De Divas, with a show beginning at 11 p.m. Call 414-630-6055 or 414-460-6277.

The Pabst, 144 E. Wells, presents Goo Goo Dolls at 8 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, has Steez at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, welcomes Nellie Wilson And The Hellbound Honeys with Mad Trucker Gone Mad, Visqueen and The American Dead at 10 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

Andreas Kapsalis & Goran

Ivanovic Guitar Duo perform at 9:30 p.m. at Restaurant Magnus, 120 E. Wilson in Madison. Call 608-258-8787.

May 16, Sunday

*Tropical Night Club, 626 S. Fifth, hosts Divas Night, with a show beginning at 11 p.m. Call 414-630-6055 or 414-460-6277.

*Club 5 Bar, 5 Applegate Court in Madison, hosts a live female impersonator show at 10 p.m. Call 608-277-9700.

Majestic, 115 King in Madison, presents Ari Herstand at 6:30 p.m. Call 608-251-2582.

May 17, Monday

Stick Men featuring Tony Levin, Pat Mastelotto and Michael Bernier, performs at 8 p.m. in Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell. Call 414-276-7288.

MC Frontalot is at High Noon Saloon, 701 E. Washington in Madison, at 8 p.m. Call 608-268-1122.

May 18, Tuesday

The Rave, 2401 W. Wisconsin, has Flobots at 7 p.m. Call 414-342-RAVE.

May 19, Wednesday

Cher's ex-husband Gregg Allman performs at 8 p.m. at The Pabst, 144 E. Wells. Call 414-286-3663.

Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, presents Dan Bern at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth, welcomes Colin Hay of Men at Work fame at 7:30 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

May 20, Thursday

*Tropical Night Club, 626 S. Fifth, hosts Noche De Divas, with a show beginning at 11 p.m. Call 414-630-6055 or 414-460-6277.

The Northern Lights Theater at Potawatomi Bingo Casino, 1721 W. Canal, presents Tim Conway & Friends, tonight and tomorrow night at 8 p.m. Call 414-847-7922.

Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth, welcomes Sage Francis with Free Moral Agents and B. Dolan at 8 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

Colin Hay of Men at Work, plays the Majestic, 115 King in Madison, with special guest Tony Furtado, at 8:30 p.m. Call 608-251-2582.

High Noon Saloon, 701 E. Washington in Madison, has Mono and The Twilight Sad at 9 p.m. Call 608-268-1122.

www.wisconsinazette.com

Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus

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www.perfectharmonychorus.org

Roots' sense of place ... and peace

Roots

1818 N. Hubbard St.
414-374-8490
www.rootsmilwaukee.com

The late John Denver wrote perhaps one of the most place-descriptive songs ever in "Take Me Home Country Roads." When I first heard it, I fell in love with the Blue Ridge Mountains, even though I'd never seen them. The song just evoked a sense of place and peace that appealed to me — and millions of others, judging by the record sales.

The reason I take you, dear reader, along for this stroll down memory lane is that a recent dinner at Roots, perched high on a hill overlooking the city, evoked that same feeling of place

and peace. We sat along the windows flanking the patio, which provided a gorgeous view of the city, especially at sunset. The fading skyline was bathed in a golden glow.

The view and the delicious cocktails would have been rewarding enough, but the food and service were equally breathtaking.

Just as John Denver created a song to celebrate American roots, chef John Raymond orchestrates a menu that celebrates the changing flavors and textures of the seasons. Each plate reflects his passion for the art of food and his respect for those who raise or harvest his food products.

"We believe the best-tasting foods are whole foods grown ecologically and respectfully," Raymond says. "We believe in supporting sustainable agriculture

as well as aquaculture. All of our meats are naturally raised. Our fish is sashimi grade, wild caught, flown in whole, and filleted here to ensure freshness. A large quantity of our vegetables are grown in Wisconsin, and we are proud to support as many local farmers as possible. Everything is made from scratch with the same love and care we show in selecting our ingredients."

That respect and care may mean that your meal at Roots might take a little bit longer to prepare than at other restaurants. Roots is definitely not a "fast food" joint, it is a place to settle in and savor every moment. The menu offers a wide variety of unique dishes and the knowledgeable staff is excellent at explaining every dish.

We began our meal by sharing the BBQ shrimp cooked

Dining

By Rick Karlin

in the style of Carolina low-country cuisine and served with phenomenal crisp cakes of creamed grits. The garnish of mustard sprouts added a nice little bite to the dish. The accompanying pimento sauce was delicious, but completely unnecessary, as the dish stood on its own. We also sampled the escarole & asparagus salad. Crisp greens arrived topped by a five-minute egg, although I'd suggest asking for a four-minute egg instead. In a dish like this, the poached egg is supposed to augment the salad dressing (a refreshing almond vinaigrette). Our egg was almost hard-boiled.

Our entrées were sheer

perfection. Pan-seared scallops arrived cooked to perfection, shimmering on the inside with a slight caramelized coating. The seafood was served atop a generous mound of sunchoke-infused barley risotto and braised baby arugula.

Fork-tender Korean BBQ brisket was paired with kim chee braised pork belly and bok choy. A deep and flavorful sauce added a piquant accent, and steamed Chinese buns provided an excellent material to soak up all the good juices. Grilled tilapia, lightly glazed in a soy-miso blend was perfectly complemented by cashew-studded sticky rice. A micro-salad of sesame-yuzu dressed pea shoots and coconut curry sauce rounded out this dish. The vegetarian in our group raved about the seitan kibbe. The Middle-Eastern inspired

dish was accompanied by couscous pilaf and a sumac salad dressed with an avocado and tahini sauce.

Desserts, while perfectly adequate, didn't rise to the level of the rest of the meal. A trio of sorbet, cantaloupe, poached pear and cucumber, were all quite tasty, especially the cucumber, but were frozen so solid that we needed a knife and fork to hack off pieces to taste. The crème brûlée and chocolate mousse were well-made but uninspired.

I'll definitely head back to Roots. Next time I'll check out the brunch. I'm particularly drawn to one of the brunch menu items, Roots Benedict, seared rare tuna and poached eggs topped with wasabi hollandaise and tempura nori and shiitake-daikon hash on the side. Try and keep me away!

Preparing the garden for spring

By Paul Mandracchia

Contributing writer

Spring is here! After a long, colorless season, nothing soothes the soul like seeing green again. And then there's the excitement of seeing living things poke through the ground.

Although it maybe tempting to jump right in and give the garden a work over, there are a few things to know before starting.

One of the quickest ways to welcome spring is by clearing away leaves and debris left over from the

previous season. Gently using a rake with flexible metal tines will ensure that no fresh young growth is damaged.

If the soil is still too wet, it's best to save any transplanting or dividing for when the soil dries out a bit. It can be moist and hold its shape when squeezed in your hand, but still crumble and break apart. When the soil is ready, working in sphagnum moss will help lighten and balance the pH of our heavy clay and alkaline soils by adding organic matter and acid.

Forsythia, with its early

yellow brilliance, is one of the first shrubs to come into bloom. As soon as the flowers fade and foliage appears, it's the perfect time to prune. Removing any old, non-productive branches at the base of the plant and trimming it back a bit is all you will need to do for the rest of the season.

Forsythia, like lilacs, viburnum and rhododendrons, bloom on growth that was formed during the previous year. Pruning any once-blooming shrub before it blossoms will only be remov-

Nothing soothes the soul like seeing green again.

ing flowering wood for this season. Pruning after they flower is best. What can be pruned now are ever-blooming roses, clematis and evergreens. Asian and oriental lily bulbs can be planted as soon

as they are available. Now is also a good time to jump-start seeds indoors

Flowering bulbs give us such early color: Crocus, daffodils, hyacinths and tulips are an invaluable part of the spring garden. As the flowers fade, it's important not to cut the foliage back. Letting the foliage turn yellow and die back on its own will produce food for the bulb to flower next year. Tying the foliage up in bunches, using twine or a rubber band, will help keep it tucked away and out of sight while other plants take the

center stage.

Resist the temptation to plant tender annuals before Memorial Day. Although nurseries are already flooded with flowering annuals, frosts in May are not uncommon. Pansies and primroses are two plants that can handle light frosts and be put in the ground early, but it's best to wait to plant the rest. If it turns cold and wet, young plants can actually rot.

The spring garden is fresh and new and full of potential. It's an exciting time for gardeners. Following a few simple guidelines will make the most of it and set the garden up for a long, glorious season of color and fragrance.



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COMMUNITY LISTINGS

MILWAUKEE

Arts/entertainment

Cream City Squares, 414-445-8080.

Men's Voices Milwaukee Chorus, Plymouth Church, 2717 E. Hampshire St., 53211, 414-964-1513.

Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, 703 S. Second St., 53204, 414-383-3727.

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

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

Queer Zine Archive Project, 2935 N. Fratney St., 53212.

Shoreline Country Dancers, 818 S. Water St. (Hot Water Bar), 53204, www.shoreline-milw.org.

Wisconsin Cream City Chorus, 315 W. Court St., Suite 101, 53212, 414-276-8787.

Community

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

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

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

Cream City Foundation, 759 N. Milwaukee St., Suite 212, 53202, 414-225-0244.

Equality Wisconsin, 2717 E. Hampshire, 53211, 414-431-1306, www.equality.wi.org.

Firebirds, P.O. Box 159, 53201.

FORGE, P.O. Box 1271, 53201, www.forge-forward.org.

GAMMA-Milwaukee, P.O. Box 1900, 53201, 414-530-1886, www.milwaukeegamma.com.

G/L Community Center, 904 S. First St., 53204, 414-

643-1652.

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

Gemini Gender Group, P.O. Box 44211, 53214. Lesbian Alliance, 315 W. Court St., 53212, 414-272-9442.

Lesbian Fund of the Women's Fund of Greater Milwaukee, 316 N. Milwaukee St., Suite 215, 53202, 414-290-7350, www.womensfund.com.

LOC/Women of Color, P.O. Box 93594, 53203, 414-263-1631.

Milwaukee Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender Community Center, 315 W. Court St., Suite 101, 53212, 414-271-2656, www.mkelgbt.org.

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

PFLAG-Milwaukee, 315 W. Court St., 53212, 414-299-9198.

Pridefest, 315 W. Court St., Suite 203, 53212, 414-272-3378, www.pridefest.com.

Pride Parade, www.pride-parademke.com.

SAGE Milwaukee, 1845 N. Farwell Ave., Suite 220, 53202, 414-224-0517.

SHEBA/Sisters Helping Each other Battle AIDS, 2349 N. Holton, 53212,

414-390-0444.

WanderWomyn Outdoors Group, deby-doo2@yahoo.com.

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

Wisconsin Rainbow Families, 315 W. Court St., Suite 101, 53212, info@wirainbowfamilies.com.

1821 N 16th St., 53205, 414-344-1746.

Divine Word Lutheran Church, 5505 W. Lloyd St., 53208, 414-476-3189.

First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee, 1342 N. Astor St., 53202, 414-273-5257.

Lake Park Lutheran Church, 2647 N. Stowell Ave., 53211, 414-962-9190.

Metropolitan Community Church, 1239 W. Mineral St., 53204, 414-383-1100.

Milwaukee Friends Meeting (Quakers), 3224 N. Gordon Place, 53212.

Plymouth Church, 2717 E. Hampshire Ave., 53211, 414-964-1513.

St. James Episcopal Church, 833 W. Wisconsin Ave., 53233, 414-271-1340.

223-3220.

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

KENOSHA Religion/spirituality

Bradford Community Church-Unitarian Universalist, 5810 Eighth Ave., 53140, 262-656-0544.

MADISON Arts/entertainment

Dairyland Cowboys and Cowgirls, Club 5, 5 Applegate Court, 53713, 608-277-9700.

Community

OutReach, 600 Williamson St., 53073, 608-255-8582, www.lgbtoutreach.org.

Politics

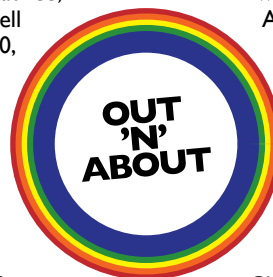
Fair Wisconsin, 122 State, Suite 500, 53703, 608-441-0143, www.actionwisconsin.com.

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., 53403, 262-664-4100, www.lgbtsewisc.org.



Health

AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, 820 N. Plankinton Ave., 53203, 414-273-1991.

BEST D Clinic, 1240 E. Brady St., 53202, 414-272-2144.

Diverse and Resilient, 2439 N. Holton, 53212, 414-390-0444, www.diverseandresilient.org.

Galano Club, 315 W. Court St., Suite 201-A, 53212, 414-276-6936, galanoclub.org.

Health Institute of Milwaukee, 1817 N. Martin Luther King Drive, Suite 3, 53212, 414-263-9999.

Milwaukee Women's Center, 611 N. Broadway, Suite 230, 53202, 414-272-6199.

STD Specialities Clinic, 3251 N. Holton, 53212, 414-264-8800, www.stdspecialities.org.

Walker's Point Community Clinic, 611 W. National Ave., Suite 400, 53204, 414-384-1400.

Religion/spirituality

Central United Methodist Church, 639 N. 25th St., 53233, 414-344-1600.

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

Cross Lutheran Church,

Sports

Front Runners/Front Walkers, 414-443-0379

Metro Milwaukee Tennis Club, 414-616-3716.

Milwaukee Gay Soccer League, 1012 E. Clarke St., 53212, 414-405-5878, www.milwaukeegayssoccer.org.

Milwaukee Gay Volleyball League, www.milwaukeegayvolleyball.com.

Saturday Softball Beer League, 2333 N. 56th St., 53210, www.ssbmilwaukee.com.

Youth/Education

Alliance School, 850 W. Walnut St., 53205, 414-227-2550, www.allianceschool.org.

Alliance for LGBTQ Youth, 1212 S. 70th St., 53214, 414-453-1400, www.cssw.org.

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

LGBT Resource Center at UWM, U.W.-M. Student Union WG-89, P.O. Box 413, 53201, 414-229-4116, www.uwm.edu/Dept/OSL/LGBT.

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

Marquette Gay/Straight Alliance, 1442 W. Wisconsin Ave., 53233.

Project Q, 315 W. Court St., Suite 101, 53212, 414-

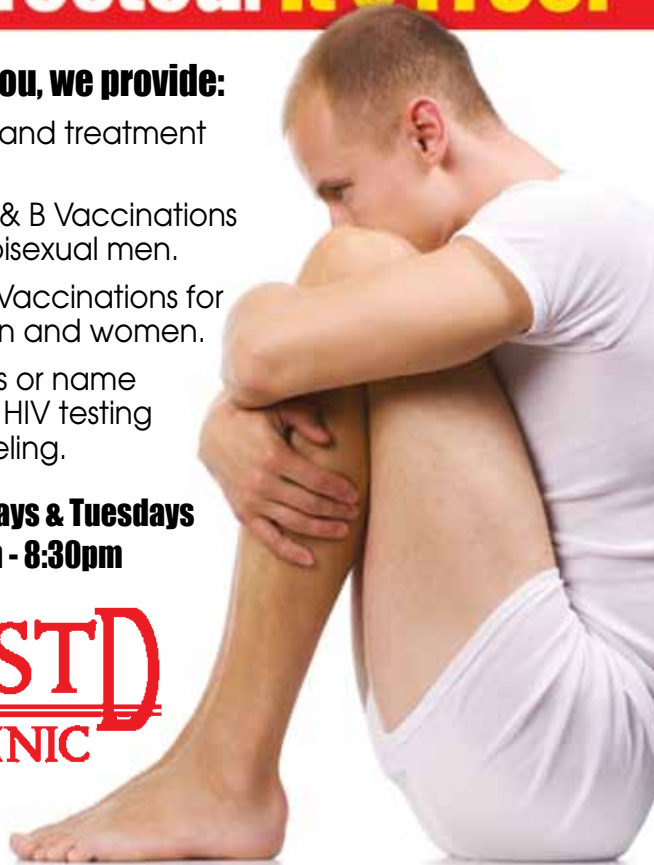
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Calendar

WHAT'S GOING ON?

ONGOING

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 partners group, OutReach, 600 Williamson St., Madison. Info: 608-255-8582, www.lgb-toutreach.org.

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

7 p.m., third Thursdays, Lesbian Alliance movie night, LGBT Community Center, 315

W. Court St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-272-9442.

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.

7 p.m., Q2-LGBTQ Youth Group, LGBT Community Center of the Chippewa Valley, 510 S. Farwell St., Eau Claire, 54702, 715-552-LGBT, www.thecentercv.org.

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.

6 p.m., second Fridays, Lesbian Alliance game night and potluck, LGBT Community

Center, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-272-9442.

7 p.m., AA, The Galano Club, 315 W. Court St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-276-6936, galanoclub.org.

7 p.m., Gay Narcotics Anonymous, 315 W. Court St., second floor, Milwaukee. Info: 414-276-6936.

7 p.m., Drop-in night, LGBT Community Center of the Chippewa Valley, 510 S. Farwell St., Eau Claire, 54702, 715-552-LGBT, www.thecentercv.org.

8:30 p.m., second and fourth Fridays, Shoreline Milwaukee line dancing and lessons, Hot Water, 818 S. Water St., Milwaukee. Info: 414-383-75936.

SATURDAY

9 a.m., Frontrunners/Walkers Milwaukee Run Walk, starting at the Water Tower at the East end of North Avenue, Milwaukee. Info: 414-443-0379.

9 a.m., Frontrunners/ Frontwalkers Madison, Wingra Park off Monroe St., Madison. Info: 608-469-4882.

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.

6 p.m., Rotating Activity Night each week, LGBT Community Center of the Chippewa Valley, 510 S. Farwell St., Eau Claire, 54702, 715-552-LGBT, www.thecentercv.org.

7-8:30 p.m., third Saturdays, BWMT (Black and White Men Together), general meeting.

SUNDAY

1 p.m., Cream City Squares dances, Lake Park Lutheran Church, 2647 N. Stowell, Milwaukee.

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.

5 p.m., third Sundays, PFLAG Milwaukee, Martin Luther Church, 9235 W. Bluemound Rd., Wauwatosa.

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 Tuesday, Retired Old/Older Lesbians (ROLLers), Madison. Info: 608-219-7751.

5 p.m., AA Over 40; 7 p.m. AA The Blue Group, The Galano

Club, 315 W. Court St., No. 201, Milwaukee. Info: 414-276-6936, galanoclub.org.

7 p.m., Spectrum GLBT and Allied social group for adults, Harmony Cafe, 1660 W. Mason St., Appleton.

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 ltomaszek@wisconsin-gazette.com.

THE NEXT TWO WEEKS

THURSDAY

May 6

7 p.m., Cribbage with GAMMA, 414-530-1886, milwaukee-gamma.com.

FRIDAY

May 7

7-10 p.m., drop-in night, LGBT Community Center of the Chippewa Valley, 510 S. Farwell St., Eau Claire, 715-552-LGBT, www.thecentercv.org.

SATURDAY

May 8

3:45-5 p.m., LGBT writers group, Mo's Café, 5537 Sixth Ave., Kenosha, asstdirector@lgbtsewisc.org.

5 p.m., Celebration of Leadership 2010, Monona Terrace, One John Nolen Drive, Madison, 608-661-4141.

6-9 p.m., "Your Favorite Recipe" potluck, LGBT Community Center of the

Chippewa Valley, 510 S. Farwell St., Eau Claire, 54702, 715-552-LGBT, www.thecentercv.org.

7 p.m., Women Unite for the Children benefit concert, performances by Ronnie Nyles and Tallulah Who, Melissa Ferrick and Suzanne Westenhoefer, Memorial Hall, 72 Seventh St., Racine, www.childrenofthefallen.org.

SUNDAY

May 9

1 p.m., Mother's Day Dance, Cream City Squares, Lake Park Lutheran Church, 2647 N. Stowell, 414-445-8080.

MONDAY

May 10

8 a.m., PrideFest Volleyball Tournament registration begins, 414-530-1886, milwaukee-gamma.com.

7:30-8:30 p.m., gender identity support group, LGBT Center of S.E. Wisconsin, 1456 Junction

SAVE THE DATE

The Skylight Opera Theatre presents a private benefit performance of "Rent" on Sunday, May 23, to benefit the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW). Specially priced tickets for the performance and a pre-show party are \$25, in honor of ARCW's 25th anniversary. Proceeds will support housing programs for people with HIV. For information, contact Tad Gospodarek at 414-225-1598.

Ave., Racine, www.lgbtsewisc.org.

TUESDAY

May 11

7-9 p.m. "Homosexuality and the Bible" forum discussion, LGBT Community Center of the Chippewa Valley, 510 S. Farwell St., Eau Claire, 715-552-LGBT, www.thecentercv.org.

WEDNESDAY

May 12

Noon, Blue Plate Special with GAMMA, 414-530-1886, milwaukee-gamma.com.

SATURDAY

May 15

6:45 p.m., Movie Night, "Prayers for Bobby," LGBT Community Center of the Chippewa Valley, 510 S. Farwell St., Eau Claire, 54702, 715-552-LGBT, www.thecentercv.org.

7 p.m., Game night with GAMMA, 414-530-1886, milwaukee-gamma.com.

SUNDAY

May 16

2-3:30 p.m., "AIDS: The Hidden Epidemic," LGBT Center of S.E. Wisconsin, 1456 Junction Ave., Racine, www.lgbtsewisc.org.

7 p.m., Florentine Opera Camerata for Rigoletto, The Room, 623 S. Second St., Milwaukee, 414-225-1958.

TUESDAY

May 18

6-7:30 p.m. Fair Wisconsin

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HOUSE BOI WANTED

SGWM with a limited disability looking for a house "boi" for lack of a better term. I need a guy to clean, do some minor cooking & run errands when necessary. I occasionally need a lift, so a car would be helpful. You wouldn't have to live in full time. Seeking SGWM, age 24-34, for this position. It is not a difficult job. If you live in rent would be minimal. Reimbursed

for gas \$. Please send stats and what your plan is for the next 5 years with contact info. Must have references & a phone of your own. Perfect for college or grad student. All the comforts of home. Send to: hummelcreche@netzero.net

netzero.net

BWMT

Black and White Men Together (BWMT) invites men of all races, ethnic backgrounds, and ages together for

socializing! Join us at 7 pm, on the 3rd Saturday of each month at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center. Dinner outings, and other group activities. For more information: www.nabwmt.org/milwaukee

WiG'S TAIL-WAGGER

COURTESY OF THE WISCONSIN HUMANE SOCIETY



Karrot Kake

SEE HER TODAY!

Karrot Kake is a 4-year-old female Rex mix rabbit. She has a soft white coat with red markings. She is a lovable and social rabbit who is very sweet and gentle. Karrot Kake likes to explore new places and meet new people. Meet Karrot Kake today at the Wisconsin Humane Society, located at 45th and Wisconsin Avenue in Milwaukee.

Tango's Tip: Sign up now for a lecture by Dr. Patricia McConnell, "Happy and Healthy Play between People and Dogs." The event will be held June 24 at the Radisson Hotel in Milwaukee. Register at www.wihumane.org. Seating is limited.

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Gazette .com**

OUT & ABOUT

Got a listing to ad? Tell us managingeditor@wisconsin-gazette.com.

STATEWIDE BAR AND ENTERTAINMENT VENUE LISTINGS

KENOSHA/RACINE

Club ICON, 6305 120th St. (off I-94), Kenosha, 262-857-3240

JoDee's, 2139 Racine St., Racine, 262-634-9804

MILWAUKEE

Art Bar, 722 Burleigh, 414-372-7880

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

Boom & The Room, 625 S. Second St., 414-277-5040

Boot Camp, 209 E. National Ave., 414-643-6900

City Lights Chill & Grill, 111 W. Howard Ave., 414-481-1441

Fluid, 819 S. Second St., 414-643-5843

Harbor Room, 117 E. Greenfield, 414-672-7988

Hybrid, 707 E. Brady St., 414-810-1809

JACK, 200 E. Washington St., 414-389-3596

Kruz, 354 E. National Ave., 414-272-KRUZ

LaCage, 801 S. Second St., 414-383-8330

Mona's, 1407 S. First St., 414-643-0377

Nut Hut, 1500 W. Scott, 414-647-2673

Pump, (Sundays at Decibel), 1905 E. North Ave., 414-272-3337

This Is It, 418 E. Wells St., 414-278-9192

Triangle, 135 E. National Ave., 414-383-9412

Tropical Niteclub, 626 S. Fifth St., 414-460-6277

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

Woody's, 1579 S Second St., 414-672-0806

MADISON

Club 5, 5 Applegate Court, 608-277-9700

Plan B, 924 Williamson St., 608-257-5262

Shamrock, 117 W. Main St., 608-255-5029

WOOF'S, 114 King St., 608-204-6222

BELOIT/JANESVILLE

Impulse, 132 W. Grand Ave., Beloit, 608-361-0000

Off The Wagon, 18-24 S River St., Janesville, 608-359-3209

LACROSSE

My Place, 3201 South Ave., 608-788-9073

Players, 300 Fourth St., 608-784-4200

Chances R, 417 Jay St., 608-782-5105

WISCONSIN DELLS

Captain Dix Rainbow Valley Resort, 4124 River Road, 866-553-1818

SHEBOYGAN

Blue Lite, 1029 N. Eighth St., 920-457-1636

FOX VALLEY

Rascals Bar & Grill, 702 E. Wisconsin, Appleton, 920-954-9262

Ravens, 215 E. College Ave., Appleton, 920-364-9599

Napalese, 1351 Cedar St., Green Bay, 920-432-9646

SASS, 840 S. Broadway, Green Bay, 920-437-7277

The Shelter, 730 N. Quincy St., Green Bay, 920-432-2662

XS Niteclub, 1106 Main St., Green Bay, 920-430-1301

Debs Spare Time, 1303 Harrison St., Oshkosh, 920-235-6577

NORTHERN

Scooters, 411 Galloway Street, Eau Claire, 715-835-9959

JT's Bar and Grill, 1506 N. Third St., Superior, 715-394-2580

The Flame, 1612 Tower Ave., Superior, 715-395-0101

The Main 1217 Tower Ave., Superior, 715-392-1756
OZ, 320 Washington St., Wausau, 715-842-3225



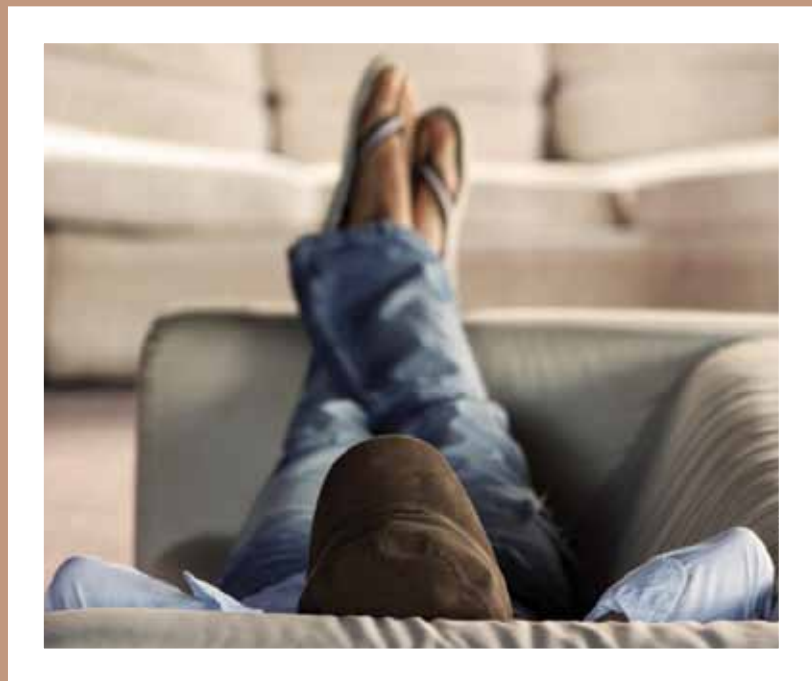
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