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THE VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR WISCONSIN'S LGBT COMMUNITY

November 17, 2011 | Vol. 3, No. 1

Cage steps aside at center

By Louis Weisberg
Staff writer

After five years as executive director of the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, Maggi Cage has stepped aside, according to a press release.

The Nov. 7 statement said Cage, who has a Ph.D. in psychology, remains at the center "to lead the new LGBT Mental Health Clinic." At the same time, Sheldon Walker has resigned from his position as co-chair of the center's board to serve as interim executive director, according to the statement.

The statement also said Cage will "focus on the needs of her family." Her father, John B. Cage of Waukesha, died on Oct. 21 at age 90.

It is unclear how the personnel change will affect the center's operation or what role Cage will continue to play in its policies and direc-

tion. Cage and board members are apparently inaccessible to the press on such issues.

As the straight leader of what is likely the state's largest LGBT-specific organization, Cage was a controversial director from the start. The center lost donors as well as members over her appointment.

But even people who embraced Cage at the beginning of her tenure lost confidence in her leadership and commitment to the community over the years. People complained about her infrequent appearances at LGBT events and said she was largely unresponsive to the public.

Philanthropist Joe Pabst was among those who initially endorsed the concept of having an LGBT ally lead the organization. But his enthusiasm and support waned as the center increasingly focused on social service grants rather than the community-building role that he and others had envisioned for the organization.

"I believe in the center as its name implies – as an integral centerpiece to the community," Pabst said. "But the center no longer engages people who were once so passionate about it. And I think that's a shame."

Rather than working to win over critics or incorporate their input, Cage tended to take actions that further alienated them. For example,

CAGE page 12



PHOTO: AP/JOURNAL TIMES, MARK HERTZBERG

Supporters of the effort to recall Scott Walker protest a recent appearance by the governor in Sturtevant. On Nov. 15, Walker's foes launched an unprecedented effort to gather 540,000 signatures and force a recall election.

National results boost local hopes

By Lisa Neff and Louis Weisberg

Staff reporters

As critics of Gov. Scott Walker officially launched their recall campaign, they were buoyed by Nov. 8 election returns from other states signaling political momentum against extremist Republican policies.

The recall effort originally was slated to begin on Nov. 15, but a Walker supporter jump-started it on the governor's behalf to take advantage of a loophole in state campaign finance law. The loophole allows Walker to raise unlimited funds in his effort to hold onto office.

Democratic Party of

Wisconsin chair Mike Tate denounced the ploy, calling it "criminal."

"No matter how dirty the Republicans play or how much outside cash the Koch brothers spend on false and misleading ads, the people of Wisconsin ... will have their day, and they will recall Scott Walker," Tate said.

Nov. 8 election returns bolstered Tate's optimism.

In Ohio, voters defeated Issue 2 and repealed Republican Gov. John Kasich's law stripping public employees of basic workplace rights, including the right to collective bargaining. Kasich's law went fur-

RECALL page 13

This issue

inside and online at wisconsin-gazette.com

News

- WiGWAG.....2
- Regional Gaze.....4
- National Gaze.....8
- Editorial.....14
- Faith Gaze.....16

Features

- WiGOUT.....21
- Stage Gaze.....23
- Theater.....24
- Music.....29
- On the Town.....30

LGBT news with a twist



By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg

A GAGA THANKSGIVING

Lady Gaga is set to star in a 90-minute Thanksgiving TV special in prime time. Airing on ABC the evening of Nov. 24, "A Very Gaga Thanksgiving," directed by Our Lady of Gaga herself, features the LGBT ally performing eight musical numbers surrounded by her family and closest friends. Songs include "You and I," "The Edge of Glory," "The Lady is a Tramp" and "White Christmas." Gaga will even whip up a few Thanksgiving treats, including deep-fried turkey and waffles.

DEVIL MADE HIM DO IT

U.S. Catholic officials were quick to remove from the Web a column suggesting that the devil is behind same-sex attraction. The column by Daniel Avila of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops ran in The Pilot, a publication of Archdiocese of Boston. "The scientific evidence of how same-sex attraction most likely may be created provides a credible basis for a spiritual expla-

nation that indicts the devil," the column said. It was pulled, and Avila apologized for "hurt and confusion." Catholic officials said publication was a simple mistake — the devil had nothing to do with it.

THE (EX)-PRODUCER

Director Brett Ratner resigned from producing the 84th Academy Awards after telling a New York Magazine blog that "rehearsing is for fags." He later apologized in a letter to the entertainment industry, writing, "I've gotten a well-deserved earful from many of the people I admire most in this industry expressing their outrage and disappointment over the hurtful and stupid things I said in a number of recent media appearances. To them, and to everyone I've hurt and offended, I'd like to apologize publicly and unreservedly."

DEADBEAT DAD HONORED

Republican Rep. Joe Walsh,

R-Ill., has become the first congressman from his state to receive the Family Research Council's "True Blue" award. The award recognizes leaders for promoting a "pro-family" agenda. But the fiery Chicago-area Republican is in legal trouble for neglecting to pay court-ordered child support to his ex-wife and three children. He owes at least \$117,437 in back payments to his ex-wife. Although Walsh told the court he was broke, last year he made a \$35,000 contribution to his congressional campaign and took lavish vacations to Mexico and Italy with his girlfriend.

GAY PENGUINS SPLIT

Toronto's zoo split up a pair of male penguins whose affection has drawn headlines and jokes about "Brokeback Iceberg." The African penguins have shared the nest they built since coming to the zoo about a year ago. But since the penguins are an endangered species, zoo officials plan to separate Pedro and Buddy so they can mate with females. The zoo has received hundreds of

calls about the pair, including a call from someone claiming to represent a group called the Canadian Society for Gay Animals.

WELFARE MODEL

At a recent GOP presidential debate, presidential candidate Michele Bachmann said China should be a U.S. model for social programs. "If you look at China, they don't have food stamps," she said. "They save for their own retirement security, they don't have AFDC (Aid to Families With Dependent Children), they don't have the modern welfare state." Critics said Bachmann must be unaware that China is a socialist dictatorship.

C-TV

U.S. Reps. Barney Frank, Tammy Baldwin, Jared Polis and David Cicilline deliver an "It Gets Better" — a whole lot better — in a video for the campaign aimed at troubled LGBT youth. "I think it's especially important for those of us in a position to give personal testimony to make it clear that for us it got better — a whole

lot better," said Frank, the senior member of the LGBT congressional caucus. To watch, go to <http://youtu.be/zupd0d7cmyu>.

11-11-11

Crowne Plaza Hotels 7 Resorts celebrated the arrival of 11-11-11 on the calendar by offering 11 couples a dream wedding and honeymoon in New York City. More than 600 couples entered the 11-11-11 contest, including many same-sex couples. The winners included two same-sex couples. The event featured VH1 star and "Master Matchmaker" Steve Ward, although the couples were already matched.

ON THE REGISTER

The National Parks Service recently placed the home of the late Frank Kameny, a pioneering gay civil rights activist who died this fall, on its National Register of Historic Places. The landmark designation in Washington, D.C., is because Kameny was a landmark in modern U.S. history, said National Park Service director Jonathan B. Jarvis.

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JOEY CARRILLO



"Elmhurst College does a great job of nurturing and supporting LGBT students. Coming out was hard for me, but I've been blessed to have an accepting community to come out to."
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At Elmhurst, you'll find an exceptionally welcoming campus community. We embrace individual expression. We see our differences as sources of strength. And we clearly, openly, emphatically want you here.

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Our Enrichment Scholarship specifically benefits academically qualified students from minority groups—including LGBT students. The scholarship covers one-third of tuition. More than that, it underscores our commitment to affirming the identities and advancing the dreams of each individual student.

A wealth of programs and resources

We support our LGBT students through a variety of campus organizations and events. The student group EQUAL (Elmhurst Queers and Allies) promotes awareness through events and advocacy. SAFE (Staff, Administrators and Faculty for Equality) offers a support network for the LGBT community. An annual guestship and other special events focus on issues of concern to the LGBT community. Our faculty is adding courses in LGBT studies.

A step ahead of the rest

"In a small but meaningful step, Elmhurst College is now officially telling applicants that gay students are welcome on campus. The private liberal arts college is the first college in the U.S. to ask potential students about their sexual orientation or gender identity on its application....The question is meant to increase diversity at the school, which is affiliated with the United Church of Christ, and to direct incoming students toward services that might ease their transition into college life. It's also a strong signal that the school will embrace LGBT students and will do its best to support them."

—Chicago Sun-Times, August 26, 2011



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Second Harvest braces for holiday season

By Michael Muckian
Contributing writer

Business in Dan Stein's world has never been better. His market has diversified to include people of all ages and socioeconomic groups. Demand for his services has increased about 83 percent over the past several years.

Unfortunately, growth is not a good thing in Stein's business. He's the president and CEO of Madison-based Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin. Stein is particularly concerned about the coming holiday season, which constitutes both the best and worst of times for those who are hungry.

Second Harvest is one of 200 food banks affiliated with the Feeding America network.

money for food."

But children aren't the only ones who suffer from "food insecurity," a phrase that refers to a reduced availability of nutrition, either through lack of supply or the inability to pay for it. These days people of all ages and multiple social strata are finding themselves in that group, and many turn to Second Harvest as social and economic challenges continue to tax their resources.

"Young and old, employed and unemployed, homeless and not homeless, single people and whole families – there is no typical profile when it comes to people struggling with hunger," Stein says.

Second Harvest, one of 200 food banks affiliated with the Chicago-based Feeding America network, isn't the state's only outlet. Other affiliates include the Milwaukee-based Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin and Feed My People Food Bank, based in Eau Claire. The goal of each organization is to work with different agencies, providers and partners to get food to those who need it, Stein says.

According to Feeding America's 2010 Hunger Study, the network is annually providing food to 37 million Americans, including 14 million children, a figure that has increased 50 percent over the past five years. The demand for food has increased 46 percent overall since 2006, when food banks

in the network fed 25 million Americans, including 9 million children, each year.

Among those served, 36 percent of households have at least one person working, and more than one-third report having to choose between food and other basic necessities, such as rent, utilities and medical care.

"The 16 counties we serve represent a variety of large, medium and small communities, each with its own set of challenges," Stein says. "The Hunger Study showed that over 141,000 unique individuals are served by Second Harvest Foodbank and its partner agencies each year. In many cases the services we support are not just one-time instances – they are needed frequently throughout the year."

Fortunately, the Madison community has a strong commitment to ending hunger and supports Second Harvest's goals year around, Stein says. Donations come as financial contributions and foodstuffs, as well donations

of volunteer time and in-kind contributions, such as media support. Second Harvest continually looks for new and innovative partnerships to leverage the country's food supply on behalf of those who need it.

An innovative partnership still in its infancy is the Field to Food Bank program. Working through a contact from UW-Madison, the food bank made arrangements with a Wisconsin grower, a canning and processing company, and a trucking company to make available nearly 200,000 cans of carrots to those who need them, Stein says.

The grower set aside five out of his 1,400 acres of carrots slated for Del Monte and donated their output to Second Harvest. A local trucking company donated a significant portion of the costs to transport the vegetables from the field to the processing plant and from the plant either directly to Second Harvest's partner agencies or its Madison ware-

house. Finally, the food bank worked with Del Monte and the can supplier to drastically reduce processing costs and the cost of the cans.

Those efforts resulted in a large amount of nutritious canned carrots with a long shelf life available to people in need.

Having access to enough of the right kinds of food is essential to proper child development, not only from a physical perspective, but also a mental and learning perspective. It's been proven that children who get enough nutritious food to eat are more successful in school, Stein says.

"Every dollar counts and every pound of food counts," he says. "Until we have completely ended hunger in southwestern Wisconsin we will not have achieved our goal."

To learn more about Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin and to donate food, money and resources, go to www.secondharvestmadison.org.

Pro-gay Catholics vastly outnumber homophobic bishops

Opinion
JOHN M. BECKER

Earlier this month I visited Milwaukee to attend the Call to Action National Conference, a gathering of progressive Catholics from around the country, and introduce pro-LGBT attendees to the organization I work for, Truth Wins Out.

Many readers will understandably balk at the words "progressive," "pro-LGBT" and "Catholic" appearing in the same sentence. However, these words and concepts are far more compatible than many people realize.

Not that equality-minded people could be blamed for thinking otherwise. After all, the Catholic Church and its affiliates vociferously push an insidious anti-gay agenda. Former Milwaukee and now New York Archbishop Timothy Dolan was the most outspoken opponent of the state's marriage equality law. Minnesota's Catholic bishops are leading the charge to add an anti-gay amendment to that state's constitution, calling the denial of marriage rights to same-sex couples a "top priority" in 2012 and using tax-exempt church resources for political purposes.

The Knights of Columbus, a lay Catholic group, bankrolls the National Organization for Marriage, which fights against the civil rights of LGBT people across the country. In fact, in 2009 the Knights spent more money fighting marriage equality than they did on all other social programs, such as food banks and food drives, combined.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops formed the Subcommittee for the

Promotion and Defense of Marriage in order to organize and galvanize opposition to same-sex marriage nationwide. (Dan Avila, the bishops' policy advisor for marriage, was forced to resign this month after publishing a column in which he stated that homosexuality was caused by the devil.)

And the Catholic Church even has its own "apostolate" for gay people, called Courage, which counsels members to abandon their natural sexuality for a lifetime of celibacy and endorses the National Association for Research & Therapy of Homosexuality, a leading proponent of "ex-gay" conversion therapy.

But the bigotry of the Catholic hierarchy is only part of the story. In fact, the beliefs of the rank-and-file Catholic faithful couldn't be more different. Recent polls have repeatedly shown that a majority support granting same-gender couples the freedom to marry.

A survey released in March by the Public Religion Research Institute, billed as "the most comprehensive portrait of Catholic attitudes on gay and lesbian issues assembled to date," found that a large majority of American Catholics – a whopping 71 percent – support civil marriage equality for same-sex couples. It further states, "Catholics are more supportive of legal recognitions of same-sex relationships than members of any other Christian tradition and Americans overall" and that "Catholic support for rights for gays and lesbian people is strong and slightly higher than the general public."

Perhaps most revealing, though, is the PRRI's finding that "less than 4 in 10

Catholics give their own church top marks ... on its handling of the issue of homosexuality."

Social justice has long been an important component of the Catholic faith tradition. The Church is outspoken in its support of labor unions immigrants and financial reform, as well as its opposition to capital punishment. American Catholics appear to view the issue of LGBT equality as one of social justice as well, consciously rejecting the bigotry of their religious leaders in much the same way they reject the official prohibition of contraception (98 percent of Catholics use forms of contraception banned by the Church).

So let's resist the impulse to stereotype all Catholics as anti-gay extremists. After all, our community knows the sting of prejudice all too well. Instead, work together with pro-equality Catholics, as Truth Wins Out and many other organizations are doing already.

Let's speak out together against the Catholic Church's institutionalized bigotry and work towards a society that's truly just for all people.

John M. Becker is director of communications and development for Truth Wins Out, a national nonprofit organization that fights anti-LGBT religious extremism. Becker has played a part in a number of TWO's high-profile actions. One was a successful international media campaign that resulted in Apple dropping a "gay cure" iPhone app. Another was a sting operation in which Becker went undercover with hidden cameras at the clinic co-owned by Marcus and Michele Bachmann and exposed them for offering fraudulent "ex-gay" therapy.



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LGBT candidates prevail at the polls

Virginia elected its first openly gay senator, Democrat Adam Ebbin, in a district that encompasses a swath of suburban Washington, D.C., making him one of more than 50 LGBT candidates elected to office in the Nov. 8 election.

"We're thrilled for Adam and for LGBT Virginians, who will finally have an authentic LGBT voice in the state senate," Victory Fund president and CEO Chuck Wolfe said in a press release. "The Victory Fund has been proud to support Adam throughout his career. He's been a persistent champion for fairness and equality, and we congratulate him."

In the highest profile of the races, Houston's out lesbian mayor Annise Parker narrowly won re-election to a second term. Parker was the first out candidate to be elected mayor of a major



Adam Ebbin



Alex Morse



LaWana Mayfield



Chris Seelbach

PHOTOS: COURTESY

U.S. city.

"I had five opponents. Plus, I had the economy, and that was a tough opponent," Parker said in her victory speech.

Houston also elected its first openly gay man to city council - Mike Laster.

Openly gay Alex Morse was elected mayor of Holyoke, Mass., making the Brown University graduate

the youngest mayor in the nation at age 22. The city of 40,000 is located in the western part of the state, about eight miles north of Springfield.

Morse has had the political bug since grammar school, joining his city's youth commission at age 11. He was elected freshman class president at Holyoke High School when he was 15.

"I think of my age as an incredible asset, in that I haven't been around for 20, 30 years. I'm not beholden to special interests. I haven't been around long enough to owe anybody a political favor," Morse said in an interview reported by CBS News.

Morse beat the 67-year-old incumbent, Elaine Pluta, by capturing 53 percent of the vote.

lesbian who was endorsed by the Victory Fund, won her race for the Missoula, Mont., city council, defeating an incumbent who voted against an LGBT non-discrimination ordinance.

• Mayor Tim Eustace of Maywood, N.J., was elected to the New Jersey Assembly, becoming the first openly gay non-incumbent to win a seat in that state's legislature.

• In Cincinnati, Chris Seelbach won his race for city council, becoming the first openly LGBT council member in the city's history.

• Daniel Hernandez Jr., the intern who helped save the life of U.S. Rep. Gabrielle Giffords, was elected to the Pima County, Ariz., school board.

• Robin Kniech became first openly LGBT member of the Denver City Council.

• Caitlin Copple, an out

Other LGBT winners on Nov. 8 included:

• LaWana Mayfield became the first openly LGBT person elected to Charlotte, N.C., City Council. She was heavily favored after ousting the incumbent Democrat in a primary race earlier this year.

• Openly gay attorney Daryl Justin Finizio was elected mayor of London, Conn.

• Caitlin Copple, an out

- from WIG and wire reports

Dems, troops take legal aim at DOMA

By Lisa Neff
Staff writer

Congressional Democrats and gay servicemembers focused on disarming the 15-year-old law that bans federal recognition of same-sex marriages and allows states to refuse to recognize marriages performed in other states.

In the federal court system, the Servicemembers Legal Defense Unit filed a lawsuit seeking equal recognition of gay and lesbian servicemembers and veterans in benefits, compensation and family support services.

At the heart of the suit is a challenge to the Defense of Marriage Act, the 1996 law passed by a GOP-controlled congress and signed by Democratic President Bill Clinton. The legislation no longer has the support of the author of the bill, former U.S. Rep. Bob Barr, and was never pushed by Clinton.

DOMA prohibits the

The brief by House Democrats argues that DOMA overtly discriminates.

Defense Department from extending marriage benefits to gay and lesbian veterans and servicemembers, who can serve openly with the repeal of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

"We are not advocating any special treatment," said Aubrey Sarvis, SLDN's executive director.

Meanwhile, another challenge to DOMA recently earned the legal endorsement of the Democrats in the U.S.

House of Representatives. House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, Calif., led 130 other Democrats in filing a friend-of-the-court brief in a case in Massachusetts, where same-sex couples can legally marry but are ineligible for federal marriage benefits.

When the Obama administration decided not to champion DOMA in court, House Republicans stepped in, hiring an attorney and preparing a legal defense.

In early November, House Democrats countered their GOP colleagues with a brief that argues DOMA overtly discriminates against a class of citizens and violates the Constitution's guarantee of equal protection for all under the law.

In the legislative realm, a U.S. Senate committee voted Nov. 10 to move forward a bill to repeal DOMA. The companion bill, however, is not expected to move in the House this session.

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Christian university's anti-gay pledge challenged

By Lisa Neff
Staff writer

A private university's new policy requiring that employees pledge to "reject as acceptable all sexual activity not in agreement with the Bible, including, but not limited to, premarital sex, adultery and homosexuality" is drawing comparisons to loyalty pledges of the McCarthy era.

Christian-based school in Rome, Ga., recently adopted a new policy requiring employees to sign a "personal lifestyle" statement. The statement contains four principles of personal conduct: • The employee be loyal to the Christian-based mission of the university, which is affiliated with the Georgia Baptist Convention. • The employee not engage

in the use, production or distribution of illegal drugs. • The employee not consume alcohol in the presence of students, including in restaurants, theaters and other venues students might visit. • The employee "reject as acceptable all sexual activity not in agreement with the Bible, including, but not limited to, premarital sex, adultery and homosexuality." New hires must sign

the pledge as a condition of employment, and current employees must sign the pledge as a condition for contract renewal. The mandate from the university president states, "Failure to adhere to this statement may result in disciplinary action against me, up to and including immediate termination." Numerous civil rights groups said that Shorter

may be a private institution with the right to require the pledge, but that doesn't make the pledge acceptable. "The school's anti-LGBT policy is sending a dangerous message to other employees and students that there is something wrong with being lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender," said Sharon Groves of the Human Rights Campaign's religion and faith program. "As we are all too

well aware, sending these types of messages can often have very serious consequences." Georgia civil rights advocates called the statement an anti-gay loyalty oath similar to the pledges teachers and other public officials were required to make during the Red Scare of the 1950s. For breaking news visit www.wisconsin Gazette.com.

Options for personnel discharged under 'don't ask'

By Peter Renn
Lambda Legal attorney

Dear Ask Lambda Legal, I'm a former servicemember discharged under "don't ask, don't tell." Now that the law has been repealed, can I re-enlist? What can I do about my discharge status?

Gay patriot

Dear Patriot, On Sept. 20, the discriminatory ban against LGB servicemembers was repealed. But the repeal will not automatically reinstate the estimated 14,500 servicemem-

bers who were discharged under DADT nor the tens of thousands more who were discharged under the discriminatory policies that preceded DADT. The majority of those discharged under DADT received honorable discharges. But hundreds of others did not. Less-than-honorable discharges can have lasting impact, such as limiting access to GI Bill protections and benefits or Veterans Administration health care. In addition, veterans often must submit their discharge paperwork when applying for jobs out-



side the military, and the problem of "bad paper" can harm employment prospects. Discharge documents can out someone to potential employers, and if the paperwork indicates

less-than-honorable circumstances, prospective employers may conclude the job applicant engaged in misconduct. If you did not receive an honorable discharge but should have, you may now be eligible to upgrade your discharge, depending on your individual circumstances. If you are interested in re-enlistment, prior service members discharged under DADT are evaluated according to the same criteria as other service members seeking reentry, without regard to their sexual orientation.

This is especially important for female and minority servicemembers, who were disproportionately discharged under DADT. The repeal of DADT falls short of protecting everyone in the LGBT community and those living with HIV. The medical regulatory ban is still in place. The Defense of Marriage Act, or DOMA, prevents the military from providing spousal benefits to same-sex partners, even if you were married in a state that has marriage equality. For more info, go to www.lambdalegal.org/help.

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Iowa special election yields victory for equality

By Lisa Neff
Staff writer

A special election in Iowa on Nov. 8 provided a big victory for marriage equality in the state by allowing Democrats to maintain their narrow 26-24 majority in the Senate. Democrat Liz Mathis won a Senate seat in a Republican-leaning district by a margin of 55 to 43, defeating right-wing Republican Cindy Golding, who received strong backing

from the anti-gay National Organization for Marriage. Democrats have used their Senate majority to block a series of right-wing Republican efforts, ranging from cutting business taxes to banning same-sex marriage to tightening laws on abortion. Senate Majority Leader Michael Gronstal, D-Council Bluffs, said the win would allow Democrats to continue blocking such proposals. He

has steadfastly refused to allow a GOP-backed measure to enact a constitutional amendment banning same-sex marriage to reach the Senate floor. If Gronstal had lost power, the Senate could have voted on a measure that the House approved in February banning both same-sex marriage and marriage-like unions. "We'll continue to block efforts by Republicans to do

extreme things," Gronstal said following Mathis' victory. The short but intense campaign was watched closely because the district, which includes the city of Marion and portions of rural Linn County, is a classic swing district. There are a few hundred more Republicans than Democrats in the district, but voters who registered without declaring a party preference outnumber both.

The election was called when Gov. Terry Branstad appointed Marion Democratic Sen. Swati Dandekar to the Iowa Utilities Board. Critics said Branstad made the appointment to open a Republican-leaning seat in the Legislature, a charge he denied. In the final hours of the special election campaign, voters were flooded by robo-calls that directed callers to ask Mathis "what homosex-

ual sex acts she endorses." The calls were designed to inflame homophobic sentiment and spur anti-gay voters to the polls to support the Republican. Golding's campaign denied any involvement with the calls. The National Organization for Marriage also denied involvement - and said that pro-gay interests orchestrated the calls to discredit Golding's campaign.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

SAME SEX COUPLE SAYS COUNTY STALLED HOMEBUILDING

A same-sex couple is suing Summit County, Colo., claiming they lost a home they were building because of discrimination. Jason Rodgers and James Hazel say they were told building permits are only issued to families and they eventually lost their home to foreclosure. According to the Summit Daily News, county officials say the two men were inexperienced homebuilders and

W.VA. AIMING TO PROTECT LGBT STUDENTS

A proposed anti-bullying policy for West Virginia schools acknowledges for the first time that sexual orientation and gender identity are common reasons for harassment. The state Department of Education took public com-

POLL: NC OPPOSES MARRIAGE BAN

A statewide poll finds virtually no change in North

Carolina residents' opinions seven months ahead of an election that would amend the constitution to ban same-sex unions. An Elon University poll indicates that 57 percent oppose changing the state constitution to permanently bar same-sex couples from marriage rights, a figure almost identical to Elon poll results in September and February. The General Assembly

stopped just short of allowing same-sex nuptials. Superior Court Judge Linda Feinberg ruled that gay rights group Garden State Equality, seven couples and several of their children have a legitimate claim that the state's civil union law does not give them equal protection under the law. But she dismissed part of the suit that argues that gay couples have a fundamental right to marriage in the state. The administration of Gov. Chris Christie wanted the entire lawsuit dismissed. - from WIG and AP reports

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From 2009 to 2011, the center experienced a 56 percent staff turnover rate

CAGE from I Jack H. Smith of Shorewest Realtors was a significant donor to the center before Cage was named director. In recognition of his support, the center placed a plaque bearing his name in the room that served as the center's library in its previous location at 315 W. Court St.

But when Smith stopped writing checks to the center, Cage abruptly removed the plaque from the library without comment.

Although Smith declined to be interviewed, others told WiG that Cage's action raised eyebrows in the donor community and hurt the center's reputation.

Perhaps the most damaging incident occurred when Cage angrily ordered employees to escort Maria Cardenas, the former executive director of Cream City Foundation, out of the community center. Cardenas had gone there to inquire about a grant her foundation had given the organization, she said.

"Staff were so humiliated by Maggi's behavior that

they were crying after Maria walked out the door," said a former employee at the center, who asked not to be identified by name. (Editor's note: several former employees spoke to WiG on condition of anonymity, saying they feared workplace repercussions if they were perceived as being publicly critical of a former boss.)

Cardenas has since left CCF and is philanthropy manager for Driscoll's, a global corporation based in northern California. She confirmed the incident for WiG but declined to talk about her relationship with Cage or her feelings about the incident, saying it would be inappropriate.

Several former employees said Cage's poor relations with the leaders of other LGBT groups made their jobs difficult.

"We lost our ability to network in the community based on the fact that we were affiliated with the community center," one employee said. "People didn't trust us because we were working there. We lost our ability to

be effective."

Former employees also described Cage as dictatorial and vindictive toward her staff. Between 2009 and 2011, nine out of 16 employees left the center — a turnover rate of 56 percent. While some turnover was the consequence of expiring grant cycles, several key dismissals were abrupt and unexplained. According to employees, even politely disagreeing with Cage could get them axed.

"People walk on eggshells around her," said a former worker. "There was a kind of ineffectiveness around the center, and it was because people were so terrified of losing their jobs that they put all of their energy into just trying to keep their jobs."

Two employees said workers often tried to schedule their time at the center around Cage's absences. One said leaving Cage's employment was like leaving a domestic-violence situation.

Over the past two years, WiG has received numerous complaints about Cage from current and former staffers

as well as members of groups that lease space from the center. In early October, WiG e-mailed a list of questions about the center's financial health and Cage's management style to her and to board co-presidents Walker and Susan Haertel. The questions went unanswered.

All of the people interviewed for WiG for this story said Milwaukee needs a viable and engaged LGBT community center. While some gave Cage positive reviews for her management of programs such as the center's Project Q, which serves LGBTQ youth, they lamented that she's failed to develop the center into an asset that contributes to the quality of life for the larger LGBT community.

Pabst said he felt Cage squandered a valuable opportunity to enhance the center's profile when she coordinated its move in November 2010 into its current spacious, loft-style digs at 252 E. Highland Ave. in downtown Milwaukee.

"That would have been a perfect opportunity for the

center's senior leadership to reach out to the community if nothing more than for funding," Pabst said. The new space, he added, could accommodate the addition of cultural and entertainment programming as well as large-scale community events that would bring people together in large numbers.

But Pabst and others said they were disappointed that the anticipated burst of energy and activities that they expected to come with the center's relocation never materialized. If anything, Pabst said, the center seems to have faded further into the background since November 2010, when Cage changed the bylaws to turn the board into a self-perpetuating entity, meaning that center members can no longer elect the board.

At the time, the board had nine members, the minimum number required by its bylaws. It currently has only five.

"I don't hear people talking about the center any more," Pabst said. "It is becoming increasingly a less and less

viable organization. It's simply not the centerpiece that it could be."

The national 2011 Annual LGBT Community Survey included questions about respondents' level of engagement with their local community centers. Among WiG readers, 78 percent said they lived in an area that had such a center. But of those, 75 percent said they had not participated in any activities at their local center in the past 30 days. That number seemed particularly high considering that respondents were consumers of local LGBT media, people who are normally among the most connected to community organizations.

Of those who responded that they had participated in an event at their local center, 15 percent said they had attended an arts or cultural event — the largest percentage of any category. The second largest area of involvement — 7 percent — was for educational or informational events, and the third largest — 6 percent — was for older adult programming.



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Right-leaning media have tried to position the recall as a single-issue effort

RECALL from I ther than Walker's so-called "budget repair bill" by including police and firefighters unions. Even though those functions represent the greatest cost to municipalities, Walker exempted their unions after getting their support in his gubernatorial campaign.

Following the vote, Kasich appeared conciliatory. "I've heard (voters') voices," he said. "I understand their decision, and, frankly, I respect what people have to say in an effort like this. And as a result of that, it requires me to take a deep breath, you know, and to spend some time reflecting on what happened here."

But Walker just "doubled-down as he always does," said Democratic Wisconsin state Sen. Chris Larson, who attended an event at which the governor spoke on Nov. 9. He said Walker dismissed the Ohio results, saying that his policies have been successful and Wisconsinites have embraced them.

Larson and other Democrats scoffed at the governor's bluster. Celebrating the Ohio returns, United Steel Workers president Leo Gerard said the 99 percent stood up and fought back with votes.

"We stood together, public and private sector — union and non-union — to start a new direction and declaration to the extremist politicians that Ohio voters reject their agenda," Gerard said.

The campaign against Issue 2 — a "yes" was a vote for the anti-union law — involved a coalition of Democratic groups, unions and progressive allies, including LGBT organizations such as the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force and Pride at Work. Issue 2 "was an important victory," said Brad Woodhouse of the Democratic National Committee. "Especially because of the millions in Tea Party and special interest money that poured into the state."

Larson and others said the Ohio results were a shot in the arm to the Walker recall effort. Voter turnout in Ohio was the highest for an odd-year election since 1991, showing that progressive voters have re-engaged after sitting out the November 2010 election and allowing right-wing extrem-

ists to take over control of government in several states, including Wisconsin.

Larson said Walker's "unflinching" posture on the Ohio vote would help progressives further.

"If you listen to his tone and how he's talking, he still has the same attitude, the same drive and the same push that he did when he took the Koch brother's (fake phone) call," Larson said. "I think that attitude is the biggest motivator for people. The guy just continues along like opposition doesn't even exist. He's become the biggest organizing tool for the Democratic Party in a generation."

OVERREACH

Right-leaning media, including the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, have attempted to position the recall campaign as a single-issue effort motivated by Walker's elimination of collective bargaining rights for public employees. But the governor's opponents cite his overreach in many areas, all of them aimed at furthering a religious/corporate right-wing agenda at the expense of working- and middle-class Wisconsinites.

Walker's opponents were incensed in mid-November when the GOP put Wisconsin's successful BadgerCare program on the chopping block. Begun by former Republican Gov. Tommy Thompson, the program provides healthcare security for more than three-quarters of a million citizens. Walker and his Republican allies floated a plan to drop 53,000 people from the program.

"Slashing BadgerCare actually increases the cost of private insurance, which will end up footing much of the bill for emergency room visits and other uncompensated care for the newly uninsured and underinsured," warned Robert Kraig, director of Citizen Action of Wisconsin, in an op-ed piece.

Kraig and others have pointed out that Walker's massive cuts to public education and health care have allowed the governor to slash corporate taxes in the state by \$1.6 billion. Walker claims the cuts are part of a strategy to bring new jobs to the state.

But 10 months into Walker's tenure, his record of job creation has lagged far

behind his promises, and the state's unemployment rate has actually risen. Meanwhile, Republicans in Madison have focused legislative energy on unrelated issues, such as concealed carry and defunding Planned Parenthood.

United Wisconsin, the group organizing the Walker recall effort, says its backers are grassroots Wisconsinites who are motivated by the totality of Walker's extremist overreach, not just his assault on union workers. Walker and others have tried to depict United Wisconsin as a front group for unions.

"We know who we are," Kevin Straka, a United Wisconsin founder, countered, in a statement to the La Crosse Tribune. "We have no identity crisis."

While Straka acknowledged his group is working with labor groups and the Democratic Party to recall Walker, he said UW does not answer to them in the same way that Wisconsin Republicans obey marching orders from Karl Rove and the Koch brothers. Rove and David Koch are able to disseminate instructions to GOP leaders at the state level through their American Legislative Exchange Council, which provides them with cookie-cutter laws to introduce in their legislatures in exchange for providing them with massive campaign cash.

CHINS UP

Out state Rep. Mark Pocan, a candidate for the congressional seat being vacated by

Tammy Baldwin as she runs for the U.S. Senate, said the vote in Ohio was "just a sign of what is about to happen all over the country to Republicans who follow the (corporate right) playbook. There is no place in America for right-wing extremist ideals that place politics before people."

Nov. 8 also saw the election of over 50 LGBT candidates nationwide (see page 8). Some of the right-wing defeats were stunning.

In Mississippi, voters rejected the Personhood Amendment, which would have established in the state Constitution that "personhood" begins at the moment of fertilization. Republicans are promoting the same measure in Madison (see page 4).

Opponents of the Mississippi measure again included a coalition of Democratic groups, unions and civil liberties organizations, especially those committed to choice. National Gay and Lesbian Task Force activists campaigned along with the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and Mississippians for Healthy Families.

In Michigan, voters recalled state Rep. Paul Scott, R-Grand Blanc, a close legislative ally of right-wing Gov. Rick Snyder. Scott's recall was led by the Michigan

Education Association, which said his defeat vindicated their complaints that Snyder and Republican majorities in the Legislature ignored the will of the people by enacting cuts to public education, extending the state income tax to some pension income and repealing the state's primary business tax.

"That voters in Michigan threw out one of Snyder's biggest lap dogs was a huge win for public education," said Scot Ross, director of One Wisconsin Now.

In Maine, voters supported a push to reinstate same-day voter registration, a nearly 40-year-old policy repealed by the GOP-dominated Legislature in June. Just before the election, opponents of same-day registration ran ads in more than two dozen newspapers suggesting that a state LGBT civil rights group, Equality Maine, was driving the ballot measure and had a secret, subversive agenda. The ad asked, "Why is this special interest group so interested in repealing Maine election laws?"

Betsy Smith of Equality Maine told the press, "You could tell it was a desperate move on their part to try to confuse the issue or to get people who're against same-sex marriage to oppose voter registration."

In Arizona, voters recalled state Sen. Russell Pearce, the author of the nation's toughest anti-immigration bill. Democrats led the drive to put the recall on the ballot, and Pearce lost to a moder-

ate Republican. The Arizona Republican Party had stood with Pearce through the controversial race, claiming he was the target of a "coordinated attack on legitimate Arizona voters by the Democrat Party in collusion with their Acorn and LaRaza-like community organizers."

Republicans in Wisconsin have introduced a measure similar to Pearce's, but it hasn't garnered enough support to move forward.

In Michigan, Traverse City voters approved Prop. 1, deciding to retain an ordinance protecting LGBT people from discrimination.

But Democrats also lost some issues on Nov. 8:

- In Ohio, voters favored a symbolic referendum against the individual mandate that's central to President Obama's healthcare overhaul. The vote for Issue 3 was 2-1, a wider margin than on Issue 2.

- Yes on Issue 3 was driven by Tea Party leaders and a group called FreedomWorks. But Larson said progressives in Ohio focused little attention on Issue 3. "They directed their attention to Issue 2," he said. "They didn't want to waste it on the healthcare thing, because they knew that measure was not binding."

- Republicans held their majority in Virginia, a vital state in 2012, and won all but one statewide race in Mississippi.

- In Mississippi, voters passed a measure amending the state constitution to require voters to show government-issued photo IDs when they enter polling places. Supporters — the state GOP, the secretary of state and Voter ID PAC — argued that the measure was needed to halt fraud. Opponents, led by the NAACP, argued that the measure was intended to suppress Democratic votes.

But Wisconsin progressives said overall that the results of Nov. 8 showed political traction is on their side. In Madison, the protest singers who've shown up at the Capitol Rotunda for the past 200-plus days showed renewed vigor on Nov. 9.

"There were a lot more of them, and they were a lot louder today," said a legislative aide at the Capitol. "Democrats were walking today with their chins a little higher."



PHOTO: AP/WISCONSIN STATE JOURNAL, STEVE APPS

Julie Wells, a volunteer county coordinator in Jefferson County for United Wisconsin, submits a ceremonial filing of the recall petitions against Gov. Scott Walker and Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch at the Government Accountability Board in Madison on Tuesday, Nov. 15.

{ Editorial }

Two years down and moving forward

When WiG began publishing two years ago, Wisconsin was a very different state. Progressive, pro-equality Democrats had control of both legislative chambers in Madison. Gov. Jim Doyle, an LGBT ally, held the keys to the Governor's Mansion.

But an ongoing economic crisis and a backlash against President Barack Obama – from both the left and the right – brought sweeping political change in November 2010. The change was abrupt and radical – its leaders uncompromising. It left Wisconsin Republicans and Democrats more divided than perhaps at any time in state history.

In light of this change, WiG too is changing.

The movement for LGBT equality stands squarely on the left side of the political divide. Once upon a time there were Republican leaders who saw themselves as part of a GOP tradition that included Abraham Lincoln, Barry Goldwater and Everett Dirksen. Those Republicans embraced an agenda that was libertarian and inclusive, and many of them recognized the connection between their philosophy and fairness for LGBT citizens.

But today's Republican agenda calls for the marginalization of LGBT people. Prominent leaders within the GOP are moving in the direction of creating a right-wing religious government. The vast majority of Wisconsin's GOP leaders either support this goal or fail to condemn it.

Wisconsin's LGBT community cannot fight this militant agenda alone. Some of the nation's most powerful corporate chiefs are behind the radical-right movement.

Fortunately, Wisconsin's LGBT community enjoys strong support from progressive allies who understand the connection between our cause and their own battles to create a more just society. Private and public unions, Planned Parenthood, immigration and environmental groups, Citizen Action, ACLU of Wisconsin and One Wisconsin Now are among the many organizations in the state that lobby and advocate on our behalf. In today's extreme political environment, when so much is at stake for all of us, we need their support and they need ours more than ever.

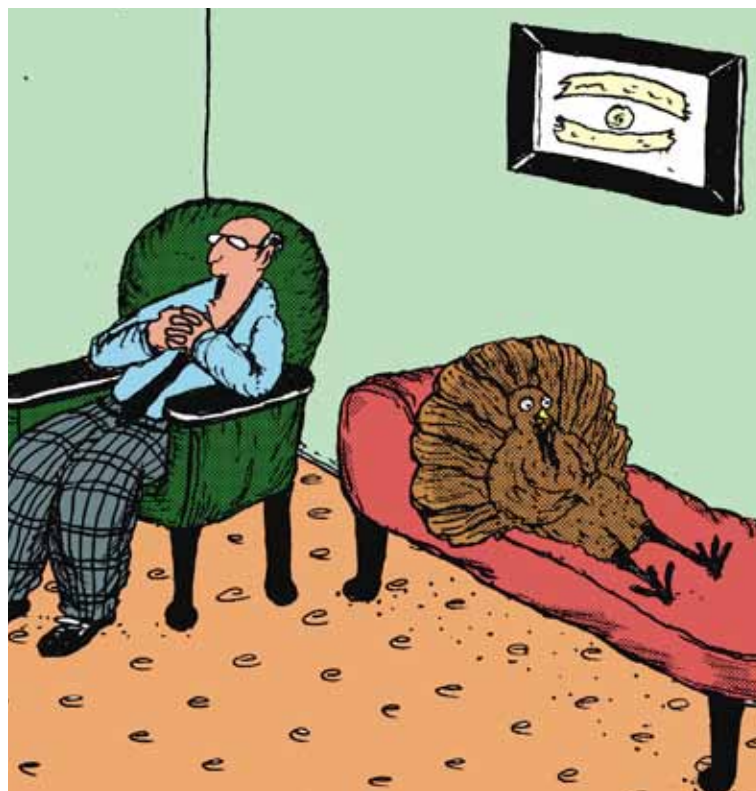
Reflecting today's social and political realities, WiG has broadened its coverage in recent months to reflect the critical interdependency of our struggle with those of other progressive causes. Our goal is to keep LGBT readers and their allies informed about other progressive news in the state while also attracting larger numbers of progressive allies to read WiG and learn about LGBT issues.

We have stepped up efforts to make our entertainment and cultural coverage more comprehensive and insightful – coverage that doesn't merely document Wisconsin's thriving arts scene but enriches readers' appreciation of it.

Meanwhile, we've expanded our circulation by 20 percent and have plans to significantly increase our distribution in the coming months.

As we celebrate our second birthday, we formally commit ourselves to this new direction. At the same time, we'd like to thank the advertisers, distributors and loyal readers who have helped us pay our bills and provided us with so much valuable feedback and encouragement. Your support has humbled, inspired and emboldened us.

We hope to continue to earn your attention.



"Well, it's common for folks to feel a sense of doom in the fall. The shorter days, falling leaves, dark weather can all trigger a case of the blues."

{ Feedback }

APPLETON'S LEADERSHIP CHOSE FAIRNESS

Last night, I was proud to stand with the fair-minded people of Appleton as we defended domestic partner benefits. The large and passionate crowd spilled out into the hallways as community members spoke for almost two and a half hours.

This was the public hearing on the full city budget, so domestic partner benefits for city of Appleton employees was not the only topic of the evening, but it was by far the most discussed.

Regardless of the topic discussed, or the view

expressed about domestic partner benefits, I was struck by the difficult decisions this local community is facing – decisions I know every community is grappling with across our state.

That's why I'm so excited to report that the Appleton Common Council voted against reconsidering the inclusion of domestic partnership benefits for city employees. Their steadfast leadership is a signal that even in tough economic times, it is always the right decision to build a more inclusive workplace and invest in your employees.

I would also like to thank the visionary leader-

ship of Mayor Tim Hanna, Human Resources Director Kathy Neisen, Diversity Coordinator Kathy Flores and Alderpersons Teege Mettelle, Kole Oswald, Christoph Wahl, Cathy Spears, Curt Konetzke, John Robin Hill, Jeff Lutz and Kathy Plank.

And many thanks to all of you who have contacted your alderperson, shown up to Common Council meetings and spoken out for fairness and equality. It is our work in local communities like Appleton that is truly building a fair Wisconsin.

Katie Belanger
executive director
Fair Wisconsin

ON THE RECORD

"Let's spend a little more time leaving everybody alone. These people who are making a big deal out of gay marriage? I don't give a fuck about who wants to get married to anybody else! Why not?! We're making a big deal out of things we shouldn't be making a deal out of. ... They go on and on with all this bullshit about 'sanctity' – don't give me that sanctity crap! Just give everybody the chance to have the life they want."

– CLINT EASTWOOD expressing support for same-sex marriage in a recent interview with GQ magazine.

"Dan Savage is a transphobe! ... He's a racist and misogynist and a rape-apologist, too!"

– OVERHEARD STATEMENT FROM ACTIVISTS who glitterbombed columnist Dan Savage during an appearance at the University of Oregon on Nov. 1.

"The scientific evidence of how same-sex attraction most likely may be created provides a credible basis for a spiritual explanation that indicts the devil."

– DANIEL AVILA, an associate director for policy and research for the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, writing in an opinion column for the Pilot, the nation's oldest Roman Catholic newspaper. The paper later retracted the column, removing it from its website.

"Don't nitpick. Don't try to Jew them down."

– STATE REP. LARRY TAYLOR, chairman of the Texas House's Republican caucus, in a speech lambasting the state's insurance companies for nickel and diming hurricane victims.

"Being asked to help put on the Oscar show was the proudest moment of my career. But as painful as this may be for me, it would be worse if my association with the show were to be a distraction from the academy and the high ideals it represents."

– PRODUCER BRETT RATNER, who resigned as producer of the Academy Award broadcast after saying "rehearsing is for fags" to an audience following a screening of his new film "Tower Heist."

"It's hard, like living the life of a professional athlete and being gay is incredibly hard. It's like carrying around a secret, you know, and carrying around luggage and just never being allowed to be yourself."

– DAVID TESTO, former professional Montreal soccer star, coming out as gay in a radio interview.

"She sat down and looked at me, and her first question was, 'Are you a lesbian?' Her second question to me was, 'Have you asked God into your heart? Have you been saved by Jesus Christ?' This is when I realized that I was no longer a United States veteran in her eyes."

– FORMER MARINE LANCE CORPORAL ESTHER GARATIE describing her experience with a nurse at the Dallas VA Medical Center on Oct. 12. Garatie had gone to the center seeking treatment for severe depression and possible post-traumatic stress disorder. More than 10,000 people have signed a Change.org petition demanding that the nurse be investigated.

Walker's recall starts now

After 11 months of one extreme policy after the other, Wisconsin finally get their opportunity to start the recall process against Gov. Scott Walker. The Democratic Party of Wisconsin, United Wisconsin and other grassroots groups launched the recall process on Nov. 15 and fanned out across the entire state with recall stations in every county.

For the effort to move forward, they need to obtain at least 540,000 valid signatures. But organizers have set their goal at 650,000-700,000, which would provide some padding if some signatures are invalid.

This effort is every bit as necessary as it is unprecedented. Walker and his administration have shepherded just about every radical right wing idea through the Legislature since taking office. The assault on the rights of working people through the elimination of

Opinion
CORY LIEBMANN

collective bargaining rights garnered much of the attention earlier this year, but the list of destructive policies goes much further.

Wisconsin has always taken pride in its education system. Walker cut what amounts to \$1.6 billion from public education over the current biennium. He cut more from education than any other governor in the country.

The Department of Public Instruction recently published a survey showing that Walker's drastic cuts forced schools to lay off teachers and increase class size. The UW system has been cut by \$250 million and technical colleges have lost \$70 million. How will Wisconsinites compete for jobs in a sophisticated international employment

market without adequate educational preparation?

The Walker administration also detailed a plan to cut Medicaid by over \$500 million, which could throw 65,000 Wisconsinites off safety-net health care programs. Over half of the losers will likely be children. Walker, of course, has enjoyed taxpayer-financed health coverage for most of his adult life.

Walker vowed during the 2010 campaign to create 250,000 new jobs. But now his administration has admitted that he will fail to deliver on that promise. While doling out tax cuts to the wealthy and special interest supporters, Wisconsin has lost jobs. In fact, the state is in a continued downward cycle of job loss even while the nation, albeit modestly, has added jobs.

The reason is Walker and his rubber-stamp Legislature have focused on just about everything but jobs. During their latest so-called special

session on jobs, they failed to pass a single jobs-related bill. Instead they wasted time on requiring abstinence education in schools, attacking women's right to choose and passing the legislative wish list of radical groups like the National Rifle Association. The special session focused on a right-wing social agenda rather than job creation.

Even though Walker has only been in office for 11 months, the list of damaging actions by his administration is far too long for one column. That's why the unprecedented action of recalling him is not only justified but absolutely necessary.

To successfully accomplish this critical goal, everyone's participation is needed. You can find out where to sign a recall petition by visiting wisdems.org/recallhq or united-wisconsin.com. After you've signed the recall petition, please consider volunteering your time to collect more signatures.

Building strong LGBT groups

Three major LGBT organizations in Milwaukee are undergoing leadership changes right now. Circumstances leading to the need for new directors vary in each case. Instead of speculating on what's gone right or wrong – all organizations face transitions from time to time – I'd rather address more broadly strategies for strengthening these important institutions so they are here to serve us for decades to come.

Many nonprofit organizations, not just LGBT groups, are going through big transitions, primarily because of the contraction of funding sources. Nonprofits depend on government and foundation grants and corporate contributions and sponsorships to finance their services. The economic collapse has dramatically reduced charitable giving by foundations and businesses and led to huge government budget cuts.

One method some nonprofits are choosing to strengthen their financial position and ensure continuation of services is to merge with groups that have simi-

Opinion
JAMAKAYA

around, organizations need to hire professional fundraisers with the expertise to implement both tried-and-true and innovative methods of raising money from more diverse funding sources. This is easier said than done, as professional fundraisers cost money, which creates a catch-22 for organizations with few resources.

But the development arena has become specialized and is moving rapidly into digital and social networking media. Nonprofit leaders must recognize it as an essential investment. Effective fundraising is every nonprofit's engine for growth.

A fully engaged board of directors, membership base and volunteer corps are also critical to the success of any organization's mission. Boards need to have a balance of skill sets – in law, finance, human resources – to ensure proper governance. Ideally, board candidates should be drawn from currently active members or donors, "known" entities whose commitment is recognized by all. They should never be merely personal friends

and rubber stamps for the executive director, although that is often the case.

Organizations that lose touch with their membership base or reduce their input into decision-making can drift away from their goals, leaving them with a weakened foundation in times of crisis. The failure to engage volunteers in tasks that match their skills and to reward them for their valuable labor is another opportunity lost. Continual cultivation of ideas and energy from these bases of support is necessary to build strength and renewal.

Finally, I think LGBT organizations lose steam when they forget the element of advocacy. Funders prefer to underwrite direct services, and confusion about the legal restrictions on nonprofits in terms of advocacy makes them shy away from it. In fact, the law limits political involvement, not issue advocacy, so groups can speak out and organize around all sorts of issues. Services help meet our community's needs. Advocacy fires up our base and helps us change the world.

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Giving thanks, honoring a pioneer's memory

Religion

ANDREW WARNER

Thanksgiving celebrates the Pilgrims' first mythical feast. As a pastor of a church named after the Pilgrims' colony – Plymouth – Thanksgiving conjures many images. But the most vivid this year is of a visit my partner Jay and I made to see Peter Gomes at his cottage in Plymouth, Mass.

Peter died this past year, after a long and distinguished career serving as preacher at Harvard University's Memorial Chapel. Or, as he would prefer to express it, serving as the Plummer Professor of Christian Morals.

One day in his office it came up that I was the son of a plumber. At first he thought I meant one of the Plummers who endowed his professorship.

"Not those plumbers," I said. Peter went on to share the story of his Plummers. They were wealthy Boston Brahmins who made their money in the slave trade. Their morality was not his Christian morality, and he clearly enjoyed the irony of serving as an African-American gay man in a professorship given by folks who'd have disapproved of him on both counts.

What always drew me to Peter was that wonderful grace he brought to living with contradictions.

THANKSGIVING POTLUCK

The 10th annual community Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner – hosted by Equality Wisconsin, Lesbian Alliance, Milwaukee Metropolitan Community Church, Galano Club, SAGE/Milwaukee and Plymouth United Church of Christ – will be held Nov. 26 at Plymouth Church, 2717 E. Hampshire.

Doors open at 4:30 p.m.; dinner is served at 5:30 p.m. People whose last names begin with A through J should bring a side dish; K-M should bring an appetizer; N-T should bring a salad and U-Z should bring a dessert.

He once said: "(My mother) always told me that I must invent my own reality. Reality will not conform to you. You must invent your own and then conform to it. So I did. I am an authentic and an original."

"I will not allow myself to be known simply as an African American, no more than I would allow myself to

be known as gay or conservative. They are all bits and pieces of a work in progress. I am a child of God."

He was a child of God with all his contradictions, and his life helped me imagine how I could be my own original.

The inspiration he gave was more than spiritual. While some people look to

Martha Stewart for decorating advice and example, I looked to Peter.

Once Jay and I visited and waited in the living room of his Plymouth cottage while he got ready for a tour of the old town. Every wall, every surface held some picture, painting or plate. An enormous cathedral-styled bird cage overwhelmed the room.

Now every time I hang something new on the walls of our home, Jay gets worried that we're slipping closer and closer toward Peter's over-the-top decor.

Peter took a similar approach to his clothing: one night he held a dinner party and greeted us wearing a formal black tux with a loud Harvard crimson cummerbund and matching silk slip-

pers. A tux and red slippers – I can only dream of pulling that off.

Peter certainly was an original. On Thanksgiving we can follow his advice: Invent your own reality and conform to it.

Some will gather for Thanksgiving dinner with family who do not know their sexual orientation. Is this the year to come out?

Others put up with family who do not fully accept them. Is this the year to create change?

And still others have invented their own reality of an inclusive family of friends and relations. Is this the year to widen your table to include someone who feels left out?

This Thanksgiving, be an original.

OPEN & AFFIRMING CONGREGATIONS

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All Saints' Cathedral (Episcopal), 818 E. Juneau Ave., 53202, 414-271-7719, www.ascathedral.org

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

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

Cross Lutheran Church, 1821 N. 16th St., 53205, 414-344-1746, www.crosslutheranmilwaukee.org

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

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

Grace Lutheran Church (ELCA), 303 Green Bay Rd., Thiensville, 53092, 262-242-1174, www.grace53092.org

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

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

Milwaukee Friends Meeting (Quakers), 3224 N. Gordon Place, 53212, 414-263-2111, www.milwaukeequakers.org

Mt. Zion Lutheran Church, 12012 W. North Ave., Wauwatosa 53226, 414-258-0456, www.mtzionlutheran.org

Our Savior's Lutheran Church, 3022 W. Wisconsin Ave., 53208, 414-342-5252, www.oslcmilw.org

Plymouth Church, 2717 E. Hampshire Ave., 53211, 414-964-1513, www.plymouth-church.org

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 2618 N. Hackett Ave., 53211, 414-962-0500, www.stmarksmilwaukee.org

St. James Episcopal Church, 833 W. Wisconsin Ave., 53233, 414-964-1513, www.stjamesmilwaukee.org

Tippecanoe Church PCUSA-Living Waters Contemplative Life Center, 125 W. Saveland Ave., Bay View, 53207, 414-481-4680, www.tippechurch.org

Underwood Memorial Baptist Church, 1916 Wauwatosa Ave., Wauwatosa 53213, www.underwoodchurch.org

Unitarian Church North, 13800 N. Port Washington Rd., 53097, 262-375-3890, www.ucnorth.org

Unitarian Universalist Church West, 13001 W. North Ave., Brookfield, WI 53005, 262-782-3535 ext. 12, <http://uucw.org>

Universal Anglican Church – Christ Enlight, Marion Center for Nonprofits, 3195 S. Superior St., 53207, 414-793-4828, www.uacmilwaukee.org

Village Church, 130 E. Juneau Ave., 53202, 414-273-7617, villagechurchmilwaukee.org

Wauwatosa Presbyterian Church, 2366 N. 80th St., Wauwatosa, 53213, 414-774-5005, www.tosapres.com

MADISON

Advent Lutheran Church ELCA, 7118 Old Sauk Rd., 53717, 608-836-1455, www.madisonchristiancommunity.org

Beth'El Evangelical Lutheran Church, 101 Bethel Drive, P.O. Box 70, Poynette, WI 53955-0070

Community of Hope UCC, 7118 Old Sauk Rd., 53717, 608-836-1455, www.madisonchristiancommunity.org

First United Methodist Church, 203 Wisconsin Ave., 53703-2105, 608-256-9061, www.wisconsinumc.org/madison-firstumc/

James Reeb Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 2146 E. Johnson St., 53704, 608-242-8887, www.jrucc.org

Plymouth Congregational UCC, 2401 Atwood Ave., 53704, 608-249-1537, www.pccucc.org

GREEN BAY

Angels of Hope MCC, P.O. Box 672, Green Bay, 54305, 920-983-7452, www.aohmcc.org, aohchurch@netnet.net

Hope United Church of Christ, 141 S. 12th Ave., Sturgeon Bay,

54235, 920-743-2701, www.hopechurchdc.org, hopeucc@hopechurchdc.org

Union Congregational United Church of Christ, 716 S. Madison St., 54301-3609, 920-437-9266, www.unionucc.com, office@unionucc.com

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Fox Valley UU Fellowship, 2600 Philip Lane, Appleton, 54915, 920-731-0849, www.fvuuf.org

SS Cyril and Methodius United Independent Catholic Church, 3499 Oakridge Road, Neenah, 54956, 920-809-3969, www.uicchurch.homestead.com, sscyrilandmethodius@yahoo.com

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

Olympia Brown Unitarian Universalist Church, 625 College Ave., 53403, 262-634-0659, www.obuuc.org, mail@obuuc.org

OTHER

First Christian Church, 1909 Highland Ave., Janesville, 53548, 608-752-3847, www.fcjanesville.org

First Congregational UCC, 504 Washington Ave., Sauk City, 53583, 608-643-8387, firstucc@merr.com

Unitarian Universalist Church of the Lakes, 319 N. Broad St., Elkhorn, 53121, 262-723-7440, www.uulakes.org

Unitarian Universalist Congregation, 421 S. Farwell St., Eau Claire, 54701, 715-834-0690, www.uueauclaire.com

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Poll finds furry pals on America's holiday shopping list



By Sue Manning

AP writer

Just over half of American pet owners will buy gifts for their pets this holiday season, and they'll spend an average of \$46 on their animals, with toys and treats

topping the list, according to a new AP-Petside.com poll.

Sixty-eight percent of pets getting gifts can look forward to a toy, 45 percent to food or another treat, 8 percent new bedding, 6

percent clothing, 3 percent a leash, collar or harness and 3 percent new grooming products, the poll showed. (Some pets will get more than one gift.)

"Christmas is about the pets," said Gayla McCarthy,

58, of Kekaha, Hawaii, whose Australian shepherd, Echo, will find a toy under the tree. McCarthy even got a shirt for her husband as a gift to him from the dog, and she'll be giving collapsible bowls that she ordered online to all

their friends' dogs.

Although the average budget for pet gifts among those surveyed was \$46, 72 percent of those polled said they'd spend \$30 or less. Those who bought gifts for their pets last year said they spent \$41 on average.

Overall, 51 percent of those polled this year said they would buy holiday gifts for their pets, a figure that's been relatively stable in the last few AP-Petside.com polls. It was 53 percent last year, 52 percent in 2009 and 43 percent in 2008.

Income does matter. Those making \$50,000 or more say they plan to spend an average \$57 on their pets. Those making under \$50,000 say it will be \$29.

Major pet retailers have been taking part in the Black Friday and Cyber Monday frenzy for a few years. Petco Animal Supplies Inc. plans a 72-hour "Black Friday Weekend Blowout," said Greg Seremetis, vice president of marketing.

Products for both pets and pet owners will be available, he said. "Including pets in holiday gift-giving has been a growing trend in the last few years. More and more pets are being treated as family members and being included in holiday traditions, including having a gift waiting for them under the tree," he said.

PetSmart Inc. plans to open stores at 7 a.m. on Black Friday, followed by a "Countdown to Christmas" sale beginning on Dec. 16, said spokeswoman Stephanie Foster.

Online retailer Foster & Smith Inc. plans a live, streaming, four-hour (11 a.m. - 3 p.m. EST) webcast full of sales and giveaways on Black Friday and Cyber Monday, spokesman Gordon Magee said. "As far as we know, with the exception of QVC ... no other retailer has done a live broadcast like this on Black Friday and Cyber Monday," Magee said. "We are going to give it a go."

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Focus is a 3-month-old domestic shorthair kitten.

TIP OF THE WEEK

One of the biggest barriers to animal adoption can be landlord restrictions. If you're trying to find a rental property that allows animals, but aren't having any luck, leave a message on our Pet Friendly Housing Line at 414-431-6109. A responder will mail you a list of animal friendly rentals in your area, along with some tips for finding additional properties on your own.

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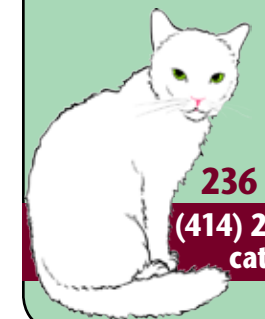
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NORMAN MOSES, PHOTO BY MARK FROHNA

Wisconsin Gazette .com

WIGOUT!

WISCONSIN GAZETTE ENTERTAINMENT

Get ready for a Lady Gaga holiday season

Lady Gaga is set to star in a 90-minute Thanksgiving TV special in prime time.

Airing on ABC on Nov. 24, "A Very Gaga Thanksgiving," directed by Our Lady of Gaga herself, features the beloved LGBT ally performing eight musical numbers surrounded by her family members and closest friends. Songs include such Gaga hits as "You and I" and "The Edge of Glory," as well as the seasonal standard "White Christmas." Tony Bennett will be on hand to duet with La Gaga on "The Lady is a Tramp."

The 25-year-old pop icon also will offer viewers a glimpse into her private life. She'll visit her alma mater, Convent of the Sacred Heart Catholic School, with Katie Couric to talk about her childhood, her family and how her background has inspired her music and politics.

Other notable alumnae of Sacred Heart are Paris Hilton and Caroline Kennedy.

"We all know Lady Gaga is a phenomenon," Couric said in a press statement. "This is a chance to see more of who she is beneath the wild

costumes and staged musical numbers. ... Lady Gaga as a high school student still bruised by being excluded from the party, Lady Gaga as a devoted daughter and caring sister, Lady Gaga as a 25-year-old woman embracing fame and fortune that seemed to come overnight. She will impress you, delight you and surprise you."

Perhaps one of the biggest surprises the TV special has in store for viewers is the sight of Gaga, whose real name is Stefania Gabriella Germanotta, in the kitchen. Her best-known previous outing with groceries was wearing a dress made of raw meat to the VMA awards last year. But on Thanksgiving, she'll whip up an actual meal, including deep-fried turkey and waffles. Chef Art Smith will help prepare her unique Thanksgiving menu.

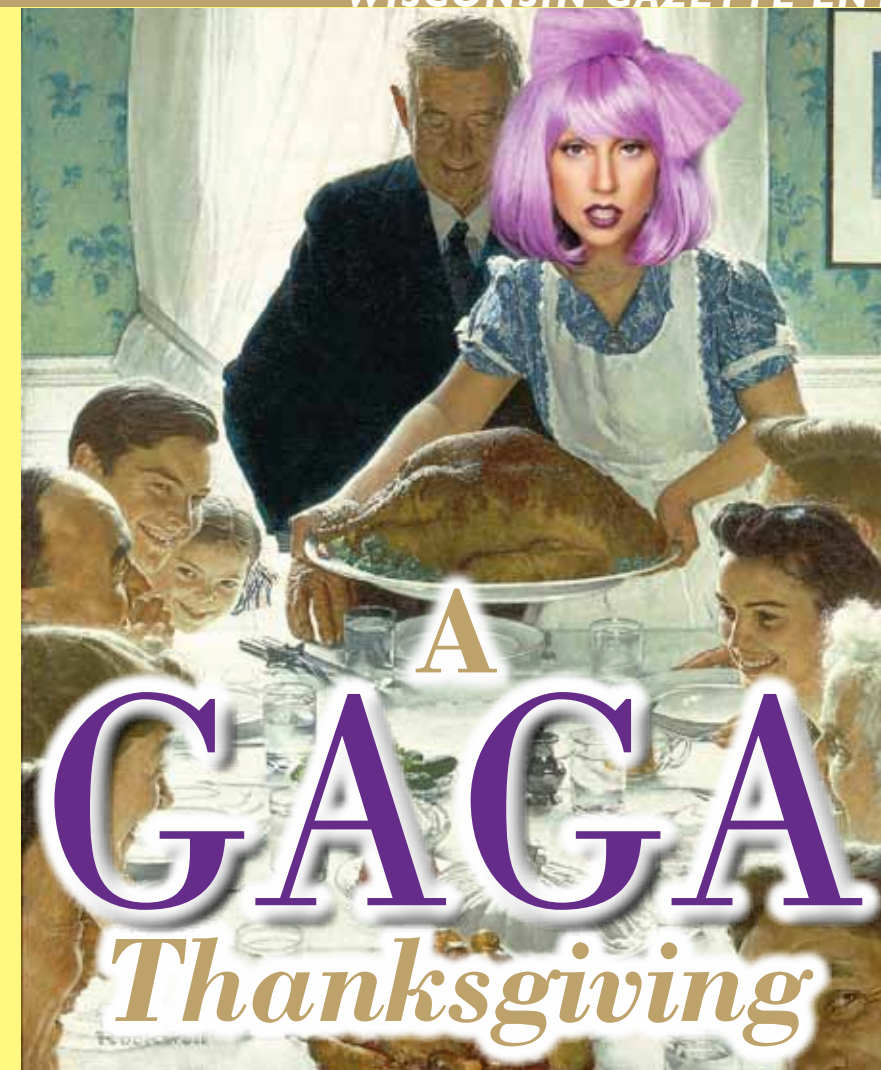
This isn't the first time Lady Gaga has been the subject of a TV special. Earlier this year, the CW aired "Gaga by Gaultier," in which she was interviewed by fashion designer Jean Paul Gaultier. The network used the interview to launch its fall season.

And television isn't the only medium where Lady Gaga will have a major presence this holiday season. Shoppers entering the flagship Barneys New York store during the holidays will go through the mouth of a giant monsterlike creature

in the spirit of Lady Gaga, as the retailer transforms one of its entrances leading to Gaga's Workshop.

The store's famous Madison Avenue windows, meanwhile, will be a collage of music, fashion, astrology and the elements.

Barneys recently released the details about its previously announced partnership with the superstar. She and her team will decorate and fill the entire fifth floor with products, totaling 5,550 square feet. There will be eight mini-stores inside



for candy, toys, apparel and accessories, holiday collectables and a media library. The "boudoir" area, featuring candles and cosmetics, will mimic a giant wig, and the jewelry shop will be carved from a spider.

The opening is planned for just before midnight on Nov. 21.

In other Gaga news, the star announced last month that she's launching the Born This Way Foundation, a non-profit focusing on "issues like self-confidence, well-being, anti-bullying, mentoring, and career development." The MacArthur Foundation and Harvard University will participate in the project.

The way in which the foundation will work is unclear, but it is currently signing up members on the Web at www.bornthisway-foundation.org. Visitors who provide their e-mail addresses are taken to a screen that shares the following message: "You have just taken the first step towards building a brave new world. As one of the early adapters of our movement, you are a leader in creating a world where humanity is embraced, individuals are empowered, and intolerance is eliminated. This is just the first step in our efforts, and we cannot do this alone. We are nothing without our supporters, like you."

Visitors are also asked to share the sign-up site via Facebook and Twitter.

- from staff and wire reports



Richard Halverson, Robert Spencer & Daniel Mooney; Photo by Bill Finn

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SIMON SAYS

Photographer's work merges art, documentary

By Debra Brehmer

Contributing writer

The photography world is generally divided between artist photographers and the lower class of documentarians. Seldom do their paths cross.

But Taryn Simon (who holds a degree in environmental science) has not only managed to merge the fields but also has achieved international acclaim, even while her work remains essentially that of a journalist.

Simon lives in New York City and is married to a filmmaker (Gwyneth Patrow's brother). She is represented by Gagosian Gallery in NYC and currently has a show of new work at the Tate Modern in London.

Three of her major projects are on view at the Milwaukee Art Museum, through Jan. 1. The show was organized by curator Lisa Hostetler, with the Helsinki Art Museum and the Moscow Multimedia Art Museum.

Perhaps what allows Simon's projects to drift into the art world is her heightened awareness of how the photograph is the perfect vehicle for examining subjects that share a complicated relationship with the real or the true. Distortions of desire and meaning, misread information, the struggle to interpret "evidence" arise from living in a complex and desensitized world.

Photography, with its split personality (both real and

not real), can be a potent tool when put in the service of examining topics with similarly elusive moral grounds. It's like a great liar sparring with another great liar. What we get in the end is theater, a kind of framing and staging of the struggle toward truth and knowing.

Simon allows both the subjective (personal view) and the seeming blunt reality or data to co-mingle actively.

But no matter how big and pretty, no matter how well-lit and color-saturated, Simon's work tilts to the conventional. It is straightforward, illustrational, indexical and project driven. The images require expository text to keep them afloat. This is not a bad thing. It is just the nature of the work.

Each of the projects on view started out as a book. Even while occupying an enormous space in MAM's east galleries, the serial history of the page and packaging stays paramount. While the three projects fully represent their own troubling worlds, they share the sense of an insistent looking, prodding, wanting to see and know.

"Contraband" features more than 1,000 six-inch by six-inch images of forbidden things taken from airline passengers over a four-day stretch at JFK airport. They range from the predictable — weapons, drugs and vegetables — to odd materials such as cow dung toothpaste and deer blood.



PHOTO: MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM

Taryn Simon's photograph shows live HIV growing in a laboratory at Harvard Medical School.

This project is interesting for the diversity of things seized. We sense the vast play of once-distant cultures and belief systems meeting in an airplane in the sky: wants, needs, dreams all laid out in Simon's rows of small square, elegant specimen pictures. Even in the 21st century, there's traffic in rituals and magic (deer penis) as well as commercial objects of status and power, such as fake Louis Vuitton handbags and Viagra.

Encasing the images in rows of narrow rectangular plexiglass boxes forces us to read them as abstracted sentences, a continuous move-

ment of hidden things, passing across borders, time and space.

The second body of work, "An American Index of the Hidden and Unfamiliar," is a series of 37-inch by 44-inch chromogenic prints from 2007 showing places and things to which we do not normally have visual access: the CIA's art collection, an exploding warhead test area, a great white shark in captivity, a marijuana crop research grow room, etc.

The photographs are elegant. Similarly to the contraband images, Simon heightens the sealed off nature of these

places. The camera peers in and consciously composes an image that serves as a meditation on the oddness of the enterprise.

A cryopreservation unit, for example, becomes an almost abstract composition of grays. We would not know a body was being frozen in this device without the text. The picture elevates the poetry and hope of the endeavor by pairing big concepts of human myth and desire within the equally strange, cold clinical language of technology.

Likewise, when Simon photographs a vial of active

HIV, she presents it as both fact and mystery. Here is this deadly potent human plague held in what looks like a tacky plastic bottle. Simon suspends this paradox in front of us. The ironic looms large in all of her work.

Her third project, "The Innocents," from 2002, holds the greatest emotional pull and the images are the most captivating. Large-scale prints (48 inch by 62 inch) are fused behind glass. Each one tells the story of a person who was wrongly committed of a violent crime and served a lengthy prison sentence before being exonerated. Simon photographs these maligned individuals at the scenes of their arrest or the site of the crime.

The portraits are fully staged and lit to enhance the disjuncture between the individual and the place that has now become so wrongly central in their lives. There is both a slick commercial beauty and sadness in the pictures as each testifies to a malfunctioning legal system and the subsequent human toll. We see that these people will never fully recover from the mistake of their prison sentence.

Again, Simon uses the photograph to reveal something normally not accessible. Like her other bodies of work, these images are both true and false. They hold incomprehensible yet stubborn facts created by a world of contradictions.

Artwatch
DEBRA BREHMER

Dec. 2 brings the city a new round of art openings, even if it is not gallery night.

The Marshall (arts) Building in the Third Ward on the corner of Water and

Buffalo Streets will host an open house in conjunction with Christmas in the Ward.

The Coalition of Photographic Arts, CoPA, will launch its **5th Annual Midwest Juried Exhibition** from 5 to 9 p.m. The show runs through Jan. 21, 2012, at Walker's Point Center for the Arts.

This is an annual oppor-

tunity for CoPA members as well as photographers in Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota and Iowa to exhibit their work. It is also an opportunity for viewers to see a huge cross-section of photo-based projects. This year's juror was Catherine Edelman, of Catherine Edelman Gallery in Chicago.

Another photo-related

opportunity is presented by Portrait Society Gallery, 207 E. Buffalo St., in the Third Ward. Current and former Wisconsin residents are invited to submit photo-based books to **BS @ PS: Book Show at Portrait Society**, a competition and exhibition. The deadline for entries is Jan. 31.

The exhibition takes place

in March and April 2012. For additional information see the project web site at bsatps.wordpress.com.

Meanwhile, it's your last chance to see the current Nohl award winners at inova/Kenilworth, 2155 N. Prospect Ave. The show closes Dec. 4. Featured are the seven **Mary L. Nohl Fellowship** winners chosen from 136 applicants.

They are film and videographer Brent Coughenour; community art programmer Paul Druecke; mixed-media painter, printmaker and sculptor Waldek Dynerman; filmmaker Sarah Buccheri; sound and experimental music artist Neil Gravander; sculptor Ashley Morgan; and documentary filmmaker Chris James Thompson.

SPOTLIGHTING THE BEST ON AREA STAGES

WIGOUT STAGE GAZE

EDITED AND COMPILED BY GREGG SHAPIRO

"The Nerd," a farce by Larry Shue, is at Soulstice Theatre, 3770 S. Pennsylvania, Ste. 2, in St. Francis, through Nov. 19.

Forward Theater presents "The Farnsworth Invention" at Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison, through Nov. 20. By playwright and screenwriter Aaron Sorkin, the play is about the invention of television. Call 608-258-4141.

Carte Blanche Studios Theatre, 1024 S. Fifth, presents the Milwaukee premiere of the "hit" musical "Reefer Madness! The Musical" through Nov. 20. Call 262-716-4689.

"Million Dollar Quartet" continues at Marcus Center For the Performing Arts in Milwaukee through Nov. 20. The Tony Award-winning jukebox musical is about the historic night that Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash, Carl Perkins and Jerry Lee Lewis gathered together at Sun Studios in Memphis. Call 414-273-2787.

Cameron Mackintosh's 25th anniversary production of "Les Miserables" is at Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, 400 W. College Ave. in Appleton, through Nov. 20. The beloved musical by Boublil and Schönberg is based on the novel by Victor Hugo. Call 920-730-3760.



"Les Miserables"

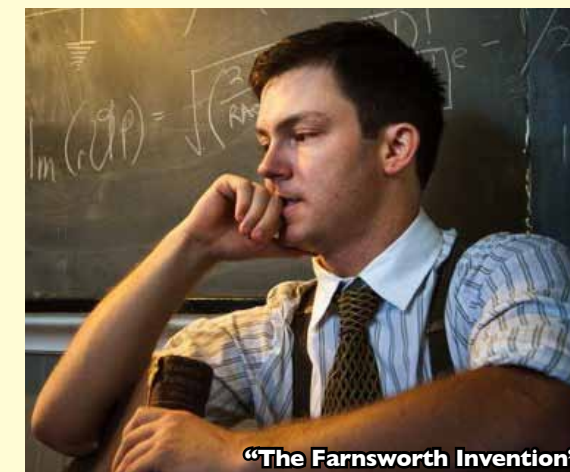
"The Gift of the Magi" returns to American Players Theatre, 5950 Golf Course Road in Spring Green, Nov. 20-Dec. 18. The original musical based on O. Henry's classic tale of love and generosity plays in APT's intimate, indoor Touchstone Theatre. Call 608-588-2361.

Boulevard Theatre, 2252 S. Kinnickinnic, presents "The Importance Of Being Earnest" through Dec.

3. Mark Bucher directs this modern-dress interpretation of Oscar Wilde's classic. Call 414-744-5747 or visit www.boulevardtheatre.com.

"Bat Boy: The Musical" is at Hemsley Theatre, 821 University in Madison, through Dec. 10. Molly Richards directs this 2001 musical, with story and

book by Keythe Farley and Brian Flemming and music and lyrics by Laurence O'Keefe. Call 608-265-ARTS (2787).



"The Farnsworth Invention"

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre presents Tom Stoppard's "Heroes" at Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway, Nov. 23-Dec. 18. The production features Milwaukee theatre veterans Richard Halverson, Daniel Mooney and Robert Spencer, in the Studio Theatre. Call 414-291-7800.

Skylight Opera Theatre presents "The Music Man" in the Cabot Theatre at Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway, Nov. 18-Dec. 18. Call 414-291-7800.

Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison, presents "Guys On Ice" Nov. 29-Dec. 18. Produced and presented by Door County's famed American Folklore Theatre, the Wisconsin-originated-and-set musical runs in the Playhouse. Call 608-258-4141.

For the dog lover in all of us, Next Act Theatre, 255 S. Water, presents "Sylvia" through Dec. 18. A. R. Gurney's play is about the titular Central Park stray and the impact she has on her adopters' marriage. Call 414-278-0765 or visit www.nextact.org.

"A Kodachrome Christmas" is at Marcus Center for the Performing Arts Nov. 18-Dec. 31. This treat from Pat Hazell stars John McGovern as Earlene Hoople. Call 414-273-2787.



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Boulevard's stripped-down Wilde is earnest fun

Theater

MICHAEL MUCKIAN

When a play is dependent on the cleverness of its language, does it help or hinder the audience's understanding to clothe the production in its original visual context?

Boulevard Theatre's Mark Bucher is betting that the crackling dialogue and ironic language inversions of Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" will excel on their own merits. To that end, the tiny Bay View troupe has stripped down the two-and-one-half-hour comedy of ill manners to its essence, presenting characters in contemporary dress and dropped into a minimalist setting.

Bucher calls it "naked wit — full-frontal cleverness unadorned by sets and costumes." It's an economical approach for the company that, for the most part, works for the audience.

Wilde's "trivial comedy for serious people," as the author

referred to it, premiered Feb. 14, 1895, at London's St. James Theatre. The gay author was then at the height of his fame. The high farce focuses on two protagonists who take on false identities to escape their social obligations. They both assume the name "Earnest" at different times, which leads to mistaken identities, one of the elements of humor driving the narrative.

Wilde at the time was criticized for writing a play with no redeeming social message, contrary to the style popular in his day. However, the apparent lack of message is in itself commentary on Victorian mores. Wilde's subtle skewering of society's elite through absurd humor may have had audiences laughing at themselves, as well as taking an inventory of their own social behaviors.

Bucher's version follows that same thread, presenting the characters of Jack Worthing (David Matthew Bohn) and Algernon (Kyle Queenan) as self-involved, socially irresponsible young knaves who create false friends and fake obligations



PHOTO: BOULEVARD THEATRE
From "The Importance of Being Earnest."

to avoid their social duties. They alternately assume the name "Earnest" in part to woo socially demanding Gwendolyn (Tess Cinpinski), daughter of the formidable Lady Bracknell (Margaret Casey), and naïve, empty-headed Cecily (Meagan Kaminsky), Jack Worthing's young ward.

The cast largely hits its marks, with Bohn and Queenan blathering through Wilde's lengthy dialogue like sharp knives through a stale cucumber sandwich. In

logue delivery and a little more affect in the blocking and movement would have given the play's silly story more wit and a sharper point, both of which Wilde would have appreciated.

But that's not to say the Nov. 12 audience and actors didn't have fun. The cast delivered with the right level of energy, including Clarence Aumend as the butler Lane, Mary Buchel as prim Miss Prism and a hilarious David Ferrie as the salacious Canon Chasuble. Boulevard's up-close-and-personal setting brought actors and audience members together for maximum effect.

"Earnest," which made Wilde even more popular than he already had been, also marked the end of his career. An ongoing feud with the Marquess of Queensbury (the father of Lord Alfred Douglas, with whom Wilde was alleged to be having an affair) came to a climax in court. Wilde was sentenced to two years hard labor for "gross indecency."

The experience, which

yielded the treatise "De Profundis" and the poem "The Ballad of Reading Gaol," broke the Irish author physically and spiritually. In 1900, five years after the premier of his greatest work, Wilde died destitute in Paris.

Still, Wilde lives on through his often revived works, which include social satires like "Lady Windemere's Fan," "A Woman of No Importance" and "An Ideal Husband." If nothing else, count Boulevard Theatre's production as another homage — and a good one, too — to one of literature's great social satirists.

Unfortunately, there aren't that many of them around anymore.

ON STAGE

Boulevard Theatre's production of Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest" runs through Dec. 3. For details and tickets, call 414-744-5757 or go to www.boulevardtheatre.com.



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Edgar Degas, *Woman in a Tub*, ca. 1883 (detail). London, Tate. Bequeathed by Mrs. A.F. Kessler 1983. Photo by © Tate, London, 2011.

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Wisconsin's top fruit comes out for the holidays

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

As America's foremost gustatory holiday, Thanksgiving brings with it expectations of special celebratory foods. Topping the list is — or should be — the lowly cranberry. Even if we grew up staring with morbid curiosity as our parents gobbled those quivering, blood red, gelatinous cylinders from cans onto plates, we've gradually learned to appreciate this strange fruit.

In Wisconsin, the cranberry holds special stature. In fact, it's the state's top fruit crop. We Badgers produce nearly 60 percent of all the cranberries grown in the United States, surpassing the output from runners-up Massachusetts, New Jersey, Oregon and Washington combined.

In 2004, the cranberry was named the state fruit, and the 2011 yield is expected to surpass 430 million pounds, or 26 cranberries for every man, woman and child on the planet, according to the Wisconsin State Cranberry Growers Association, based in Wisconsin Rapids.

"Wisconsin has an abundance of the right combination of conditions you need to grow cranberries," says Tom Lochner, WSCGA's executive director. "We have plentiful water, the right soil and weather conditions and a tradition of growing and cultivating cranberries."

Scientifically speaking, cranberries are produced by a group of evergreen dwarf shrubs of the genus "oxycoccus." While that might sound like a social disease, it's actually a relative of the blueberry. Cranberries grow on low trailing vines and favor sandy, acidic soil. The plant's bright pink flower and stem configuration was thought by early North American settlers to resemble the head and neck of a Sandhill Crane, initially earning the tart fruit the name "crane berry." The name was later shortened.

Cranberries were first cultivated in the Wisconsin territory in the 1830s. The crop now accounts for major agricultural activity in 20 central and northern Wisconsin counties. The vines grow on an aggregate 180,000 acres of wetlands, the harvestable areas of which are flooded with up to 8 inches of water each fall during harvest season. The fruit



PHOTO: INTERNATIONAL WISCONSIN
Workers harvest cranberries in a bog in northern Wisconsin.



PHOTO: WISCONSIN STATE CRANBERRY GROWERS ASSOCIATION
A ribbon of berries is collected by a mechanical raking machine.

floats to the top and mechanized harvesters automatically separate it from the vines.

Despite the difficult financial times, Wisconsin's cranberry crop still contributes \$300 million annually to the state economy and accounts for 3,400 jobs.

"The sweet dried cranberries — Ocean Spray calls them 'Craisins' — have allowed local growers to really open up overseas markets," Lochner says. "Ten to 15 years ago, roughly 5 percent of our total output was exported. That number is now 30 percent."

The economic impact of the cranberry aside, there are still more reasons to recommend

Wisconsin's top crop for the Thanksgiving table. Cranberries have been designated a "super food" because of the vitamins and nutrients packed into each little berry. The fruit also offers significant health benefits, according to information gathered from various studies by the Carver, Mass.-based Cranberry Institute.

Diets supplemented by cranberries have been connected to a lower incidence of tumor development among breast cancer patients. Cranberries also can help protect the brain from neural damage caused by the release of free radicals that can lead to motor or cognitive function loss.

A component in cranberry juice can inhibit production of certain oral bacteria that can lead to dental plaque and periodontal disease.

In addition, cranberries are good for your heart, producing flavonoids and polyphenolic compounds that are a potent antioxidant and aid in the prevention of atherosclerosis. A compound found in cranberry juice combats the bacteria responsible for the formation of peptic ulcers. There is even evidence to show that cranberry juice can contribute to the prevention of urinary tract infections.

And, if all that weren't benefit enough, cranberries are finding their way into cosmetics, thanks to their vivid natural color and healthy characteristics. A growing number of commercially produced natural exfoliants contain cranberries, largely for their antimicrobial qualities that are especially good for use on mature and sensitive skin.

But the fruit's biggest draw is still that tart, vivid flavor that provides a sharp Thanksgiving table contrast to roast turkeys, thick gravies and other seasonal goodies, Lochner says.

"Public appreciation for cranberries has increased over time," he says. "It's true that some of that has to do with health benefits, but these days we're all consuming a lot of cranberries."

For more information and some innovative cranberry recipes, visit www.wiscran.org.

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Eastwood finally gets gay right with 'J. Edgar'

Film

GREGG SHAPIRO

'J. EDGAR'

After the hack job Clint Eastwood did on "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," there was cause for alarm when it came to his undertaking a J. Edgar Hoover biopic. Was he the right director to tackle a subject rife with queer innuendo?

But once you get past the



PHOTO: COURTESY

"Martha Marcy May Marlene."

gnarly old-age make-up and Leonardo DiCaprio's inconsistent accent, "J. Edgar," with a screenplay by Dustin Lance Black ("Milk"), isn't half-bad.

Throughout the film, Hoover (DiCaprio, who has played gay before, as poet Rimbaud in "Total Eclipse," for example) dictates his version of his life's story to a series of FBI agents/writers. Naturally, Hoover's account may not be entirely accurate, and gay screenwriter Black does what he can to fill in some of the blanks.

Beginning in 1919, before there was a Federal Bureau of Investigation, "J. Edgar" follows the driven (or one might say, obsessive) Hoover's rise through the ranks. From his time at the U.S. Department of Justice and his contribution to creating the cataloguing system at the Library of Congress to his spearheading the creation of the FBI, "J. Edgar" attempts to portray its man as someone with a compulsion to please his manipulative mother Annie (Judi Dench) at all costs.

The movie recounts the highlights of Hoover's FBI career, including investigating the kidnapping of the Lindbergh baby, organized crime and political radicals. It's when the historical intertwines with the personal and romantic that the film is most compelling.

The entrance of Clyde Tolson (sensitively portrayed by Armie Hammer) into the socially inept Hoover's life is tastefully presented. The homoeroticism of the relationship, in which Tolson moved from assistant to par-



PHOTO: COURTESY

"J. Edgar."

amour, is handled with respect, and the relationship feels genuine — for the most part. Black deserves credit for the way he brings it to light and the actors, particularly Hammer, should also be commended. "J. Edgar" goes on about 20 minutes too long, but it's still worth seeing.

'MARTHA MARCY MAY MARLENE'

In a performance as brave, nuanced and layered as Jennifer Lawrence's in "Winter's Bone," Elizabeth Olson's embodiment of the titular Martha is a riveting triumph.

After leaving a Manson-like

cult led by the charismatic Patrick (John Hawkes), where she lived for two years, the socially awkward Martha attempts to re-enter society via her older sister Lucy (Sarah Paulson) and brother-in-law Ted (Hugh Dancy).

But the transition is doomed from the start. Moving back and forth from the present, where Martha is struggling to fit in, to the recent past, where she was welcomed into the cult, renamed Marcy May, then raped, brainwashed and inducted into participating in break-ins and thrill kills, writer/director Sean Durkin's full-length feature debut creates an atmosphere of tranquility crossed with terror.

'A VERY HAROLD & KUMAR 3D CHRISTMAS'

Beloved gay actor Neil Patrick Harris reprises his role as his "gay for pussy" self, alongside Harold (John Cho) and Kumar (Kal Penn), in this self-referential, hilarious holiday one-hitter. As irreverent as you've come to expect the series to be, "A Very Harold & Kumar 3D Christmas" raises the stakes by incorporating 3D (making the best use of the technology in any film so far this year). The story wanders joyously from rekindling old friendships and making new friends, to honoring family traditions and creating new ones, to waffle-making robots, tweaking toddlers and getting high on and for the holidays.

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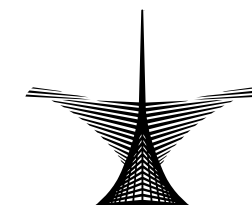


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From *Contraband* series

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NOV. 17, THURSDAY

UWM Union Theatre in the UWM Student Union, 2nd level, 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd., presents a free screening of the documentary "The Interrupters." Call 414-229-4070.
The OutReach Fall Drag Fundraiser begins with a 6 p.m. mixer and buffet, followed by an 8 p.m. drag show starring Desiree Mathews, Josie Lynn, Kandi Barr, Danielle Avalon, Ava Stone and Wilma's Fund spokesperson Willma Flynn-Stone at Club 5 Bar, 5 Applegate Court in Madison. Call 608-277-9700.
Florentine Opera Studio Artists re-enact a selection of arias and ensembles from a variety of opera favorites, including pieces from Bizet's "Carmen," Puccini's "La Bohème," Carlisle Floyd's "Susannah" and Mozart's "Idomeneo" at 7 p.m. in the Wayne and Kristine Lueders Florentine Opera Center, 926 E. Burleigh. Call 414-291-5700, ext. 224.



Paula Cole

NOV. 18, FRIDAY

Find out if Paula Cole ever discovered where all the cowboys went when she performs at 8 p.m. at the Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, 19805 W. Capitol Drive in Brookfield. Call 262-781-9520.
A variety of performers, including the American Folk Dance Group, led by Eric Tangman of Pewaukee, perform at the Holiday Folk Fair International, today and Sunday, at the Wisconsin Exposition Center at State Fair Park, 8200 W. Greenfield in West Allis. Call 414-727-8840.

Queer trio Girl In A Coma plays High Noon Saloon, 701A E. Washington in Madison, at 8 p.m. Call 608-268-1122.
The Christmas Music of Mannheim Steamroller presents a holiday spectacular, reinventing Christmas classics with an integrated light, multimedia and special-effects performance, at 4:30 p.m. at the Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison. Call 608-258-4141.
Present Music revives Henry Brant's "Wind, Water, Clouds & Fire," featuring more than 100 musicians and singers, at 4 p.m. in the Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist, 812 N. Jackson. Call 414-276-9814.



The Christmas Music of Mannheim Steamroller

NOV. 19, SATURDAY

Fab duo Mates of State performs at 8 p.m. at Turner Hall, 103 N. Fourth. Call 414-286-3663.
South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center, 901 15th in South Milwaukee, presents physical comedian Tomáš Kubínek at 7:30 p.m. Call 414-766-5049.
Gay mystery writer Mark Zubro, who has just released his 22nd book, "Black and Blue and Pretty Dead Too," and David Pratt, whose "Bob the Book" was nominated for a Lambda Literary Award, read from their work at 2 p.m. at Outwords Books, 2710 N. Murray. Call 414-963-9089.



Mates of State

"Nature into Flight," oil paintings by J.J. Joyce, are on exhibit through Nov. 26 at THE Fine Art Gallery, 207 E. Buffalo St., Suite 210. Visit thefineartgallery.org.

The exhibit "Cleopatra: The Search for the Last Queen of Egypt," featuring nearly 150 artifacts from Cleopatra's time, continues at Milwaukee Public Museum, 800 W. Wells.

Happy Thanksgiving! This year's community Thanksgiving Potluck Dinner will be held Nov. 26 at Plymouth Church, 2717 E. Hampshire. For more information, see FAITH GAZE, page 16, or visit http://www.facebook.com/events/167358300021655/.

NOV. 26, SATURDAY

Jerry Grillo and John Hefter perform at 7 p.m. at The Savoy at The Shorecrest Hotel, 1962 N. Prospect. Call 414-270-1070.
Club 5 Bar, 5 Applegate Court in Madison, presents a live female impersonator show, at 10 p.m. Call 608-277-9700.



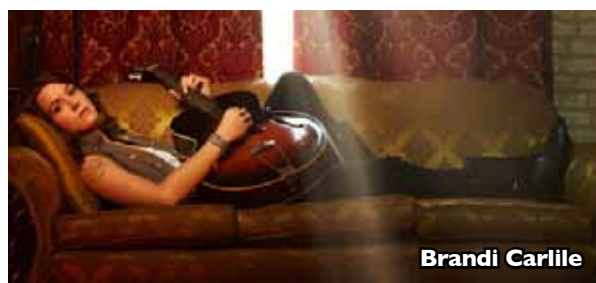
"The Interrupters" screens Nov. 17 at UWM and Nov. 27 at Times Cinema

NOV. 27, SUNDAY

Times Cinema, 5906 W. Vliet, offers free admission for the acclaimed documentary "The Interrupters," at 4 and 7 p.m. at Call 414-453-3128.

NOV. 28, MONDAY

Frankly Music performs Bach-Goldberg Variations at 7 p.m. tonight and tomorrow night at Wisconsin Conservatory of Music Bader Recital Hall, 1584 N. Prospect.
Boldt Arts Alive! Series presents Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra featuring Rockapella, tonight and tomorrow night at 8 p.m. at Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, 400 W. College Ave. in Appleton. Call 920-730-3760.



Brandi Carlile

NOV. 29, TUESDAY

Out singer/songwriter Brandi Carlile performs at 7 p.m. at Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth. Call 414-286-3663.

DEC. 1, THURSDAY

The Riverside, 116 W. Wisconsin, presents Moscow Ballet's Great Russian Nutcracker at 8 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

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