

STORIES IN MOTION

The Milwaukee Ballet's Michael Pink bends dance to the power of narrative. **WiGOUT!** Page 19



THE VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR WISCONSIN'S LGBT COMMUNITY

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Why Walker killed wind energy jobs

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

When Wisconsin voters elected Scott Walker governor and handed Republicans control of the Legislature, about 1,000 new jobs in the emerging wind energy sector stood waiting on the state's horizon, according to industry proponents.

But Walker, who received at least \$1.5 million in campaign cash directly from interests opposed to wind energy, quickly quashed the rules that would have allowed those jobs – and the state's energy independence – to move forward.

Walker's move reportedly startled wind-energy supporters on both sides of the political aisle, since the so-called "wind siting" rules were ironed out during a year of negotiations with all the major stakeholders and approved by a two-thirds, bipartisan majority of law-

makers during the legislative session immediately preceding the state's GOP takeover.

Now, with Wisconsin recording the second largest job losses in the nation from May to October 2011, Democrats say the governor, who announced in January that "Wisconsin is open for business," should explain to voters why he abruptly closed the state to the potentially lucrative wind energy business. A total of five wind energy companies have suspended or canceled work in Wisconsin since Walker took action to cripple the industry in the state, according to industry representatives.

State Rep. Peter Barca, D-Kenosha, said he's particularly disturbed by the Republicans' reversal on wind energy because it's one of the few areas of prospective economic development where "the state would not invest any money and could be putting hundreds, possibly thousands of people to work almost immediately."

Environmentalists charge that the governor has lifted regulations protecting Wisconsin's wetlands and waterways in order to give free reign to corporate polluters in the name of job creation. They say the Walker administration is currently trying to fast track a hugely controversial mining bill that would jeopardize the state's groundwater quality.

So why, they ask, is he so concerned about the

WIND page 10



Sweet Charity

A guide to good giving

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Put away the pepper spray. Back off the \$3 waffle-maker. And join the Black Friday Resistance Army's campaign for good giving during the holiday season.

The winter holidays coincide with one of the most vital fundraising periods for nonprofits. A majority of U.S. charities receive a significant portion of their donations at the year's end – partly because the holidays are a time of reflection that inspire many people to share, and partly because donors need to make their end-of-year giving decisions by Dec. 31 to qualify for a tax deduction in that calendar year. Some charities receive as much as 90 percent of their annual donations in the last six weeks of the year. Trackers of nonprofit donations show that dollars have been down the past five years, largely due to the struggling, sputtering economy.

DID YOU KNOW?

Retailers took in more than \$45 billion in sales during the four-day weekend surrounding Black Friday in 2010. Arts charities in the United States took in \$13.28 billion in contributions for the entire year.

Yet "despite the ongoing recession, we're optimistic about this year-end giving season being at least equal to last year," says Ken Berger, president of Charity Navigator. The resource offers ratings to donors who want to spend wisely and advice to nonprofits that want to operate efficiently, economically and ethically.

One of the simplest ways to give during the holiday season is to make a donation to a nonprofit in someone's name. So CN recommends that consumers planning to gift donations

follow a few guidelines:

- Use a rating service to learn about an organization's financial health, accountability and purpose. The best managed nonprofits spend more on charitable endeavors and mission deeds and less on administrative costs.

- Look beyond the heartwarming stories to an organization's overall accomplishments. A tug-at-the-heart appeal from a hungry child doesn't mean an organization is the best at feeding the hungry.

- Investigate an organization's programs to guarantee the nonprofit is a philosophical, political and philanthropic match for the donor. A discriminating charity such as the Salvation Army might be highly visible and active at Christmastime, but it's not deserving of funds from or on behalf of LGBT people.

Some of Charity Navigator's top-**GIVING** page 11

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inside and online at [wisconsinGazette.com](http://wisconsin Gazette.com)

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LGBT news with a twist



By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg

HULK HITS BACK

Wrestling icon Hulk Hogan is suing his ex-wife over her allegations that he beat her and cheated on her with fellow wrestler Brutus Beefcake. He says both charges are "insane."

"If any of that was true, I would admit it, and (if) I was a homosexual I would embrace it. It's just so crazy to hear, so I have a real problem with it," the Hulk told Us Weekly. "I don't mean to laugh about it, because it's not funny. But it's insane. It doesn't make any sense to me."

RUNNING MATE

Donald Trump claims that GOP presidential candidate Michele Bachmann was considering him as her running mate if she secured her party's presidential nomination.

Trump made the revelation while skewering Bachmann for turning down his invitation to participate in a debate he's moderating in Iowa on Dec. 27. The event was canceled after Trump pulled out of it as well.

BUZZ KILL

A married Colorado man who was once named "sheriff of the year" was arrested on Nov. 29 on suspicion of trying to trade crystal meth to a man for sex, said investigators who monitored the deal. Arapahoe County Sheriff Patrick Sullivan, 68, was being held in the jail that bears his name, the Patrick J. Sullivan Jr. Detention Facility. He was named Sheriff of the Year by the National Sheriffs' Association in 2001.

CHURCH REGRESSES

A small rural Kentucky church has ignited a controversy by voting to ban interracial couples from joining its flock. The decision by Gulnare Free Will Baptist Church comes as a reminder that before fundamentalist churches opposed same-sex marriage, they fought interracial marriage, also on a scriptural basis.

NYRO INDUCTED

For the fourth time, the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame has reject-

ed Donna Summer. But the 2012 inductees include the late lesbian singer/songwriter Laura Nyro, who made the cut on her first nomination.

WILDE'S RESTING PLACE

Oscar Wilde's Paris gravesite has received a makeover for the 111th anniversary of the legendary writer's death. The tomb of the well-loved writer is a well-loved pilgrimage site, and Wilde enthusiasts had covered the stone with thousands of lipstick kisses. A renovation intended to return the tomb to its 1912 design also included removal of the lipstick and the installation of a glass screen to separate visitors from the stone.

TOO S*X*Y FOR A HEADLINE

The right-wing Liberty Counsel found the word "sex" too much for a headline in its own press release announcing a new development in a challenge to New York's marriage equality law. The Nov. 29 release read,

"Judge Refuses to Dismiss Open Meetings Violations Suit Against New York Same-S*x Marriage." Right Wing Watch, a monitoring program of People for the American Way, suggested that the Liberty Counsel censors "sex" so its information is not blocked by the Internet filters it promotes.

DON WE NOW...

Texas Gov. Rick Perry claims kids can't celebrate Christmas in schools, but WiG knows they're at least caroling in Traverse City, Mich., schools. But for a time, there was no "gay" in the "Deck the Halls" carol sung by first- and second-graders at Cherry Knoll Elementary in Traverse City. A music teacher concerned about giggling kids replaced "gay" with "bright" in the "don we now" line while rehearsing for a Christmas concert. The omission was short-lived and, according to the school principal, regrettable.

WHITE HOUSE A GAGA

Obama administration officials welcomed Lady Gaga to the

White House on Dec. 6 to discuss the performer's partnership with the MacArthur Foundation and Harvard University to launch the Born This Way Foundation. Gaga told White House officials that as a child she was picked on for being different and that the foundation will combat bullying by reforming the culture, policies and curriculum in schools.

CL VS. NFL

Catholic League president Bill Donohue wants National Football League Commissioner Roger Goodell to revoke an invitation to Madonna to perform in the Super Bowl half-time show. Donohue, in a letter to Goodell, complained, "For decades, Madonna has blatantly offended Christians, especially Catholics. The offensive lyrics, lewd behavior and misappropriation of sacred symbols are reason enough not to have her perform. Worse, she has repeatedly mocked the heart and soul of Christianity: Jesus, Our Blessed Mother, the Eucharist and the Crucifixion."



REGIONAL GAZE

Got news? Tell us managingeditor@wisconsin-gazette.com.

Losing jobs rivalry, Walker offers suspect stats

By Louis Weisberg
Staff writer

Shortly after taking office in January, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker set up a rivalry with Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn, a Democrat, by inviting Illinois companies to relocate north of the border. Walker promised a more "business-friendly" environment.

But October numbers from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics give Quinn the upper hand in the competition for job growth. While Wisconsin payrolls dropped 9,700 from September to October – the most in the nation – Illinois added 30,000 jobs – the country's best record.

The only sector in which Wisconsin posted job gains in October was the leisure and hospitality sector, where most jobs

are low-paying. Declines were in higher-paying sectors, including construction, manufacturing, financial, business and health services, education and government.

From its low point of 2,723,600 jobs in January 2010, Wisconsin has added 64,800 jobs. Illinois has gained 108,100 jobs since its nadir of 5,580,500 in December 2009.

Walker campaigned on a promise to create a gain of 250,000 jobs during his first term, but his administration has lowered its projection. So far this year, Wisconsin has gained just 20,100 jobs.

In July, in advance of the state's first round of recall elections, Walker staged an unusual news conference to announce that Wisconsin had gained a net total of 9,500 jobs

in June. He boasted that the number was the best in the country, claiming it represented half of the net total of all jobs created nationwide that month.

Walker's claim was touted by the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel and right-wing talk radio hosts, who said it was evidence the governor's crippling of public unions, corporate tax cuts and reductions in spending on education had bolstered the state's economy.

But the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel revised its July story recently, saying that during his news conference Walker "left out the fact that his office had been told in an internal report that the monthly numbers were 'very questionable' and 'suspect.'"

Here's what the news-

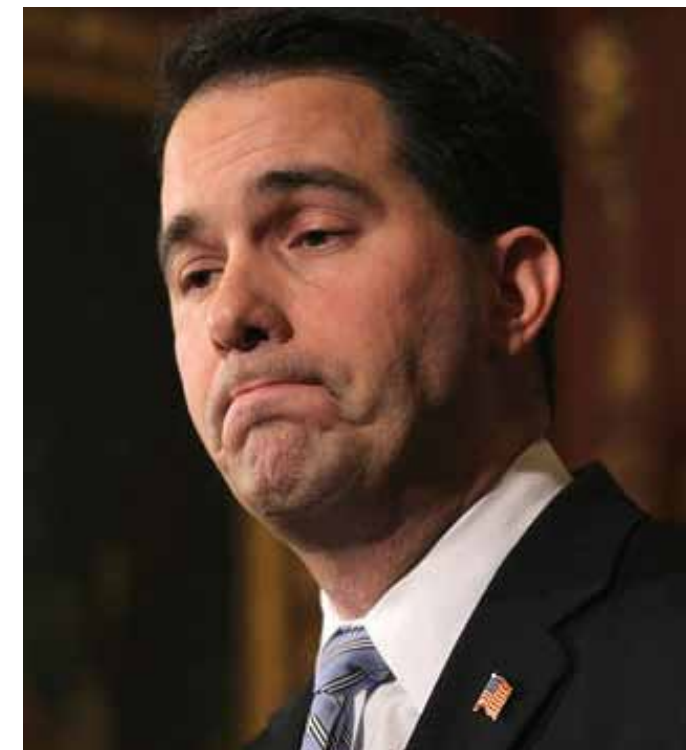
paper now says about Walker's previous claim:

"The unusual announcement was made in the run-up to pivotal Senate recall elections last summer that were seen as a referendum on Walker's policies."

"But three days before the announcement, Walker's office received a report from the state labor department that raised serious concerns about the numbers. The PowerPoint presentation was released to the Journal Sentinel under the state's open records law."

"Results, while (federal Bureau of Labor Statistics) approved, are very questionable," reads the first line of the report.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel endorsed Walker and has largely supported his agenda on its editorial page.



Gov. Scott Walker.

PHOTO: ADDICTINGINFO.COM

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Paul Varnell, activist and journalist.

PHOTO: JASON SMITH/JASONSMITH.COM

Journalist, activist Paul Varnell dies at 70

Veteran gay Chicago activist and journalist Paul Varnell died Dec. 9 at the age of 70.

Varnell died of complications associated with pneumonia and a stroke.

Colleagues — in the press and from the protests — remembered Varnell as an independent thinker, a loyal friend, an ardent activist, a devout atheist, a valued mentor to LGBT youth and a meticulous, thorough writer. He kept a detailed notebook in which he jotted and developed his many column ideas.

Varnell worked with WiG editors Louis Weisberg and Lisa Neff for more than a decade in Chicago, first at the original Windy City Times and then at the Chicago Free Press, an LGBT weekly they helped to create in 1999. When WiG launched in 2009, Varnell helped, serving as one of the newspaper's first columnists.

His op-ed pieces were syndicated in other LGBT newspapers, as well as online at the Independent

Gay Forum, a website that Varnell founded to feature some of the nation's most prominent LGBT columnists.

Varnell's writings touched on familiar topics — gays in the military, the freedom to marry, bullying in schools, equality in the workplace, acceptance in homes, progress in political arenas.

But he began writing on those topics years ago, in the earlier days of the LGBT press, and he wrote from a unique, extraordinary perspective — he was a proud, gentle, gay, libertarian.

Varnell also was an avid reader, opera enthusiast and leatherman.

He was rarely seen in Chicago's Boystown bars out of his uniform of Levi's jeans, boots and form-fitting T-shirts.

He did not seek out fame or recognition — he turned down an invitation to appear on "Oprah" after attempting with journalist Rex Wockner to obtain a marriage license in Cook County, Ill., in 1989. Varnell and Wockner weren't

romantically involved, but they wanted to challenge the law.

Varnell was born in St. Louis. He graduated from Cornell University and attended graduate school at Indiana University-Bloomington.

For several years, Varnell taught at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, where he served on a committee of the Gay/Lesbian Union.

He moved to Chicago in the early 1980s and quickly became involved in the push for gay rights. He was on the board of PFLAG Chicago, chaired an Illinois Gay and Lesbian Task Force committee, served on the Chicago AIDS Task Force, founded the Chicago Area Gay Republican Organization, was an early promoter of Gay History Month and served on the Illinois Department of Public Health AIDS Interdisciplinary Advisory Committee.

— Lisa Neff

To read one of Paul Varnell's most appreciated columns, go to www.wisconsin Gazette.com.



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SAGE MILWAUKEE SEEKS TALENT

SAGE Milwaukee is looking for talented performers to participate in its annual Rootin' Tootin' Talent Parade.

This year's event is scheduled for the evening of Dec. 30, at Plymouth United Church of Christ, 2717 E. Hampshire Ave.

If you sing, dance, play an instrument, juggle or even walk on stilts, contact Dawn Schmidt at dawns53715@gmail.com or phone 414-224-0517.

SUBMISSIONS SOUGHT FOR CONFERENCE

The 36th annual Wisconsin Women's Studies Conference and the seventh annual University of Wisconsin System LGBTQ Conference are seeking presenters for 2012.

Topics should address the conference's theme of "Power, Politics and Performance in Women's Studies and LGBTQ Studies" and should focus on research, scholarship, curriculum or program development, pedagogy, campus programming or community activism.

REGIONAL BRIEFS



Nancy Ryherd and Linda Schroeder, the first couple to receive a civil union license in Illinois.

PHOTO: EQUALITY ILLINOIS

ILLINOIS ISSUES MORE THAN 3,000 CIVIL UNION LICENSES

During the first six months of the availability of civil unions in Illinois, at least 3,729 couples obtained licenses, according to Equality Illinois. Ninety of the state's 102 counties reported at least one license was issued.

"That so many couples secured licenses in the first six months after they became available on June 1 demonstrated the importance that families placed on the protections it provided," said Bernard Cherkasov, CEO of Equality Illinois. "The fact that the figure grew to 3,729 civil unions licenses in the half year indicates a strong, ongoing

desire for same-sex families to not only secure the legal recognition of government and the affirmation of their relationship from employers, family and friends but also the equal rights that civil unions guarantee."

MICHIGAN GETS AN ANTI-BULLYING LAW

A governor who remembers being bullied from elementary school through college for being a "nerd" has

made Michigan the 48th state to put an anti-bullying law on the books.

Gov. Rick Snyder signed legislation giving schools six months to put anti-bullying policies into place. He called the measure "long overdue."

Michigan landed in the national spotlight recently after GOP senators passed an anti-bullying bill that included a clause saying the legislation didn't "prohibit a statement of a sincerely held religious belief or moral

conviction."

Democrats say the exceptions would have made it even easier to bully.

The House and Senate last week passed a version without that language.

SCHOOL DISTRICT RECONSIDERS CONTROVERSIAL POLICY

The Minnesota school district that's under fire over a policy limiting discussion of sexual orientation in the classroom has taken the first step to change it.

Critics charge that the current policy of silence has led to the bullying and suicide of gay students. A new policy proposal would allow for the discussion of controversial topics under specified guidelines.

But of the more than 60 people attending a recent meeting of the Anoka-Hennepin Schools board, more than a dozen spoke against the new proposal. Opponents of the current policy said the new one was

too vague on what would be considered "controversial." Supporters said it would open the schools to pro-homosexual teaching.

"I really didn't know what to expect," said school board Chairman Tom Heidemann after the meeting. The new policy was supposed reduce confusion about how to handle certain issues in the classroom, he said, but based on the comments the board received it may need to be amended before the board considers it again in January.

The Anoka-Hennepin district is the state's largest with 38,500 students. Its current sexual orientation policy says the topic isn't part of the curriculum and is best addressed outside the schools. If the topic of homosexuality comes up in student-led discussions, the policy says the staff is to remain neutral.

The proposed new policy says the school board recognizes the importance of teaching students how to examine controversial topics, so long as those discussions are age-appropriate, free of prejudice and teachers don't "advocate personal beliefs or opinions."

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U.S. government to use diplomatic tools to promote global LGBT human rights

By Lisa Neff
Staff writer

The United States will use its diplomatic tools to protect LGBT human rights and combat efforts to persecute and prosecute people based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

The American commitment came Dec. 7, first in an unprecedented memorandum on LGBT human rights from President Barack Obama and then in a landmark speech by Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

"Gay rights are human rights, and human rights are gay rights," Clinton said.

Obama wrote, "I am deeply concerned by the violence and discrimination targeting LGBT persons around the world — whether it is passing laws that criminalize LGBT status, beating citizens simply for joining peaceful LGBT pride celebrations, or killing men, women and children for their perceived sexual orientation."

The president's memorandum outlined the first-ever U.S. government strategy to deal with human rights abuses against LGBT people and directed federal agencies that engage in foreign affairs

to promote LGBT human rights globally — including decriminalization of LGBT people and humane treatment of LGBT refugees and those seeking asylum.

Clinton delivered her speech, in recognition of International Human Rights Day, to a United Nations assembly in Geneva, Switzerland.

She reminded her audience of the origins of the universal Declaration of Human Rights. The document was adopted in December 1948, in the aftermath of World War II, to "prevent future atrocities and protect the inherent humanity and dignity of all people."

Many nations, Clinton said, have made progress in the 63 years since the drafting of the declaration, but work remains.

"Today, I want to talk about the work we have left to do to protect one group of people whose human rights are still denied in too many parts of the world today," the secretary said. "In many ways, they are an invisible minority. They are arrested, beaten, terrorized, even executed. Many are treated with contempt and violence by their fel-

low citizens while authorities empowered to protect them look the other way or, too often, even join in the abuse. They are denied opportunities to work and learn, driven from their homes and countries, and forced to suppress or deny who they are to protect themselves from harm.

"I am talking about gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people, human beings born free and bestowed with equality and dignity, who have a right to claim that which is now one of the remaining human rights challenges of our time."

Clinton, in her remarks, said it is a violation of human rights for governments to criminalize a sexual orientation or gender identity, allow lesbians or transgender women to be subject to so-called corrective rape and permit or ignore beatings or killings of people because they are gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender.

Homosexuality, she added, is not a Western invention or phenomenon, and thus all governments must protect LGBT human rights.

"Gay people are born into and belong to every society

in the world," Clinton said. "They are all ages, all races, all faiths; they are doctors and teachers, farmers and bankers, soldiers and athletes; and whether we know it, or whether we acknowledge it, they are our family, our friends, and our neighbors."

Clinton also spoke about those who cite religious or cultural beliefs as justification for the persecution or prosecution of LGBT people.

"No practice or tradition trumps the human rights that belong to all of us," she said. "And this holds true for inflicting violence on LGBT people, criminalizing their status or behavior, expelling them from their families and communities, or tacitly or explicitly accepting their killing."

A spokesperson for the state department said a \$3 million global equality fund was being established to support the State Department campaign to protect and promote LGBT human rights.

In the diplomatic community, Clinton's remarks were well received.

In the activist community, there was swift response. The speech prompted an immediate petition drive

for the release of two men sentenced to five years in a Cameroon prison because they are gay. The men, a 19-year-old and 20-year-old, were arrested as they walked out of a bar.

"If Cameroon had a transparent and fair judiciary system, and if the president and minister of justice valued the human rights of all Cameroonians, Franky and Jonas would be free men today," said Stéphane Koche of the Association for the Defense of Homosexuals in Cameroon.

Jessica Stern of the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission said she hoped Clinton's words "will ring loud and clear in towns and cities across the United States and villages and communities around the world."

Stern added, "The presidential memorandum and speech by Secretary Clinton make clear that LGBT rights are not a mere afterthought but a carefully considered component of U.S. foreign policy. Because of the distinct needs of LGBT people globally, such a nuanced approach is crucial."

Religious right groups in the United States issued statements condemning the administration's positions, however.

And GOP presidential candidate Rick Perry launched a campaign ad in Iowa claiming that the president was waging a war on religion.

"I'm not ashamed," Perry said, "to admit that I'm a Christian. But you don't have to be in the pew every Sunday to know that there's something wrong in this country when gays can serve openly in the military, but our kids can't openly celebrate Christmas or pray in school. As president, I'll end Obama's war on religion, and I'll fight against liberal attacks on our religious heritage."

The Log Cabin Republicans, a gay GOP group, challenged the Texas governor: "Gov. Perry is running to be commander-in-chief, not theocrat-in-chief. Our nation was built upon individual liberty and individual responsibility, and open service by gay and lesbian servicemembers is directly in line with the vision of our Founding Fathers," said LCR executive director Clarke Cooper.

Anti-equality forces losing fight to keep video secret

By Lisa Neff
Staff writer

The courtroom battle over Proposition 8 resumed on Dec. 8, with proponents and opponents of the anti-marriage equality amendment arguing over whether videotapes of the California trial should be released.

Arguments before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit in San Francisco also focused on whether the federal district court judge who ruled against Prop 8 in 2010 should have withdrawn from the case. Proponents of the amendment say that because former U.S. District Court Judge Vaughn Walker was involved in a long-term same-sex relationship, he was not able to be unbiased in the case.

The federal challenge to Prop 8, which was enacted by voters in November 2008, is Perry v. Brown. It's likely bound for the U.S. Supreme Court.

But before the case can reach the High Court, the appeals court must make its final decisions on whether to:

'The video of the trial shows the powerful evidence we submitted showing that Prop 8 flatly violates the Constitution.'



Judge Vaughn Walker.

PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS

- Release the trial tapes.
- Vacate Walker's verdict against Prop 8 as meritless.
- Uphold the trial judge's finding that Proposition 8 violates the U.S. Constitution.

Opponents of Prop 8 — the legal team of Theodore B. Olson and David Boies and the American Foundation for Equal Rights — have asked the court to unseal the trial video, citing the First Amendment.

In September, U.S. District

Chief Judge James Ware sided with Olson and Boies, finding, "Transparency is pivotal to public perception of the judiciary's legitimacy and independence."

Olson said last week, "The video recording of the trial truly and accurately shows the powerful evidence we submitted showing that Proposition 8 flatly violates the Constitution. ... We are anxious for the American people to see the evidence

and testimony the district court had before it."

Prop 8 proponent David Thompson, however, argued that releasing the videos could lead to witness harassment.

On whether Walker's ruling against Prop 8 should be vacated, Ware again ruled in favor of Prop 8 opponents.

Before the appeals court last week, Boies said, "What proponents insist on today is nothing short of a double

standard within the federal judiciary — one that applies to gay judges but not to their straight colleagues. Nothing in our law — not one case — supports this regrettable attack on Chief Judge Walker."

Charles Cooper, representing Prop 8 proponents, told the three-judge panel that Walker should have stepped away from the case because he "was in the same kind of relationship as the plaintiffs."

"The question is, was he

in a position to try his own case?" Cooper said.

Judge Michael Daly Hawkins asked Cooper whether a married judge could hear a divorce case, which drew laughter from the audience.

Outside the courthouse, demonstrators rallied for marriage equality and for the court to free the tapes.

The appeals court could issue rulings at any time.

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Top Marine says 'don't ask' repeal went smoothly

By Robert Burns

AP writer

Marine Gen. James F. Amos, the face of opposition in the military to lifting the ban on gays serving openly, now acknowledges his concern that repeal would undermine the war effort and has proven unfounded. In fact, he says, Marines have embraced the change.

In an Associated Press interview, Amos called the repeal in September "a non-event."

That is in contrast to his cautionary words to Congress in December 2010, shortly before President Barack Obama signed the repeal legislation. The ban was not lifted until this year to allow the Pentagon to prepare troops for the change.

"Successfully implementing repeal and assimilating openly homosexual Marines into the tightly woven fabric of our combat units has strong potential for disruption at the small unit level as it will no doubt divert leadership attention

away from an almost singular focus on preparing units for combat," Amos testified. Still, he said at the time that if the law were changed, it would be faithfully followed by Marines.

He now sees no sign of disruption in the ranks — even on the front lines.

"I'm very pleased with how it has gone," Amos said during a weeklong trip that included four days in Afghanistan, where he heard nary a word of worry about gays. During give-and-take sessions with Marines serving in Helmand province, he was asked about a range of issues, including the future of the Corps — but not one about gays.

In the AP interview, he also offered an anecdote from the home front to make his point that the change has been taken in stride.

He said that at the annual ball in Washington this month celebrating the birth of the Marine Corps, a female Marine approached Amos' wife, Bonnie, and

introduced herself and her lesbian partner.

"Bonnie just looked at them and said, 'Happy birthday ball. This is great. Nice to meet you,'" Amos said. "That is happening throughout the Marine Corps."

Looking back, Amos said he had no regrets about publicly opposing repeal during wartime. He said he had felt obliged, as commander of the Corps, to set aside his personal opinions and represent the views of the 56 percent of combat Marines who told a Defense Department survey last year that repeal could make them less effective and cohesive in combat.

"I think I did exactly what I should have done," Amos said. "I've never looked back on it and said it (his concern) was misplaced."

He said he is aware of only one reported incident in Afghanistan thus far, and that turned out to be a false alarm. He said a blogger had written of a gay Marine being harassed by fellow Marines for his sexual orientation. In



PHOTO: COURTESY

Marine Gen. James F. Amos

an ensuing investigation, the gay Marine denied he had been harassed.

A Defense Department spokeswoman, Cynthia O. Smith, said implementation of the repeal of the gay

ban is proceeding smoothly across the military.

"We attribute this success to our comprehensive pre-repeal training program, combined with the continued close monitoring and

enforcement of standards by our military leaders at all levels," Smith said.

In the months leading up to Congress' repeal, there were indications that the change might not be embraced so readily.

During a visit to a Marine combat outpost in southern Afghanistan in June, then-Defense Secretary Robert Gates was confronted by an enlisted Marine who clearly objected to the repeal. He told Gates that the Marine Corps had "a set of standards and values that is better than that of the civilian sector," and that repeal of the gay ban had "changed those values."

He asked Gates whether Marines who object to serving with gays would be allowed to opt out of their enlistment. Gates said no and predicted that if pre-repeal training was done right, "nothing will change" with regard to rules of behavior and discipline.

Find breaking news at www.wisconsin Gazette.com.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

US DROPS DEPORTATION CASE

The U.S. government will not deport an Argentine lesbian who married a U.S. citizen.

Monica Alcota's lawyers were told that an immigration judge signed an order Nov. 30 dismissing the case.

Since the Defense of Marriage Act, which was signed into law in 1996, specified marriage as being between a man and a woman, lawyers for same-sex couples have said U.S. immigration authorities routinely deny gay non-citizens green cards. Advocates have estimated the U.S. has 26,000 same-sex couples where one partner is a U.S. citizen.

The government's position softened when Attorney General Eric Holder said the executive branch would no longer defend DOMA in court.

VERMONT COMMISSION JOINS LAWSUIT

The Vermont Human Rights Commission recently joined a lawsuit against an inn that allegedly refused to host a lesbian couple's wedding reception.

The American Civil Liberties Union filed the discrimination lawsuit on behalf of Katherine Baker and Ming-Lien Linsley of New York.

The women say the Wildflower Inn turned them

away when they said the wedding would have two brides, but no groom.

The inn's owners say they were never told about the couple's request.

MAN SURRENDERS IN KIDNAPPING CASE

A man who allegedly helped a woman leave the country with her daughter to avoid giving custody to her former lesbian partner surrendered Dec. 6 to face charges that he aided in international parental kidnapping.

A complaint unsealed earlier this month said Kenneth L. Miller, 46, arranged passage for Lisa Miller (no relation) to travel to Canada before flying with her daughter in 2009 to Nicaragua, where she was sheltered for a time by Mennonite missionaries.

Lisa Miller and her daughter were last known to be in Nicaragua in 2010. In the spring of 2010, she was indicted in Vermont on charges of international parental kidnapping.

CAUCUS URGES SENATE CONFIRMATION

Members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus are pressing the Senate to confirm the presi-

dent's nominee for ambassador to El Salvador.

The caucus said the Senate's failure to confirm Mari Carmen Aponte would send a message to Latinos nationwide that partisanship trumps qualifications. Aponte has served as ambassador since September 2010, but her temporary tenure is about to run out.

Republican opposition stems from questions about Aponte's relationship decades ago with a Cuban-American man and an recent essay she wrote in June to mark gay Pride month.

EDUCATION ISSUES BULLYING REPORT

On Dec. 6, the U.S. Department of Education released "Analysis of State Bullying Laws and Policies," which details anti-bullying laws in 46 states.

From 1999 to 2010, more than 120 bills were enacted by state legislatures to either introduce or amend statutes that address bullying. Twenty-one bills were enacted in 2010 and eight additional bills were signed into law through April 30.

Out of the 46 states, 36 have provisions that prohibit cyber bullying and 13 have statutes that grant schools the authority to address off-campus behavior that creates a hostile school environment.

BULLIED TENNESSEE TEEN COMMITS SUICIDE

Bullied teenager Jacob Rogers, a student at Cheatham County Central High School in Ashland City, Tenn., killed himself Dec. 7, according to activists with the Tennessee Equality Project.

Jacob complained of anti-gay bullying at school and dropped out of school just before Thanksgiving because school officials ignored his complaints.

In computer notes, he said other students called him "faggot" and "queer."

TEP called on school district officials to quickly enact a series of reforms to protect LGBT students from bullying and discrimination.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Cleveland Browns linebacker Scott Fujita

NFL PLAYER JOINS MARRIAGE EQUALITY CAMPAIGN

Cleveland Browns linebacker Scott Fujita is appearing in a Web ad for the Americans for Marriage Equality campaign.

In the ad, Fujita says, "I've been married for 12 years, and I know that it is unfair to keep other loving and committed couples from getting married and protecting their families."

"Gay and lesbian couples value love and commitment in a relationship, just like everyone else," said Joe Solmonese, president of the Human Rights Campaign, sponsor of the Americans for Marriage Equality effort and the nation's largest LGBT civil rights group.

The video can be viewed online at www.hrc.org/MarriageEquality.

NBAS AGREE TO PRO-GAY LABOR POLICY

The NBA scored with LGBT civil rights advocates

on Dec. 8 with an announcement that a new collective-bargaining agreement will include sexual orientation in its non-discrimination policy.

Earlier this year, the NFL and Major League Baseball adopted sexual orientation protections.

"The NBA now joins the ranks of some of the most influential organizations and corporations in the country, who all believe that equality and inclusion are integral to a successful workplace," Solmonese said.

"We are grateful to Commissioner Stern, the NBA and the Players' Association for sending such a powerful message to society that what matters is a person's talent, not their sexual orientation," Solmonese added.

SETTLEMENT REACHED IN SOFTBALL WORLD SERIES

A settlement reached earlier this fall ends a 3-year-old dispute between the North

American Gay Amateur Athletic Alliance and three bisexual softball players.

The bisexual players' team was disqualified from the 2008 Gay Softball World Series in Seattle because of a NAGAAA rule limiting the number of non-gay players on a World Series team.

The dispute went from the ballfield to the courthouse, with the players represented by the National Center for Lesbian Rights in San Francisco.

NCLR maintains that before they were disqualified, the players were questioned before more than 25 people about whether their predominant sexual interest was in men or women.

In the settlement, NAGAAA recognized that disqualifying the players from the tournament was inconsistent with its intention of being inclusive of bisexual players and agreed to reinstate the team as a second-place winner in 2008.

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Walker contributors fear wind energy could take away some of their profits

WIND from I safety of wind farms, which are operating successfully all over the globe?

"Gov. Walker and his allies in the Legislature are once again bowing to the special interests at the expense of Wisconsin families," said Kerry Schumann, executive director of the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters. "Wisconsin sends more than \$850 million out of state every year to places like Indiana, Wyoming, and Illinois to purchase coal. Wind energy, on the other hand, creates homegrown jobs in manufacturing, construction, and other industries right here in Wisconsin. Reinstating Wisconsin's wind siting rules could bring back the \$1.8 billion in new wind power investments that Gov. Walker chased out of the state."

3,000 JOBS

Wind energy is considered one of the major industries of the future. Both clean and renewable, it's the fastest growing source of electricity in the world. Experts estimate it will provide about one-third of the world's electricity by 2050.

Last year, wind powered 26 percent of all new electrical capacity in the United States, according to the American Wind Energy Association.

Investors in wind energy viewed Wisconsin as a state with great potential for development. Neighboring Iowa and Illinois are national leaders in the field. Through April of this year, Iowa generated 20 percent of its electricity from wind, according to AWEA statistics. Meanwhile, Illinois ranks fifth for overall installed wind capacity in the United States.

A resource assessment conducted by the National Renewable Energy Lab found that Wisconsin's wind resources could provide over four times the state's current electricity needs. Wind energy supported as many as 2,000 direct and indirect jobs in the state during 2010 and generated \$900,000 in annual property tax payments as well as \$1.4 million in lease payments.

At least 22 facilities in Wisconsin manufacture components for the wind energy industry, and another



er 171 related supply chain businesses have been established in the state.

Walker's change of heart toward wind energy put a halt to future growth of this kind. It also provoked two major wind energy developers to pull out of the state, canceling more than \$1 billion in investment and about 1,000 new jobs, according to the group Renew Wisconsin.

Invenery, a Chicago-based company, announced in March that it was canceling the Ledge Wind Energy center, a 100-turbine facility proposed for Brown County, due to the GOP's refusal to go forward with the compromise wind siting rules. Shortly afterward, Midwest Wind Energy, also based in Chicago, said it was suspending a 75-turbine wind farm that had been under development for four years.

WIND OPPOSITION

Early opponents to wind energy say the turbines, which look like giant airplane propellers on a stick, are ugly and noisy. They also complain that the blades kill birds and bats, although cars, high-rise buildings and power lines destroy far more animals, according to experts.

But some new opposition voices have recently crept into the debate. A grow-

ing number of anti-wind bloggers now contend that undetectable vibrations caused by the spinning of turbine blades can cause health problems — a claim that's without medical foundation or support.

They also complain about something called "shadow flicker." When the sun is in a position where rays glance off the spinning blades, it creates a flickering of light similar to that caused by leaves rustling in a summer breeze. Critics insist this scattering of light is a public nuisance.

Wisconsin law only allows for objections to be raised over wind projects if they pose a threat to public health or safety. Proponents of wind energy believe that these new complaints are part of a carefully coordinated strategy to position wind farms as dangerous in ways that the law covers. While proponents credit critics for using their imagination, they laugh at the absurdity of their claims.

So who and what are really behind the new opposition? Wind proponents believe the answer lies in Walker's campaign finance records.

Records compiled by the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign show Walker received \$750,833 in campaign contributions from

the construction industry and \$427,629 from Realtors through Oct. 18, 2010. Both industries oppose wind energy projects out of fear they'll harm the value of properties located nearby, in the same way that the presence of a nearby railroad track, highway or airport reduces property values.

"I'm not seeing evidence to that effect," Barca said of critics' fears that nearby wind farms reduce property values. According to him, the Legislature took property values into consideration when it created the approved wind siting rules. Those rules require turbines to be placed at least 1,250 feet away from an occupied building — a distance that was arrived at through lengthy negotiations with all the major stakeholders, Barca said.

Walker was able to stop the rules by introducing a bill to increase the distance of the so-called "setbacks." The oil, coal and gas industries also contributed heavily to Walker — a total of \$127,693, according to WDC. Those industries oppose wind energy for the obvious reason that it threatens to take away some of their market share.

Koch Industries, a fossil fuel company that's grown

into one of the nation's largest private companies, is both one of Walker's leading financial backers and one of the world's leading opponents of green energy. The Industrial Wind Action Group, which hosts a website that disseminates negative and outright false information about wind energy, routinely quotes as "experts" affiliates of various front groups supported by Koch Industries, Charles Koch and the Koch family.

According to a press release for the documentary film "Greedy Lying Bastards," scheduled for release next year, Koch Industries and Exxon Oil have each spent nearly \$25 million to undermine the science of global warming. Wind energy has been embraced by environmentalists as a way to slow down climate change.

While several other Republicans are expected to join the race, the only announced Democrat so far is out U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin.

Meanwhile, the GOP's stance against wind energy, while popular with its rich backers, could prove unpopular with voters as a political issue. Ahead of Walker's anticipated recall race, Barca and other Democrats are promoting awareness of the governor's self-inflicted loss of wind energy and high-speed rail jobs. Ultimately voters will decide whether Walker has cost the state jobs in order to pay back his financial backers.

But the Kochs' influence in the campaign was far greater than that number suggests. Their PAC gave \$1 million to

the Republican Governors Association, which in turn spent a remarkable \$3.4 million on TV ads and mailers attacking Walker's 2010 opponent Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett.

POLITICAL ISSUE

During the Legislature's recent and unsuccessful special jobs session, Barca and other Democrats tried to push forward the wind siting rules as a job-growth measure, but to no avail. In frustration, Barca penned an opinion piece that charged, "Under Gov. Walker, Wisconsin continues to underperform the national economy, yet Republicans continue to push an agenda that sends our jobs out of state."

Republicans have until March to make changes on the wind-siting rules. If no changes are made, then the rules will go into effect as they were originally approved.

But the GOP has two bills sitting in legislative committees that are designed to kill the original rules and force the state to start the lengthy process of creating siting rules all over again. That would effectively shut down wind energy development in Wisconsin for years while other states continue to forge ahead.

One of the bills was introduced by state Sen. Frank Lasee, R-Ledgeview, who is considering a U.S. Senate run. Lasee's call for a moratorium on wind energy in the state positions him to receive big money from Koch front groups and other monied players in the fossil fuel industry.

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For the community-minded, buy local and shop LGBT-supportive businesses

GIVING from I ranked nonprofits this season include the Grameen Foundation USA, which fights poverty by providing small loans to support new entrepreneurs, and the Natural Resources Defense Council, an environmental action group seeking to defend endangered species and prevent pollution.

In Wisconsin, some of the higher-ranking groups on Charity Navigator are animal rights and animal welfare organizations, including the Wisconsin Humane Society and local affiliates.

Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin also ranks high with CN, as do the Freedom from Religion Foundation, which promotes the separation of church and state; the United Way of Dane County and the United Way of Greater Milwaukee; the Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater Milwaukee; the Wisconsin Historical Foundation in Madison; the Second Harvest Foodbank of Southern Wisconsin in Madison; the Clean Wisconsin environmental protection group in

Madison; and the Greater Milwaukee Foundation.

High-ranking arts and culture groups in Wisconsin include the Wisconsin Public Radio Association in Madison; the Racine Art Museum in Racine; and the Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee Repertory and Skylight Opera theatres in Milwaukee.

Among LGBT groups on the Charity Navigator website, three of the top-rated are the Washington-based Servicemembers Legal Defense Network, which campaigned against "don't ask, don't tell" and now works for equal benefits in the military; the Los Angeles-based Trevor Project, which operates a national 24-hour helpline for LGBT youth; and the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission, a global advocate for equality.

SAGE, the Point Foundation scholarship fund, Gay & Lesbian Advocates & Defenders, the Gay and Lesbian Leadership Institute, PFLAG, Gay Men's Health Crisis, the National Center for Lesbian Rights and

ON THE WEB

For information about nonprofits in the United States, check the Charity Navigator website at charitynavigator.org.

GLSEN also have strong ratings.

Some other good-giving ideas:

- **For the earthy,** consider a donation to the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters in your gift recipient's name. Or, how about a native living tree from the Arbor Day Foundation to hang the holiday lights on, an acre of preservation land for the public trust from the Nature Conservancy, a birding app from the National Audubon Society or indoor and outdoor solar-powered lights?

- **For the animal-lover,** shine a light in the Wisconsin Humane Society's Hope's Lights campaign; purchase a Sea2Shore T-shirt to sponsor an endangered manatee; pledge to protect a threatened sea turtle, seal, polar bear, pelican, dolphin, penguin or shark through

Oceana and get a plush animal to give; or, for free, send a holiday wish for wildlife through the National Wildlife Federation.

- **For the foodie,** package some state pride and samples of Wisconsin originals — beers and brats, cheeses and wines, chocolates and candies, dairy and produce; or browse from the Feeding America gift catalog and chose to feed a family of four for a month, purchase 200 holiday meals or supply a food bank with 800 pounds of produce.

- **For the arts aficionado,** consider tickets and subscriptions to local arts and culture venues. Some WiG favorites include Milwaukee Rep, Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Renaissance Theaterworks, Milwaukee Gay Arts Center, Florentine Opera, Madison's Stage Q, the Milwaukee and

Madison symphonies, the Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee Ballet, Skylight Opera, Barrymore, NPR and Radio Milwaukee.


- **For the partisan player,** know that he or she will want to make a statement in 2012. Recall Walker T-shirts are certain to be a big fashion statement next year. Also, the president's reelection campaign is selling gear from the online 2012 Obama Store — portrait T-shirts, fleece jackets, car magnets, bumper stickers, coffee mugs and even a beer can koozie. Hillary Clinton's campaign is selling the last "Team Hillary" T-shirts and "She Is the One" posters to retire a debt. Or, at no cost, stuff the stockings of newcomers to Wisconsin and twentysomethings with voter registration materials.

- **For the global-minded,** donors to the International Rescue Committee can send a child to school for a year, create safe spaces for kids in the wake of disaster or supply a family with a goat. Donors receive holiday cards and an

organic threads "Rescue" T-shirt. "When floods and other natural disasters strike vulnerable areas of the world, little or nothing is left standing," says Farah Kathwari of Generation Rescue, a group of young professionals who volunteer for IRC. "Entire villages ... are swept away literally overnight. But just as quickly, a single household asset ... can offer a new beginning."

- **For the community-minded,** shop local and buy local. Patronize local boutiques and restaurants, galleries and shops, particularly those with progressive inclinations. How? One approach is to look for WiG advertisers, another is to look for a rainbow sticker in the shop window.

- And, for consumers who must shop the big-box stores, WiG suggests downloading Buying for Workplace Equality from the Human Rights Campaign website. HRC rates retailers so that consumers have an idea which are naughty and which are nice in their treatment of LGBT employees.



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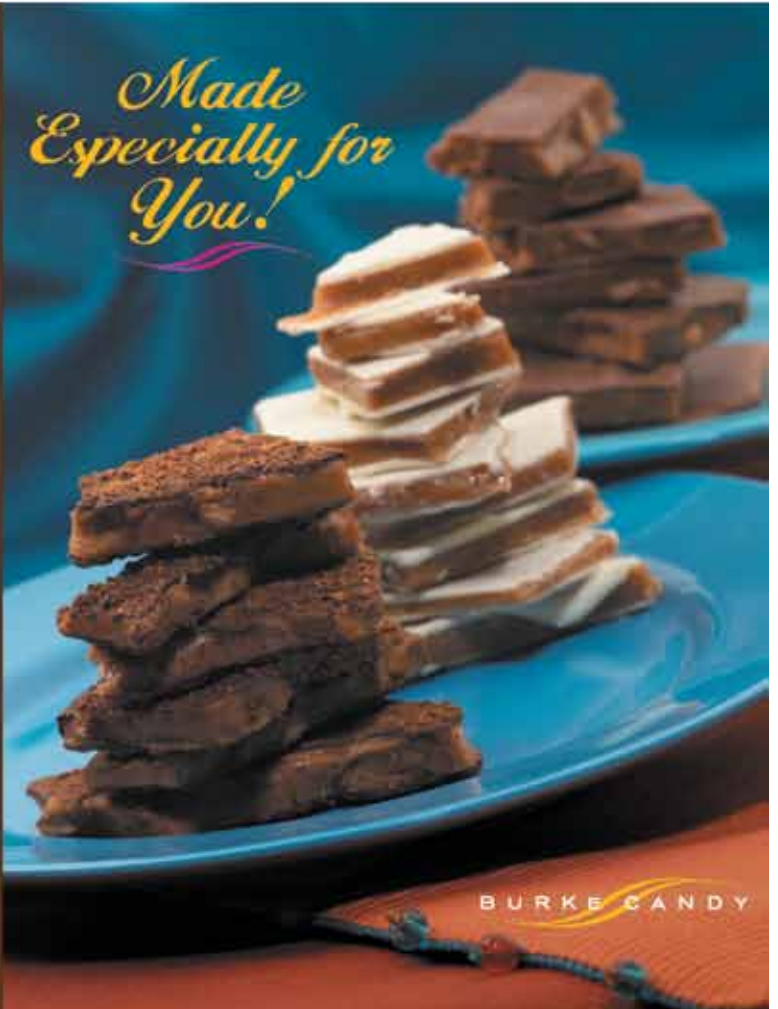
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{ Editorial }

Center needs new leadership

The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center is at a crossroads. Beset with a leadership crisis, another year of financial shortfall and a lack of community and donor engagement, the center faces challenges that could prove insurmountable.

LGBT Milwaukeeans and their allies must decide if they want the center to continue. If so, they must throw their dollars, energy and ideas behind it.

Before that can happen though, the center has to make changes that will win back the community's trust and enable the center to respond to community input. Based on the feedback WiG has received since running a series of stories about the center's financial health and operations, neither of those goals can be met until former executive director Maggi Cage and the few remaining board members she appointed are out of the picture altogether.

Cage announced recently that she was stepping aside as executive director of the center to head its mental health program – a lateral move that she apparently ordered by fiat. But Cage and her board neglected to explain how her new position would be paid for at a time when the center is losing money and will have to hire a new executive director.

Moreover, Cage's past behavior has raised questions about her ability to succeed in a directorial position. The stories WiG reported about her treatment of staff, colleagues and donors are at odds with the sensitive, nurturing environment that mental health programs require.

As a reader wrote us, "Who in the LGBT community would ever have confidence in mental health services that are led or provided by (Cage)?"

The center's interim executive director Sheldon Walker has asked the community for input in envisioning the center's future and revitalizing its operations. But until a new board is in place, it's unlikely that many people will want to get involved.

The center's remnant board is apparently more committed to Cage's wishes than to those of the LGBT community. That's the greatest danger of having a self-perpetuating board, which the center chose to have last year under Cage's direction.

The best way to re-engage the community is for the board to go back to being elected by the center's membership. The current board should resign and give others the chance to rebuild.

Fortunately, there are many ways the center could contribute to creating a better quality of life for LGBT people in Milwaukee, and there are many ways in which the center could engage its constituents.

Other LGBT centers offer full calendars of events that include film screenings and lectures, readings by LGBT authors, theatrical performances, art shows, poetry slams and other cultural programs. They also offer events that bring people together to interact, such as cooking classes, dance lessons and computer instruction.

Strong LGBT community centers also advocate for equality at the local level. They disseminate news and information to constituents and participate in public policy debates.

Under Cage, the center devoted minimal energy to these kinds of activities. Hopefully, the center's future leadership will offer compelling programs, be accessible to the public and create a more welcoming environment.



{ Feedback }

A GIFT LIST

On the first day of Christmas, health reform gave to me, the right to keep my kids on my health insurance until age 26.

On the second day of Christmas, health reform gave to me, the right for my kids to have health insurance regardless of whether they have pre-existing conditions or disabilities (this will expand to adults in roughly two Christmases).

On the third day of Christmas, health reform gave to me, no lifetime dollar limits from insurance companies on essential coverage.

On the fourth day of Christmas, health reform gave to me, protection from insurance companies who want to drop me when I get sick just because I made an honest mistake on my coverage application.

On the fifth day of Christmas, health reform

gave to me, free checkups and preventive care screenings and services for seniors enrolled in Medicare.

On the sixth day of Christmas, health reform gave to me, a 35 percent tax credit for small business owners who offer health insurance (this will increase to 50 percent in roughly two Christmases).

On the seventh day of Christmas, health reform gave to me, more value for my premium dollar – by requiring insurance companies to spend more on my health care and less on advertising and overhead.

On the eighth day of Christmas, health reform gave to me, a 50 percent discount on covered brand-name prescription drugs for seniors who hit the "donut hole" coverage gap under Medicare.

On the ninth day of Christmas, health reform gave to me, a phase-out of

annual dollar limits for job-related and individual health plans – until the annual limit is completely eliminated for plans starting in 2014.

On the 10th day of Christmas, health reform gave to me, coverage for many preventive services with no co-pay or deductible – including immunizations, mammography and other cancer screenings.

On the 11th day of Christmas, health reform gave to me, a longer life for Medicare due to a reduction in waste, fraud, and abuse, and slowing the growth of health care costs by focusing on preventive care.

On the 12th day of Christmas, health reform gave to me, www.healthcare.gov – an easy-to-use site to explain the rest of health insurance reform to me in plain English.

Doug Hill
Director of Know Your Care
Wisconsin

ON THE RECORD

“This means more to me than any Grammy I could ever win.”
– LADY GAGA accepting the *Hero Award* from the Trevor Project in recognition of her advocacy for the LGBT community.

“If you can have gays who don't seem gay, why can't you have heterosexuals who kind of seem gay? She (Michele Bachmann) wouldn't run for president if her husband were gay!”

– ANN COULTER, the darling of the gay political right, speculating about whether Marcus Bachmann, the effeminate husband of GOP presidential candidate Michelle Bachman, is gay.

“We urge people to boycott the Salvation Army and instead give to non-sectarian agencies because it uses its selective interpretation of the Bible to promote discrimination against LGBT people in employment benefits and leadership positions within the Army.”

– ANDY THAYER, co-founder of Chicago-based Gay Liberation Network.

“It's not that we've forgotten how to create wealth in this country. It's that we have allowed that wealth to be concentrated in fewer and fewer hands. And as the distance between top and bottom has widened, the bonds between us have stretched – and broken.”

– U.S. REP. TAMMY BALDWIN, who seeks to become Wisconsin's first woman in the U.S. Senate next year as well as the nation's first out senator.

“At the end of the day, we are a family and that's important. The catch is that when we leave the dinner table or leave the Christmas gathering, you know he and (his wife) Callista still have way more rights than my wife Rebecca and I do.”

– CANDACE GINGRICH-JONES, half-sister of anti-gay GOP presidential candidate Newt Gingrich, explaining to Rachel Maddow why she'll vote for Barack Obama next year and not her brother.

“When the blow comes, it's going to be horrible.”
– THE REV. PAT ROBERTSON predicting dire consequences from heaven over President Barack Obama's international LGBT rights policy.

“Macy's is one of many retail establishments now catering to pro-homosexual activists who are pushing forward with 'social engineering' throughout our schools, workplaces, military and government agencies.”

– A LIBERTY COUNSEL STATEMENT urging right-wing “Christians” to sign a petition demanding that the department store giant end its policies of workplace equality.

“They all scare me frankly. I get depressed and scared when I look at the Republican debates.”

– ACTOR, PRODUCER AND POLITICAL ACTIVIST JANE FONDA assessing the GOP presidential field for CNN's Piers Morgan.

Toasts, roasts for 2011

Three rounds of whatever he wants to New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, whose confident, fearless leadership won over the legislature and led to the adoption of marriage equality for lesbians and gay men in the Empire State. The incredible victory was clinched on the eve of gay Pride weekend in late June. Priceless.

The sharpest stakes of holly and the biggest bowl of putrid punch is reserved for Gov. Scott Walker and the Wisconsin GOP. At a time when people have been swindled out of their savings, are losing their jobs and health care, and living with growing fear for the future, “Scooter” and his legislative henchmen are quashing public sector employment, throwing thousands of poor people off health and unemployment relief rolls, restricting voting rights and birth control, filling the pockets of private-sector cronies and making guns



easier to carry.

A special drink, laced with a powerful emetic if you please, for Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch. Kleefisch, an intolerant woman absent of empathy for anyone but her narrow, privileged class, recently cried crocodile tears over the fact that the millions spent on a gubernatorial recall could take money away “from health care for the poor or schoolbooks for your kids.” No, you hypocrite, you've already done that.

Also deserving a choke, perhaps on a large dose of bitters, is GOProud, a national group of gay conservatives that named the vicious Ann Coulter, famed for anti-gay and other slurs, as honorary chair of its advisory board. Apparently, neither Ayn Rand nor Heinrich Himmler were

available.

A warm toddy and beaucoup book sales for lesbian Kay Ryan, a Poet Laureate of the United States (2008-10), who this year added to her laurels the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry and a half-million dollar “genius” grant from the MacArthur Foundation. Ryan has taught English for decades at a community college in Marin County, Calif., and used her modest celebrity to promote the community college system.

A fond farewell toast to lesbian science-fiction writer Joanna Russ, who died in April at 74. Russ' bestseller “The Female Man” blasted through the entrenched sexism of the sci-fi genre back in 1975. Her novels and short stories are witty and fierce. One powerful line in “Female Man” is spoken by the woman warrior Jael: “The best way to silence an enemy is to bite out his larynx.” Hoo-ah!

Speaking of “Hoo-ah!” let's raise a toast and salute our

gay brothers and sisters who are able, at long last, to serve openly in the military. Anyone crazy enough to die for their country ought to be allowed to, I say. Besides, the Army and Marine bands could benefit from a little electronica, and half-time shows will be so much more fab!

A happy coming-out toast to Louisa May Alcott, the 19th-century author of the classic “Little Women.” Her Wikipedia entry cites an interview in which she was asked about her lifelong spinsterhood. Alcott's delightfully unguarded reply: “Because I have fallen in love with so many pretty girls and never once the least bit with any man.”

Finally, actress Jane Lynch deserves an extra fizzy champagne cocktail for delivering the funniest line of the year while hosting the Emmy Awards. “A lot of people are very curious why I'm a lesbian,” Jane mused before this sly segue: “Ladies and gentlemen, the cast of ‘Entourage.’”

Walker's tradition – falsehoods

The Republican Party has been infused with fundamentalist fervor for decades, but the level of involvement by “Christian” extremists in the GOP has jumped off the charts in the last few years. These people, who fancy themselves the arbiters of what they call “family” and “traditional” values, now virtually control the Republican Party's primary elections in many places.

Among this faction's dearest allies is Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker. But as the governor faces a historic recall effort, he has clearly shown his willingness to toss aside the “traditional value” of honesty. Perhaps the best example of this is Walker's long list of statements rated false by PolitiFact Wisconsin. PolitiFact has fact-checked 39 Walker statements and found 27 of them to be “mostly false” or worse. The governor's record of falsehoods has increased as the recall effort has heated

up. Walker's last statement to be rated some variation of “true” was back in the late spring or early summer.

If Walker is so willing to play fast and loose with the truth in his own statements, then it should come as no surprise that his latest special interest-funded campaign ad is based on a giant lie. The ad features a Monona Grove School District teacher who gives a fictional account of how his district weathered Walker's cuts to education. The ad would leave a viewer thinking that Walker's reckless cuts did no damage at all to the district.

In fact, the Monona Grove School District superintendent has verified that the district has indeed had to lay off teachers, cut needed pro-



grams – and even had to close a building. The district's school board president is concerned about filling an even larger shortfall in funding next year.

So special interest-funded attack groups are trying to support Walker with shady tactics and dishonest claims. The worst example comes from the right-wing attack group Media Trackers. This group specializes in promoting false allegations and unproven innuendo on right-wing talk radio. The group gained notoriety recently with the false claim that two African-American women caught on camera signing a recall petition in Milwaukee were underage. In fact, they were both in their early 20s. This lie got a troubling amount of play in several media outlets, only to be proven completely false after someone took the time to actually fact-check the accusation.

Media Trackers accused a progressive get-out-the-vote effort earlier in the year of trading a barbecue meal for absentee ballots in the last round of recall elections. The Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office investigated and found that no law was broken. The DA's findings in no way resembled Media Trackers' allegations. A Media Trackers representative actually gave a sworn statement during the investigation that didn't match the organization's rhetoric on the subject.

Apparently, members of the organization value honesty only when they are under oath. It would be a welcome change of pace if they also valued it in their public statements and accusations.

These examples remind us that right-wing extremists like Walker value political power over everything else. Even though they wear a phony mantle of “traditional values,” one of the first casualties of their politics is the traditional value of honesty.

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

The messy theology of Bishop Eddie Long

Religion

REV. IRENE MONROE

Bishop Eddie Long, one of the black church's prominent pastors of "prosperity gospel" and bling-bling theology, is flashing neither his gold nor silver these days.

The Atlanta-based Long had hoped to close the lid on a sex scandal by settling for an undisclosed sum with the young men who charged him with using trips, gifts and jobs to coerce them into a sexual relationship.

But the mess won't subside and trouble keeps coming: Long's wife recently filed for divorce, church coffers and membership keep shrinking, and now Long's stepping

down temporarily from his bully pulpit. Who among us would not flinch at the thought of a "holy man" preying on the young men in his charge instead of praying with them?

But many of those inside Long's stained-glass closet at Atlanta's New Birth Missionary Baptist Church have known for some time of the bishop's penchant for young men, whom he calls "spiritual sons." Sadly, some parishioners just didn't care.

"What he does in his personal time, he does," said Adrian Jackson, a New Birth member for 21 years. "As long as he's in there preaching, that's what matters to me."

Long, like too many African-American ministers on the "down low," denounces gays from the pulpit while

Was the pressure for Long to step down about morals or the church losing money?

using his clerical authority to court and to covet vulnerable, much-younger fatherless males.

During his infamous anti-gay march in December 2004, Long stated, "In essence, God made Eve to help Adam replenish the earth. Woman has the canal ... everything else is an exit. ... Cloning,

homosexuality and lesbianism are spiritual abortions. Homosexuality is a manifestation of the fallen man."

The pressure for Long to step down at New Birth, some would argue, has been more about the church losing money than its loose morals.

One of the reasons many churches avoid implementing a zero-tolerance policy concerning sexual abuse, including pedophilia, is that the church neither sees nor understands it as a form of sexual violence. Its pervasiveness within the church, from its seminarians to its bishops, has anesthetized church officials to the severity of the crime and its effects, both on the victims and their families.

Therefore, institutions like the Catholic Church and New Birth close their eyes

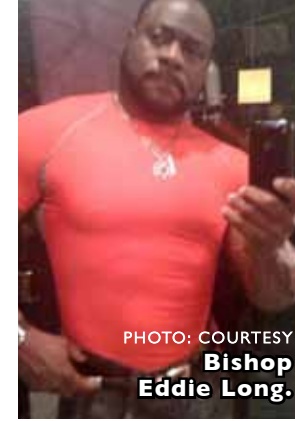


PHOTO: COURTESY Bishop Eddie Long.

non-sexual while they were still underage

Like pedophilia, Long's behavior amounted to sexual exploitation. He abused his power and used manipulation and emotional coercion to get what he wanted. At the same time, he preached publicly against the behavior he was forcing on his victims.

The sexual exploitation of parishioners is viewed as a sin and not a crime by most clerics. It persists in our churches through a culture of silence, deception and shame. Some have the unfortunate belief that they can overcome these transgressions against by daily offerings of prayers and penance – but not prosecution.

The men involved in these cases are sex offenders like any others. And Long's name should be added to them.

and refuse taking responsibility for the abuse.

Due to the older age of his victims, Long is not accused of pedophilia. But his behavior reflects the same sick power dynamics at play in crimes involving children.

Many of his relationships with young men began as

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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, www.villagechurchmilwaukee.org

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

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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.jruuc.org

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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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Sacred Journeys Spiritual Community, worship at Meadowbrook Country Club, 2149 N. Green Bay Rd., Racine, 53405, 262-312-4890, www.sacredjourneyscc.wordpress.com

OTHER

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

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

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A gift guide for animal companions

The Associated Press asked a couple of pet lifestyle experts to describe ways people might celebrate the holiday season with their pets. Some of the answers: Buy your parrot a piñata full of dried fruit. Put a tiny video camera around your cat's neck and let it record some Christmas memories. Or build a holiday dinner around your dog's gluten-free needs.

Some pet stores and shelters host photo fundraisers where you can purchase a picture of your pet in Santa's lap. And photographers who specialize in pets can bring backdrops and lights to your home to take professional shots of your pet and family for keepsakes and cards, said Carol Bryant of Fido Friendly Magazine.

Be sure you get a top-notch pet photographer your



family can feel comfortable with, such as WiG advertiser Peggy Morsch.

There also are artists who specialize in pet portraits in oil, such as Joe Simon (www.

jsimonart.com).

Private chefs can teach you to create menus for human families based on a dog's diet needs, said Jessica Vogelsang, a San Diego veterinarian and creator of pawcurious.com. Vogelsang ate ground chicken with cheese and stuffed squash at a recent demonstration by chef Tasha Ardalan from foxytreats.com.

Or you can include goodies pets can eat — like peanut butter treats — in your holiday baking.

Check out the homemade pet treats and natural/organic foods at Hounds

Around Town, 330 E. Silver Spring Drive, Whitefish Bay. Hounds, along with Feed Bag, 10900 N. Port Washington Road in Mequon, and The Natural Pet, 2532 E.

Oklahoma Ave., are locally owned stores that offer healthy treats and unique gifts for pets.

If Fido indulges during the holidays like his human companions, get him to classes at Zoom Room, Milwaukee's premiere indoor dog agility center, located on Brady Street. It's not only a great way to bond with your dog, but you can work on your winter spare tire together.

If you have to travel without your pet for the holidays, Central Bark USA has two convenient locations — in downtown Milwaukee and on the city's North Side. Go to centralbark.usa.com for details.

On the other hand, if you're planning on entertaining visitors for the holidays, you might want to stock up on breath freshener for pets, said Sandy Robins, an Irvine-

'Not all pet owners want embroidered cardigans or socks.'

based lifestyle consultant for Petco Animal Supplies Inc. "If you can kiss your two-legged family members under the mistletoe, you can kiss your four-legged family members," she said.

But don't let pets nibble on the mistletoe — it's poisonous to small animals.

Another thing to be aware is that pets might be allergic to ingredients in air fresheners, oils and candles, Robins said. Fortunately, there are pet-friendly versions of some

scented products. People who use them might even find themselves wheezing less, Robins said, because "what's good for pets is good for people."

There is no must-have pet gift this year, but one of the most popular gifts last year was the Snuggie for pets, Robins said. This year, she expects pajamas will be big sellers.

Another trend: gifts for the senior set — pets over age 7 — including infrared massagers and chew toys for those short on teeth, Robins said. The Feedbag has a fabulous dog fitness pool to aid in weight reduction or increase strength and mobility in the arthritic or older dog.

You can also unleash your pet's inner Fellini with a video cam that fits on a collar and lets your cat or dog take home movies by

Continued

the Christmas tree, though Robins acknowledged it might take some serious editing to get to the good stuff.

Petfinder.com is holding its third annual "Foster a Lonely Pet for the Holidays" campaign, hoping to give pets from 1,500 shelters a home stay between Christmas Eve and New Year's. Meanwhile, the goal of the Iams Home 4 the Holidays drive this year is 1.5 million pet adoptions worldwide.

Finally, there is an endless variety of pet-themed clothing, housewares and accessories for the humans in a dog's life. Bay View's Companion Art Gallery, 2680 S. Kinnickinnic Ave., offers all sorts of treasures for dog and cat aficionados made by local artists.

For bakers, cake, cookie and candy pans come in the shape of bones, dog houses and fire hydrants. Tiffany & Co. sells a sterling silver dog bone charm for a bracelet.

"The apparel and accessory industry is recognizing that not all pet owners want embroidered cardigans or socks," Vogelsang said.

— Louis Weisberg

FURRY BRIEFS

CAT INHERITS \$13 MILLION

Tommaso, a 4-year-old former stray cat rescued from the streets of Rome, has inherited \$13.4 million worth of properties around Italy, making him the richest cat on the globe, according to the U.K. newspaper the Guardian.

Tommaso's owner was a 94-year-old childless widow who died last month. Because animals cannot inherit property directly in Italy, the widow named a cat-loving nurse she met in a park as Tommaso's trustee.

"I had no idea the signora had such wealth," the nurse, identified only as Stefania, told the Guardian. She and Tommaso, a black shorthair, are now living in an "undisclosed location" outside Rome, the Guardian reported.

Tommaso still has a way to go to before catching up with the world's richest dog, Gunther IV, a German shepherd from Germany, is said to be worth \$372 million.

Still, \$13 million is some serious scratch.


A PLACE TO CAT AROUND?

A petition on change.org calls on Gregor Robertson, the mayor of Vancouver, British Columbia, to establish a cat park in the city's West End.

"There are over 12,000 cat owners living in Vancouver's West End, but there are no designated public spaces for the cats to roam free," the petition reads. "Cats should have equal rights to dogs and yet that doesn't seem to be the case in Vancouver."

So far the petition has attracted only 128 signatures.

— From wire reports



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TIP OF THE WEEK

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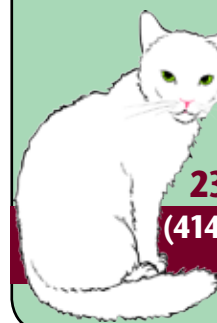
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EN POINTE

Michael Pink creates stories that dance

By Michael Muckian
Contributing writer

As far as Michael Pink is concerned, comparisons between him and Billy Elliott, the fictional lad from northern England who gave up boxing to pursue ballet, are purely coincidental. But as artistic director of the Milwaukee Ballet, Pink has created a one-two punch during his nine-year tenure, coupling narrative with athleticism in ways that have turned the ballet into one of the city's performing arts heavyweights.

"The abundance of arts that we have here is excessive for a city this size, and I don't mean that in a bad way," says Pink, an Englishman who arrived in Milwaukee with his family in December 2002. "And the quality of those arts is exceptional and continues getting better."

The Milwaukee Ballet fits neatly into the city's artistic abundance, mounting five fully staged programs during the 2011-12 season in an economic environment that for many companies might support two or fewer productions. Holiday favorite "The Nutcracker," which runs Dec. 10-26 at the Marcus Center for Performing Arts' Uihlein Hall, doesn't even mark the mid-point of the season.

THE BOY AND THE BALLET

Milwaukee's European feel and performing arts overload perfectly suit Pink, who was born into a theatrical and musical family in York in northern England. As a boy, Pink always knew he was destined for the theater.

"I asked my mother once what the most difficult discipline in theater was," Pink, 55, said over a cup of Earl Grey tea at Shorewood's The City Market recently. "She told me it was being a ballet dancer, so that's what I decided to do."

The events that followed read like a Horatio Alger story – if Alger had been a dancer. Pink applied for admission to a local ballet school and was turned down. He applied again and was turned down again. The instructor would not admit boys to her school, she said, because they were not serious and would not stay with the program. Pink applied again and was finally admitted. He was the school's only boy, and eventually its only student who performed well enough to be admitted to the Royal Ballet School in London.

Upon graduation in 1975, Pink joined the English National Ballet. In the ensuing 10 years he danced many of the company's leading roles, most notably in partnership with Natalia Makarova in performances of choreographer John Cranko's ballet of Tchaikovsky's "Onegin."

LEARNING FROM NUREYEV

From 1986 to 1998, Pink served as founding director of Ballet Central in London and associate artistic director of Northern Ballet Theatre in Leeds. He worked with many of ballet's brightest lights during his dancing career. He was a répétiteur for Rudolph Nureyev, teaching the out Russian dancer's steps to performers at the Paris Opera and at La Scala in Milan.

"In working with Nureyev, I observed a man that was totally consumed with his art," Pink says. "He lived to dance, feeding off anything that would enrich his passion for all things artistic – objects and people alike. I learned from him the price of success and the need for finding a balance between your life and your art, which I do not believe he ever found. He gave me the confidence to be true to myself as a creative artist."

BEYOND DANCING

Pink knew early that choreographing ballet, something he does as Milwaukee Ballet's artistic director, would enable him to enjoy a longer career in the business he loved. He began entering choreography "compositions" in various contests early and earned accolades as well as awards. After a decade he stopped dancing and started teaching. Working with a composer at London's Ballet Central, he created numerous works of every conceivable style.

Choreography, he says, is a live art that in many ways is more difficult to create than other art forms.

"Creativity is the balance of artistic aspiration and audience expectation," Pink says. "A playwright works alone his room, an artist in his studio, but the choreographer has to create the fringing dance while everyone else is watching."

Unlike some choreographers, whose emphasis is entirely on the athleticism of the performers, Pink pays close attention to lighting, staging, costumes and prop-



PHOTO: ADAM HORWITZ
Milwaukee Ballet
Artistic Director
Michael Pink.

erties to make the sure the performances' theatrical aspects are as convincing and supportive as possible. Perhaps most importantly, Pink develops programs with a narrative for his performers to follow – even if the dance has no story to begin with – in hopes of better reaching the audience.

"I try and imagine what the 'text' would be if we were speaking rather than dancing the parts," Pink says.

"Even 'Nutcracker' requires a narrative through line, and if you look for it, you will find it."

What surprised Pink at first was how well his dancers took to the approach. Dancers are skilled athletes who spend their entire careers learning to manage their bodies, he explains. Once you expose them to the acting thought process and start training the mind in similarly expressive ways,

they open up to what, for them, is a new discipline.

As a result, the audience is more responsive, because the dance communicates something they can relate to, Pink says. "The audience suddenly begins to hear and understand the unspoken words in the dance steps," he explains. "They begin believing and becoming emotionally involved with the story."

The art of gifting

By Kat Murrell

Contributing writer

The holidays and the economy are on everyone's minds these days. There is no denying they go hand-in-hand when it comes to finding gifts that have lasting meaning and value without costing a fortune. We also are more acutely aware of how buying local can have a positive impact on our communities.

With these points in mind, I would like to suggest giving art as a very appropriate choice – if chosen wisely.

I can imagine heads spinning over this suggestion for a number of reasons. Yes, art can be expensive. But not all art is stratospherically costly, and there are plenty of places to find reasonably priced pieces.

Cost is a concern for the buyer, but taste is a concern on the receiving end. The best way to choose is to gauge the subject of the piece. What does it show? Maybe it is a bucolic landscape. That could be lovely for someone who adores nature, but it might also provide escape for the type-A personality who needs to let go of some stress. Still-life paintings are often good choices. A still life is basically a group of inanimate objects arranged in some pleasing way. Here, a person's interests or hobbies can guide your selection. The chef, for instance, might enjoy a picture of kitchen implements.

Avoid purely abstract art, which isn't a recognizable representation of anything.

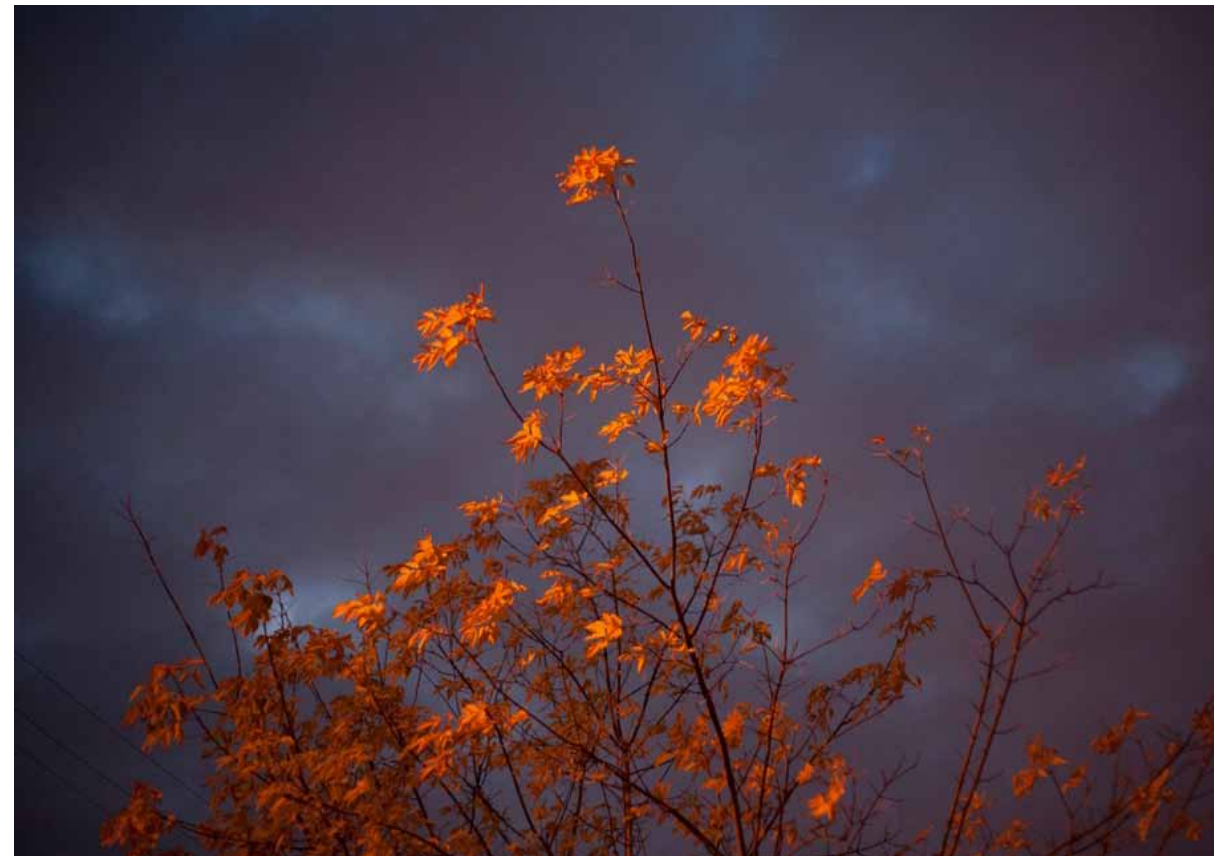
You see this kind of art as arrangements of blobs and blotches and splashes of color in places where it is little more than non-confrontational wall decor. Boring abstract art is numbly dull, but when it is done well, it is exceptionally powerful and moving. So how to get to the good stuff? To realize the full effect takes a connection between the viewer and the work itself, and this can be really hard to gauge for another person. Sticking with the pictures of objects is safer.

One more word of caution: Don't buy "art to match the sofa." There is plenty of art that is selected this way to enhance a decorative scheme, but you want your gift to be appreciated long after that sofa has gone to Goodwill and the fashion for chartreuse walls is over. Buy something that stands on its own, and it will fit in wherever it goes.

OK, time to go shopping.

If you are on the hunt for something with a definite pedigree and established historical value – and have the pocketbook to obtain it – there are a number of options. David Barnett Gallery, 1024 E. State St. in Milwaukee, has an eclectic mix of European, American and non-Western art spanning the last 500 years. Works are not on the low end of the price scale, but if upscale art is on your holiday list, it is worth checking out.

For art that ranges in



Tara Bogart pictures everyday life in multifaceted photographs.

PHOTO: COURTESY PORTRAIT SOCIETY GALLERY

price from a mere \$20 into the thousands, head to the Marshall Building, 207 E. Buffalo St., in Milwaukee's Third Ward.

Of particular note is Portrait Society Gallery on the Marshall Building's fifth floor. Gallery director Debra Brehmer (also a WiG writer) is showing multiple exhibitions, including the inventive "Every Day," featuring 13 art-

ists and photographers. They were asked to make images throughout a single day, and the results reveal much about the artistic eye. The pictures have a meditative nature, comforting in the way they expose the ordinary world with a sense of beauty, and even transcendence. This is the stuff of everyday life, and it's not so bad when you look at it this way. Aside from the artistic

quality of these pictures, price-wise they are among the best deals in town at a cost around \$1 per square inch.

While art galleries may be the obvious places for procuring aesthetically pleasing holiday pictures, don't forget other venues such as Art Bar, 722 E. Burleigh St. The current exhibition "mini" is like the proverbial box of chocolates – you never know

what you are going to get, and there is something for everyone. It is billed as "tiny art & tiny prices," and it does not disappoint. The quality varies among the dozens of works, but you will find wonderful pieces by established Milwaukee artists, including Steph Bartz, Dan Stauff, Mike Kasun and Melissa Musante, with most works costing less than \$50.

As the year winds down, so do other exhibitions. "Current Tendencies II: Artists from Milwaukee" surveys the local scene in all its diversity, including social reflections in the art of Sharon Kerry-Harlan, Reginald Baylor and Luc Leplae, the exquisite sound and sculpture of Jordan Waraksa, and the multi-layered video of Jessica Meuninck-Ganger and

Nathaniel Stern. The exhibition continues through Dec. 31 at the Haggerty Museum of Art, 530 N. 13th St.

Closing even sooner is "Input/Output" at Inova/Kenilworth, 2155 N. Prospect Ave., showing work from the UWM Peck School of the Arts Department of Film, Video, Animation and New Genres MFA program. The department name alone suggests the spirit of experi-

mentation found in this next generation of artists and creators. The exhibition concludes its brief 10-day run on Dec. 18.

A notable exhibition opening soon is "One World: One People: Jewish Photographic Portraits by Arnold Newman" at the Jewish Museum Milwaukee, 1360 N. Prospect Ave. Newman's subjects include important fig-

ures in politics, the arts and entertainment, such as Golda Meir, Leonard Bernstein and Marc Chagall. The exhibition opens on Dec. 25, from noon to 4 p.m. with the event "A Jewish Cinematic Celebration," featuring screenings of "West Side Story" and "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," films involving two of Newman's portraiture subjects.

SPOTLIGHTING THE BEST ON AREA STAGES

WIGOUT STAGE GAZE

EDITED AND COMPILED BY GREGG SHAPIRO

Stage Q presents a non-musical send-up of "The Sound of Music" by Joe Godfrey titled "Claptrapp -or- The Sound of Musicals," at Bartell Theatre, 113 E. Mifflin in Madison, Dec. 15-17. This version is strictly for adults. Call 608-204-0280.

The Milwaukee Rep presents "Next to Normal," the Pulitzer- and Tony-winning musical, through Jan. 15. This groundbreaking work about a suburban family coping with mental illness features a pop-rock score of more than 30 songs. Call 414-224-9490 or go to www.MilwaukeeRep.com.



PHOTO: COURTESY
"Scrooge In Rouge"

"Scrooge In Rouge" is back at Tenth Street Theatre, 628 N. 10th, through Dec. 31. In Tandem Theatre presents the final season of this uproarious musical comedy featuring original cast members Chris Flieller, Matt Daniels and Marcella Kearns. Call 414-271-1371.

American Players Theatre restages "The Gift of the Magi," an original musical based on O. Henry's classic short story about love and generosity. "Magi" plays APT's intimate, indoor Touchstone Theatre, 5950 Golf Course Road in Spring Green, through Dec. 18. Call 608-588-2361.

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre presents "Heroes" by Tom Stoppard at Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway, through Dec. 18. The production stars veterans Richard Halverson, Daniel Mooney and Robert Spencer. Call 414-291-7800.

Skyline Opera Theatre's brilliant and lavish production of "The Music Man" continues at Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway, through Dec. 18. This is a feel-good, can't-miss experience. Call 414-291-7800.

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

For the dog lover in all of us, Next Act Theatre

presents A. R. Gurney's "Sylvia," about a Central Park stray who has an unexpected impact on a couple's marriage. The production continues at 255 S. Water through Dec. 18. Call 414-278-0765 or visit www.nextact.org.

"Roald Dahl's Willy Wonka" is at The Racine Theatre Guild, 2519 Northwestern (Highway 38) in Racine, through Dec. 18. This musical version of Roald Dahl's "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" was created by Leslie Bricusse, Anthony Newley and Tim McDonald. Call 262-633-4218.

Immediate Theatre presents the Chicago premiere of Adam Bock's play "Five Flights," featuring perhaps the longest man-on-man kiss in theatre history, at Red Tape Theatre, 621 W. Belmont in Chicago, through Dec. 18. Visit www.redtapetheatre.org.

"A Kodachrome Christmas," a treat from writer/director Pat Hazell, is at Milwaukee's Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, at Water and State, through Dec. 31. The production stars local favorite John McGivern as Earlene Hoople. Call 414-273-2787.

The Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Drive in Lincolnshire, Ill., presents a new musical based on "White Christmas" through Jan. 1. Call 847-634-0200.



PHOTO: COURTESY
"A Christmas Carol"

The Milwaukee Rep's "A Christmas Carol" returns to The Pabst, 144 E. Wells, through Dec. 24. Joseph Hanreddy and Edward Morgan adapted this popular version of Charles Dickens' classic. Call 414-286-3663.

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Artwatch
KAT MURRELL

Got grievances? Then get to the Milwaukee Art Museum for the MAM After Dark celebration of **Festivus** on Dec. 16, from 5 p.m. to midnight. The "Seinfeld"-inspired evening will include traditions such as

feats of strength, photos with the Festivus pole and the airing of grievances, emceed by Comedy Sportz's Beth Lewinski. Check the MAM website for additional details.

The Festivus events include a tour at 8 p.m. of "Taryn Simon: Photographs and Texts" with curator Lisa Hostetler. This important exhibition will close on Jan. 1, so get in to see it while you still can.

'Next to Normal' tackles difficult subject matter

Theater

MICHAEL MUCKIAN

Mark Clements, artistic director for the Milwaukee Rep, went through a period of depression from 2005-2007. The bouts were sometimes debilitating, but initially he was too ashamed to seek help. Once he found help, he was amazed by how supportive friends, family and therapists could be. Sharing his pain helped to dissipate it and put him on the road to recovery, he found.

Clements' personal experience in part drives the Rep's production of "Next to Normal," the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical that opened Dec. 6 at the Quadracci Powerhouse Theater. The pop-rock production, which also won three Tony Awards, deals with the story of a suburban housewife with bipolar disorder and her family's attempt to cope with it.

"My problems were not as serious as being bipolar, thank God, and I knew the

reason for them," Clements says. "Part of the play's purpose is to address the issues associated with mental illness. 'Next to Normal' allows us to start a conversation."

Described by Clements as "a theatergoers' piece of theater," "Next to Normal" won the 2010 Pulitzer Prize for drama, the first musical to do so since "Rent" took the honor in 1996. Composer Tom Kitt's surging musical score, which earned one of the show's three Tonys, joins with Brian Yorkey's book and lyrics to paint a picture of suburban suffering for lead character Diana Goodman, her husband Dan, daughter Natalie, and the ghost of her dead son Henry, who appears as part of Diana's delusional state.

Mastering the role of Diana, who goes through pharmacotherapy, electric shock treatments, self-cutting and other mental illness challenges, proved a daunting, but not impossible task, says Sarah Litzinger, the Broadway performer chosen for the role. Extensive conversations with Clements and cast interviews



PHOTO: MICHAEL BROSILOW

"Next To Normal"

with therapists helped the Indiana native establish a baseline character on which to realistically build Diana's manic and depressed stages.

"I think Diana reacts differently due to her illness, and it seems to me that her mania and depression rule over her," says Litzinger, best known as being the longest-running actress to play Belle in the Broadway production of "Disney's Beauty and the Beast" after inheriting the role from Andrea McArdle.

"The way I see it, the disorder is doing the driving and she is simply the passenger."

"Sarah is able to display the broad range of emotions needed and can be powerful as well as vulnerable," Clements says. "In addition, she has a killer voice. We really lucked out with her."

Clements also lucked out in heading one of the first regional theater groups to mount a production of "Next to Normal," which started in 1998 as "Feeling Electric," a 10-minute theatrical work-

shop sketch about a woman undergoing electroshock therapy and its effect on her family. Playwright Yorkey brought the idea to Kitt, who scored the piece, which was performed at a number of workshops over the next several years.

The first full-length version appeared off Broadway in 2008. The concept and approach were revamped by director Michael Greif before the play open at the Booth Theater on Broadway in 2009. Greif also directed the Pulitzer Prize-winning production of "Rent."

Despite the uplifting musical score, which Clements believes helps make tackling the subject matter easier for audience members, the Milwaukee Rep understands the seriousness of its subject matter and the effect it might have on theatergoers. Rogers Memorial Hospital, a psychiatric facility with outlets in Milwaukee, Madison, Kenosha, Oconomowoc and Brown Deer, is the show's signature sponsor. Doctors will be on hand for the talk-back sessions that follow many performances. Other medical facilities are among

the community participant groups for the show.

The content also is having an effect on performers, including Litzinger. She anticipates that playing Diana might be a life-changing experience.

"How could it not?" the actress asks. "When rehearsing, it's hard not to fall to pieces sometimes."

Despite the challenges, Clements believes Milwaukee is ready for a show like "Next to Normal."

"Milwaukee audiences are inquisitive and like to be challenged," the director says. "This play is witty, entertaining, ends on an uplifting note and has a killer score. It's a show that affects people very deeply."

ON STAGE

The Milwaukee Rep's production "Next to Normal" runs through Jan. 15 at the Quadracci Powerhouse Theater. Call 414-224-9490 or go to www.milwaukeekeerep.com.

'If I couldn't do ballet, I would love to direct a movie,' Pink says

PINK from 19

The emphasis on narrative even helps when there is a firm storyline already in place. Normally, the famous balcony scene in Prokofiev's "Romeo and Juliet" is delicately danced, the principles turning away and looking back at each other with wistful, longing glances. Not so in Pink's more narrative-driven productions.

"These are teenagers who can't keep their hands off of

each other," he says, "and when they kiss during the dance, they really kiss. There is no way to fake that."

NEXT STEPS

Pink calls choreographers like Martha Graham and George Balanchine "dance-makers." Their approach, he says, is entirely original and advances the dance discipline. But much of choreography is more a matter of connecting the dots, choosing from a

library of steps, moves and pas de deux that correspond with the music to which they are being performed.

The moves also are matched to the abilities of the performers and their relationships to each other. Pink stresses the development of the entire Milwaukee Ballet, rather than depending on one or two star performers to carry the company forward. He believes that a stronger company can sur-

vive even when a star performer burns out.

"The dance world has been in a holding pattern for 15 years," Pink says. "Complicated steps are not enough to build a relationship with the audience. If dance is to survive, it's about making the discipline more relevant."

Although he would like to further expand the ballet's fan base to attract young people, Pink is optimistic

about Milwaukee and the continued growth of the community's appreciation for his and other art forms.

To help broaden that appreciation, Pink has reached out to other companies, collaborating with Milwaukee Repertory Theater artistic director Mark Clements, also a Brit by birth, on last season's production of "Cabaret." He's collaborating again this season, providing choreographic

direction for the Pulitzer Prize-winning musical "Next to Normal," the Rep's current production.

After nine years, Milwaukee has become a comfortable home for Pink, his wife Jayne and children Chloe, 20, Max, 11, and Georgina, 9. He still has artistic aspirations, and the city has gone a long way in meeting many — but not quite — all of them.

"If I couldn't do ballet, I would love to direct a movie," Pink says. "Live theater and especially dance are bubbles that burst every night because you can't anticipate what will happen, and it's never exactly the same as it was the night before. With a movie, you can watch and learn from it again and again."

Since Pink already storyboards the flying sequences for his popular ballet "Peter Pan," which returns to Uihlein Hall May 10-13, it would seem that the protean artist is taking his first small steps toward a filmmaking career. Could cinematic success be next on his horizon?

Uncork the mystery of your holiday bubbly

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Some things occur by happy accident, and such is the case with the discovery of Champagne, the effervescent wine that the unfortunate French queen Marie Antoinette is rumored to have said was the only drink that made women more beautiful.

Winters in the Champagne region of northeast France can be cold, and during the 17th century the chill air often stopped the locally grown wines in mid-fermentation. The warmth of the spring would ignite a second fermentation, resulting in the release of carbon dioxide that caused a pressure buildup, often leading to exploding wine bottles. Many winemakers were horrified, but it took Dom Pierre Pérignon, a nearly blind Benedictine monk from the Abbey of Hautvillers, to tame the vines and master the methode champenoise process.

"I am drinking stars," the monk is reported to have said upon tasting the delightful result of the double-fermentation process. Today, we all benefit from Dom Pérignon's wisdom and can taste the stars in a variety of sparkling wines.

The legal identity "Champagne" can include all sparkling wines from the famous French region, but sparklers from elsewhere cannot legally lay claim to the name. However, that doesn't mean there aren't perfectly good substitutes for your holiday festivities.

Given that the price of Moët and Chandon's Dom Pérignon Champagne currently starts at \$120 per bottle and goes up from there depending on the vintage and merchant, less expensive but equally enjoyable brands may be a better match for your budget. Here are some recommendations. (All wines are available throughout Wisconsin.)

SLIGHTLY SWEET

The La Marca Prosecco (\$16) comes from northern Italy's Treviso region. Produced from 100 percent Prosecco grapes, the



STOCK PHOTO

wine arrives with hints of citrus, honey and floral patterns on the nose, its persistent bubbles delivering a similar combination plus essences of apple, grapefruit and a little minerality to the palate.

SPARKLING BARGAINS

The Mas Fin Cava Brut (\$10) is grown and bottled in the Catalan country of El Penedés in northern Spain from native Xarel-lo, Macabeo and Parellada grapes. The result is an elegantly balanced wine with a nose of white flowers and citrus and a creamy palate of fresh stone fruits.

The 2008 Korbel Organic Brut (\$16), like the name implies, is produced from organic French Columbard, Chardonnay and Sangiovese grapes grown in California's Sonoma Valley. Apples, pears and white peaches dominate the wine's flavor profile, one that delivers medium dry with slightly savory notes at the end.

THE REAL THING

The Piper-Heidsieck NV Brut (\$45) from Champagne takes things up a notch. The blend of Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier grapes arrives in the glass with sparkling clarity and a pale gold color, its bouquet reminiscent of summer blossoms with hints of apple, pear and a warm toastiness. The blend transfers well to the palate, its delicate bubbles bursting with notes of citrus and

other fruits.

Champagne Charles Heidsieck NV Brut Reserve (\$58) pushes the envelope a little further with its deeper golden color. Its nose brings to mind cocoa, pralines and fresh almonds with the rich subtlety of tiramisu. The flavor of almonds carries over to the palate, with the addition of white peaches, pineapple and tropical fruits for a light-bodied, but still decadent blend.

Pol Roger Brut Reserve "White Foil" NV (\$59) has long been considered a "gentlemen's" champagne, and was a favorite of Sir Winston Churchill and the British royal family. The blend of Pinot Noir (from the vineyards in Montagne de Reims), Pinot Meunier (from Petite Valle de Epernay) and Chardonnay (from Cote de Blancs) results in a wine of body and depth, freshness and fruit and elegance and finesse. Bright colors on the nose are followed by flavors of crystallized fruit, butterscotch and savory tart. There are few finer champagnes for the money.

Regardless of your choice, know that your holiday season will become that much more festive once you uncork a bottle and begin drinking stars.

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HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM THE WISCONSIN GAZETTE!

'Kodachrome' is a gift box of holiday cheer

By Louis Weisberg
Staff writer

"A Kodachrome Christmas" reunites Emmy-award winning actor and Milwaukee favorite son John McGivern with playwright/director Pat Hazell, a consultant on the first season of NBC's "Seinfeld." The two collaborated successfully on "Wonder Bread Years" and "Bunk Bed Brothers" to produce nostalgic laughs for Baby Boomer sensibilities. Their latest joint effort blends the spirit of those prior works with McGivern's popular one-man shows about growing up in Milwaukee.

The result is holiday nirvana for McGivern fans, a gift box of cleverly staged sight gags, folksy insight and seasonal humor wrapped with just enough social realism to make it relevant. If you haven't found your holiday groove yet, head over to Marcus Center's Vogel Hall for a guaranteed mood adjustment.

In "Kodachrome," McGivern dons a skirt and



John McGivern portrays Earlene Hoople in "A Kodachrome Christmas."

PHOTO: ROSS ZENTNER

nylons to take on cable access TV hostess Earlene Hoople, the self-proclaimed "Queen

of Rural Media," as she tapes her last Christmas special in front of a live audience

in Fredonia. But this is no prancing drag act. McGivern's Earlene is as authentic as she is colorful, and the man beneath the lipstick quickly disappears in his skillful portrayal.

Earlene has recently lost her husband Ray. Her professional shelf life, like that of the Kodachrome film Ray left in the refrigerator, is about to expire. But McGivern's Earlene still has plenty of heart and enough plucky resolve to see her through the day. Her show will go on.

Although Ray is gone, his beautiful Belgian angel arrives just in time to top the tree on Earlene's homey set. A blowout on the freeway

details the bell-ringing act set to appear on her broadcast, but the resourceful Earlene, using her spatula as a baton, leads audience members through a bell-ringing number. The Christmas miracles unfold before our eyes.

This is a slickly produced piece of theater, and its inventiveness extends beyond the witty script and McGivern's polished delivery. The set is almost as alive as Pee-Wee's playhouse, with a pop-up tree and drop-down holiday cards and stockings.

A series of "Saturday Night Live"-style commercials spoof the marketing of religion with great hilarity. One ad, for instance,

promotes a service that provides home delivery of holy water. Another is for a microwavable "last supper" TV dinner, which comes complete with a Shroud of Turin tablecloth.

With so many props to juggle, stage manager Lisa Sottile deserves a special shout-out for coordinating all the business in this flawless production. So does wardrobe designer Aria Thornton, whose contributions include a holiday vest made of air fresheners.

The titular Kodachrome slideshow that ends Earlene's broadcast is a cleverly contrived walk down memory lane. It lovingly resurrects the Baby Boomer past with a meticulously culled scrapbook's worth of old photographs, which become riotously funny when coupled with Earlene's commentary.

"We had a saying back then - safety was second," Earlene quips, flashing a picture of a kid precariously perched on a car seat without a seatbelt.

Earlene opens the show with the adage, "Always arrive with your arms full." This production follows that advice and, in the end, leaves audiences with their hearts full.

ON STAGE

"A Kodachrome Christmas" continues through Dec. 31 at the Marcus Center's Vogel Hall, 123 E. State St. Call 414-273-7206 or go to www.marcuscenter.org.



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Zak's Café is a great new find

Dining

RICK KARLIN

Zak's Cafe is new and a bit off the beaten track, but I predict that it won't be long before it's hard to get a table there.

Following a day of shopping, we showed up in early evening at this bistro-style eatery, located in a newly renovated Walker's Point building.

I opted for a pair of appetizers instead of an entrée. The mix and match "slider" flight offered me a choice of three mini-sandwiches. The burger featured lean ground beef topped with apple-wood smoked bacon and rich cheddar cheese. Pulled BBQ pork was topped with cheddar cheese as well as crispy fried onions. The standout was the seared ahi tuna with arugula, caper remoulade and a splash of balsamic vinegar. Not bad for \$9!

Next time I may mix it up and check out the orphan of the selection - a Cubano

slider, featuring smoked ham, pulled Cuban pork, Swiss cheese, mustard and pickle.

The sandwiches proved so filling that I barely touched my salad. However, the combination of fresh slices of pear and Maytag blue cheese, arugula and candied walnuts drizzled with a light vinaigrette was not wasted. It held up quite well, and served as an excellent lunch the next day.

My dining partners were all in the mood for fish, and since it was Friday, most of the seafood dishes were on special. The Friday night fish fry for \$12.95 featured three large pieces of cod (perch is another option), coated in a light beer batter and served with choice of French fries or potato pancake. The fries succeeded better than the slightly greasy pancake. A side of cole slaw, usually a nod to veggies, stood on its own. The creamy sauce was used sparingly and had a bit of a kick. I could have eaten an order as my entrée.

There also is the option of getting a combo platter featuring beer-battered cod,

perch and shrimp served with baked potato for two bucks more.

One of us opted for the healthier, but no less delicious rainbow trout. Lightly breaded and pan-seared, it featured a light and refreshing lemon parsley beurre blanc and steamed broccoli for \$14.95.

For meat eaters there are a variety of options, including steaks and chops, all served with a choice of cabernet demi-glaze or green peppercorn sauce. Meat entrees range in price from \$12 to \$20. Vegetarians aren't left out - there are roasted veggie dishes as well as a number of pasta options.

Whatever you do, save room for dessert. While the cakes are not made on premises, they are made by hand. The carrot cake is among the best I've ever eaten, while the red velvet was far moister than many versions I've sampled. Whatever you order, get it with artisan ice cream, sourced from a nearby vendor. On the night of our visit one of the flavor options

ON THE TABLE

Zak's Cafe
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was peppermint candy cane. All I can say is that if that ice cream were a man, my husband would be in trouble.

Zak's serves breakfast, lunch and dinner. The breakfast menu is available until 3 p.m. Monday through Saturday, with brunch served from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Sundays.

The brunch/breakfast menu intrigued me with such tempting dishes as two varieties of breakfast burritos, brioche French toast and four varieties of eggs Benedict, including one with lobster and another with king crab.

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PHOTO: COURTESY Zak's Cafe.

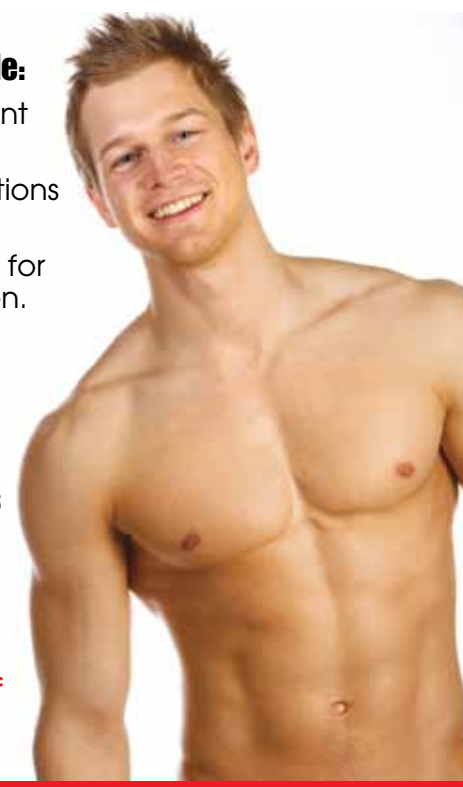
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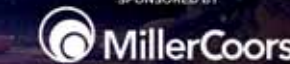


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GREGG SHAPIRO

'LONGHORNS'

Few things are more annoying than a comedy that's not funny. Except for a sex comedy that's not sexy or funny. Such is the unfortunate case with "Longhorns," from writer/director David Lewis ("Rock Haven").

On a college campus in 1982 Texas, Kevin (Jacob Newton) finds himself fan-

tasizing about sex with a guy while he's shuffling cheerleader Camille (Sophia Revelli). Of course he can't tell his homo-hatin' best buddy on campus Justin (Kevin Held) or his over-sexed back home best friend Steve (Dylan Vox) about his feelings.

But when he meets arts major and tutor César (Derek Efrain Villanueva) and experiences an undeniable attraction to him, he must face facts. César sees Kevin for the "delusional closet whore" that he is. But he just can't help himself and falls

in love with Kevin anyhow, meaning there's heartbreak on the horizon and possibly redemption, too.

With the exception of Villanueva, the performances are wooden (and not the good kind). Distracting voice-overs don't help the situation.

"Longhorns" is short on laughs and homoeroticism. It also lacks an authentic feel for the 1980s. If you want that in abundance, watch "Edge of Seventeen."

'THE REAL L WORD'

Pierced, tattooed and dreadlocked Whitney leads her merry band of lesbians through the second season (on three DVDs) of Showtime's "unscripted" reality series "The Real L Word." Inspired by co-producer Ilene Chaiken's dramatic cable series of the same name, "The Real L Word" goes bicoastal and touches on relationships, activism, lesbian motherhood, power tools, casual hookups and so much more.



PHOTO: COURTESY
From "Longhorns."

'LEADING LADIES'

In "Leading Ladies," the dancing Campari sisters, Tasi (Shannon Lea Smith) and Toni (Laurel Vail), live with their stage mother Sheri (Melanie LaPatin) — a cross between Mama Rose and vintage Divine Miss M. When she's not arguing with her boyfriend, Tasi preps for a ballroom dancing competition with gay dance partner Cedric (Benji Schwimmer). Toni, relegated to the sidelines by Sheri, helps Tasi prac-

time when she's not working at a pizza parlor.

But things are about to change in big ways for the sisters. A night out swing dancing with Cedric results in Toni meeting and falling in love with Mona (Nicole Dionne). Tasi, meanwhile, can't fit into her competition costume because she's pregnant with twins.

The good news is that Toni and Mona make a great dancing pair. The bad news is that the judges probably won't let

them compete.

"Leading Ladies" is like "Strictly Dirty Ballroom Dancing with the Stars," due to its sensational dance sequences. But the paper-thin script is problematic. Fortunately, Vail and Dionne are radiant as the young lesbians in love, making these leading ladies the best reason for seeing "Leading Ladies." DVD bonus features include outtakes, deleted and extended scenes and much more.



PHOTO: COURTESY
"The Real L Word."

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New releases make for a strong end to the year

Film

GREGG SHAPIRO

'SHAME'

Employed and responsible NYC exec Brandon (Michael Fassbender) is an insatiable satyromaniac. In Brandon's world, sex is everywhere: in his bed (mainly with hookers), on the subway, in the windows of hotel rooms, on the street, in bars, on his laptop, in a men's room stall (alone) at the office. An exhibitionist with a stunning endowment, Brandon simply can't get enough.

The one thing he can get enough of is his scarred and self-destructive, bleached-blond, nightclub-singer younger sister Cissy (Carey Mulligan). Their dysfunctional relationship, which includes Brandon's disregard of Cissy's desperate answering machine messages, has a whiff of a sexual dynamic. Like Brandon, Cissy places little value on the feelings of others, except when it comes to her brother. But even that is short-lived when she crashes at his place and invades his carefully crafted world.

Brandon's struggle with his unquenchable desires reaches a fever pitch when he isn't able to perform with co-worker Marianne (Nicole Beharie), a woman in whom he could actually take an interest. But he washes away that experience with a string of encounters, including one, surprisingly,

There are obstacles that the barely functioning alcoholic Mavis doesn't count on, including the fact that Buddy has no interest in reconnecting with her. There's

in the backroom of a gay bar (didn't see that one coming, so to speak, at all). Hanging over all of it is suicidal Cissy's disappearance after he kicks her out of his place.

The movie's shock value and its NC17 rating may be more than some audience members can handle.

'YOUNG ADULT'

Oscar-winning screenwriter Diablo Cody reteams with "Juno" director Jason Reitman for the mean-spirited, kick-in-the-teeth comedy "Young Adult." The title refers to the genre of books that self-absorbed substance abuser Mavis (Charlize Theron) writes. Her once-successful series of y/a novels has run its course and Mavis is avoiding her editor, who regularly dogs her about her deadline.

But an e-mail from now-married, new father Buddy (Patrick Wilson), the ex-boyfriend who got away, drives Mavis to extremes. She jumps in her car in Minneapolis, laptop and Pomeranian named Dolce in tow, and heads for hometown Mercury, where she plans to get Buddy back. Never mind that the e-mail from the proud papa was glowing with news about his newborn daughter. Mavis has her sights set on Buddy, wife Beth (Elizabeth Reaser) and baby aside.

There are obstacles that the barely functioning alcoholic Mavis doesn't count on, including the fact that Buddy has no interest in reconnecting with her. There's



PHOTO: COURTESY
From "The Descendants."

also former classmate Matt (Patton Oswalt, who steals the movie), permanently disabled in a case of hate-crime mistaken identity. The jocks who brutally assaulted him thought, wrongly, that he was gay. Matt is both a voice of reason in Mavis' constantly wet head as well as a much-needed source of laughs for the audience.

Oscar-winner Theron proves to be adept at comedy, especially alongside a pro such as Oswalt. Several shades darker than "Juno," "Young Adult" has merit, especially for anyone who has made peace with the past, specifically the past known as high school.

'THE DESCENDANTS'

Lawyer Matt (George Clooney) and his cousins are the titular descendants in the latest Alexander Payne flick, Matt has his hands full.

To add insult to injury, Matt's wife Liz (Patricia Hastie) is in a coma and on life-support following a water-skiing accident. Left with 10-year-old daughter Scottie (Amara Miller), who borders on being a problem child, and 17-year-old daughter Alex (Shailene Woodley), a troubled teen away at boarding school, Matt must step up and regain control of his family. His plans take an unexpected turn when he learns from Alex that Liz had been cheating on him with married real estate agent Brian (Matthew Lillard).

From there, "The Descendants" comes into sharp focus as a movie about

Matt and his family, both immediate and extended. Clooney gives the performance of a lifetime, raw and moving. Woodley, Lillard and Greer also deserve to be singled out for their work. More heartbreaking than heartwarming, "The Descendants" is one of this season's must-see movies.

'MY WEEK WITH MARILYN'

Based on filmmaker Colin Clark's experiences working as a third assistant director on Sir Laurence Olivier's 1957 movie "The Prince and the Showgirl," "My Week with Marilyn" ranks among the better movies about making movies. The film also gives Michelle Williams, who was incredible in "Wendy and Lucy" and "Blue Valentine," a chance to continue showing audiences what she is capable of as an actress. By interpreting, not imitating or impersonating Monroe, Williams elicits a compassionate response for both her performance and for Monroe.

"My Week With Marilyn" is undeniably charming, as charismatic, if unpredictable, as Monroe herself. Branagh's Olivier is spot-on and Judi Dench is delightful as Dame Sybil Thorndike. But it's to Williams' credit that she holds her own against scene-stealers such as Dench. Her Marilyn is as enchanting and complex as the real thing.



PHOTO: COURTESY
Michelle Williams in
"My Week With Marilyn."

Dave Koz feels like a brand new artist

Interview
GREGG SHAPIRO

It's hard to imagine a better title for Dave Koz's latest Grammy-nominated album than "Hello Tomorrow." After almost 20 years on Capitol Records, Koz has relocated to the Concord label, and the album feels like a fresh start.

"I feel like a brand new artist, too," Koz said, as we began our interview. "That's a great thing to be able to feel. I have had a wonderful career and feel very blessed. And yet in many ways it's like starting from scratch again, because the business has changed so much. Everything has changed. And everything was brand new this time around. For someone who's been around for a lot of years, it was very refreshing and right on time. I needed that new dose of energy and new way of looking at things."

Gregg Shapiro: **You've been generous over the years in sharing space on your CDs with vocalists and other musicians. How did you select collaborators for the songs on "Hello Tomorrow"?**

Dave Koz: Each song had its own unique calling, if you will. It was kind of like a casting session really, each song was kind of a script. It was about, "This would be perfect if blank came in," and then we would just call that person (laughs). One of the great things is that I have two co-producers who had so much prestige that people really wanted to be involved in this project. When we called Herb Alpert, for example ...

I wanted to ask you about that, since Herb also recorded a version of "This Guy's in Love with You."

"This Guy's in Love with You" is a personal song for me. I love that song and have always connected to it. When I heard it with fresh ears in



Out jazzman Dave Koz recently received another Grammy nomination for his latest album "Hello Tomorrow." The Grammy Awards will be presented on Feb. 12 on CBS.

PHOTO: COURTESY

2010, this song just sounded like a song written for gay marriage, to me. In my head it sounded like a marriage-

equality theme song. With everything that's going on right now, especially of late, it just seems like that song is simple and poignant and a sweet message about love - love of any kind. I recorded that song and I wasn't planning on singing it actually but my producers ... encouraged me and said, "You're singing this," and I was like, "Oh my God, I don't know if I can do this." But I did it.

You sound great.

I'm happy with it and I said, "We really should send this to Herb Alpert just for him to hear," because he has been a mentor of mine for many years. I love that man. So I sent it to him, he called me back and said, "I not only give you my blessing but I would like to play on it, as well." So he came in and played on the track and truly that was a "Hello Tomorrow" moment. He was playing on a song that he made famous in the late 1960s.

It's also significant in that it was a breakthrough song for him, because he also sang on his version.

Right. And he had one of his biggest hits, and he is not a singer either. It is not a song that requires you to be a Pavarotti anyway to sing.

That's a song that I connect to on an emotional level and really feel a part of it, a part of the message.

"Put The Top Down" is the perfect name for the opening track. It feels like driving along the California coast - or Lincoln Memorial Drive for that matter - in a convertible. Was that always the title you intended for the song?

That's a good question. I remember writing that song with one of my collaborators, Brian Culbertson, and the name of that tune just came. It sounded like a breezy, fun, enjoy-life-to-the-fullest kind of track. It's funky, it's got kind of a carefree attitude toward it, and there was the title and it just seemed to fit.

Each song on this album kind of feeds this overall message of embracing our future and embracing change. I don't know anybody, if you are of a certain age, anybody that hasn't felt to a certain degree in the past couple years that monumental amount of change that is swirling around us in our lifetimes. Many people waking up in 2010 are saying, "My life looks a lot different than I thought it would be." I think that's what the message is of

the album, just ... surrendering and going with the flow, seeing where these changes and these new things lead you as a human being.

I know it was 20 years ago, but do you have any regrets about the mullet you were rocking on the cover of your first album?

I have only regrets about the mullet I was rocking (laughs). You're very cute in saying that I was "rocking" it. That's probably different than the way I would refer to it. I would probably say that it hasn't worn well. That it's rather embarrassing when it's a record cover that never goes away. The truth is that everybody had that haircut. I wasn't the only one. Unfortunately, I had to have a picture of me on my first CD. So it rears its ugly head constantly in my life. I wear it proudly as a symbol of staying power.

ON THE WEB

Check out Dave Koz's inspirational same-sex marriage video "This Guy's in Love with You," featuring a guest appearance by Herb Alpert, on YouTube.



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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.

Seasonal music: Do you hear what we hear?

Music
GREGG SHAPIRO

SHE & HIM

The retro album art for "A Very She & Him Christmas," by the duo M. Ward and the ubiquitous Zoëy Deschanel, provides a good indication of what's inside. This CD could have been recorded 50 years ago - or yesterday. The Sammy Cahn/Jule Styne standard "The Christmas Waltz" (what is it about Jewish songwriters and Christmas compositions?) opens the disc. She & Him go on to pay pleasant homage to The Beach Boys, with covers of "Christmas Boy" and "Little Saint Nick." "Sleigh Ride" suggests a jaunt through artificial snow, while "Rockin' Around The Christmas Tree" sways more than rocks. Be sure to have the mood elevators handy for the borderline catatonic "Have Yourself A Merry Little Christmas" and "The Christmas Song," as well as the lackluster "Silver Bells."

THE SING-OFF

After getting off to a Mariah Carey-style start with a rendition of "All I Want for Christmas Is You," the cappella group Delilah redeems itself on the first track of "The Sing-Off: Songs of the Season." Featuring cast members from the third season of NBC's "The Sing Off," this 13-track disc mixes tunes from across the Christmas spectrum. Included are contemporary favorites, such as "Christmas Time Is Here" and "Up on the Housetop," as well as traditional carols, such as "It Came Upon The Midnight Clear" and "Coventry Carol."

GLEE

Like "The Sing Off" disc, "Glee: The Music, The Christmas Album, Volume 2" gets the snowball rolling with "All I Want for Christmas Is You," a version that is dif-

ferent enough from Carey's to make it a delight. But the remainder of the disc is as uneven as the branches on Charlie Brown's Christmas tree. Original/exclusive cuts written by committee (the generic Anders/Astrom/Peiken tune factory) pale in comparison to the faithful readings of Joni Mitchell's "River," which is not too badly mutilated by Lea Michele, and The Waitresses' modern Christmasterpiece "Christmas Wrapping." "Let It Snow" gets a gay peppermint twist from Chris Colfer and Darren Criss.

CAROLE KING

For those who thought they'd never see the day when legendary singer/songwriter Carole King would perform a song from "The Sound of Music," that day has arrived. On "A Holiday Carole," King opens her first-ever holiday album with "My Favorite Things" and continues with delightful interpretations of such festive favorites as "Carol of the Bells," "Sleigh Ride," "Everyday Will Be Like a Holiday" and "This Christmas." In addition, King sings three new songs, including the lovely "New Year's Day." The album's centerpiece is a luminous rendition of the "Chanukah Prayer," on which King is joined by her daughter and grandson.

SCOTT WEILAND

Scott Weiland, of Stone Temple Pilots, Velvet Revolver and various drug busts, popped a fedora on his head for "The Most Wonderful Time of the Year," a set of less than smoothly crooned holiday hits. It must have taken a lot for Weiland to screw up the courage for a project like this, so take a moment to acknowledge that. When you're done, be sure to check out "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," the swinging "What Child Is This?," the original "Happy Christmas and Many More" and the island-influenced "O Holy Night." But



wisely avoid the rest.

DAVE KOZ

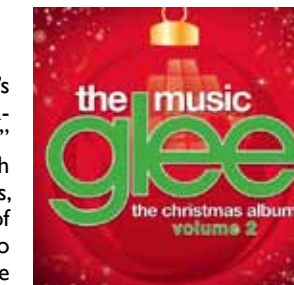
Out sax man Dave Koz's second holiday compilation "Ultimate Christmas" draws on songs from both of his previous seasonal sets, including the jazzy twang of "Sleigh Ride" and the retro soul of "Please Come Home For Christmas" (featuring Kimberly Locke). It also expands his contributions to the seasonal songbook with "Welcoming the Season (Prelude)" and "Welcoming the New Year (Coda)." Koz also includes the original "Eight Candles (A Song For Hanukkah)," a nod to his own heritage.

TONY BENNETT

Culling tracks from various Christmas discs going back as far as 1968, "The Classic Christmas Album" by Tony Bennett feels the most like Christmas of all the discs in this column. The combination of Bennett's voice and phrasing, along with the arrangements, makes this a true classic. Standouts include the toe-tapping and finger-snapping "Santa Claus Is Coming to Town," the groovy "My Favorite Things," the warmth of "The Christmas Song," "Christmas In Herald Square" and the previously unreleased "What Child Is This?"

BENJAMIN UTECHT

As far as we know, football player-turned-singer Benjamin Utecht isn't in the same wacko camp as that Tim Tebow fella, despite having recorded for Sandi Patti's record label and releasing the "Christmas Hope." The CD



includes a duet with Christian jazz (whatever that is) singer Jaimee Paul on "Let It Snow." It also features a trio of collaborations with piano man Jim Brickman. Utecht's voice is pleasant - way better than Scott Weiland's. And his approach is dead serious - no fooling around for the faithful - if that's what you're

looking for in your Christmas music.

YESHIVA BOYS CHOIR

Employing studio trickery worthy of Lady Gaga on the song "Yivonim," the Yeshiva Boys Choir, under the direction of Eli Gerstner and Yossi Newman, sounds like the

holiest boychik band ever. Their album "Chanukah," comprised of original selections, rocks like davening frummers. Joyous selections, such as "Those Were the Nights," "Shehechyanu," "The Chanukah Medley" and "Mizmor Shir," make the best use of the choirs' talents.



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Trans-Siberian Orchestra

DEC. 15, THURSDAY

The **Trans-Siberian Orchestra** performs "Christmas Eve and Other Stories," followed by excerpts from "Gutter Ballet and The New York Blues Express." The show begins at 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. at Bradley Center, 1001 N. Fourth St., Milwaukee. Call 414-227-0400 or go to www.bradleycenter.com.

DEC. 16, FRIDAY

Unity Church, 1717 N. 73rd St. in downtown Wauwatosa, presents "**An Old-Fashioned Christmas**" with Women's Voices Milwaukee at 7:30 p.m. tonight and tomorrow night. Enjoy some of the most heartwarming Christmas songs ever written, from "O Holy Night" to "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and "Rockin' Around the Christmas Tree."

UWM Union Theatre, UWM Student Union, 2nd level, 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd., hosts a **Student Film and Video Festival**, a juried showcase of the best film student short films and videos, at 7 p.m. Call 414-229-4070.

MAM After Dark presents "**Festivus**" from 5 p.m. to midnight at the Milwaukee Art Museum, 700 N. Art Museum Drive. The anti-holiday holiday celebration includes an unadorned aluminum "Festivus pole," music from 88Nine, food, a cash bar and more. Admission is free for members and \$12 for non-members. Tickets are available online and at the door. Call 414-224-3200 or visit www.mam.org.

"**A Clooney Christmas**" is at Schauer Arts and Activities Center, 147 N. Rural St., Hartland, from 8 to 10 p.m. Chicago singer/actress Heather Moran present seasonal favorites made famous by Rosemary Clooney, including "White Christmas" and "Baby, It's Cold Outside." Call 262-670-0560.



EDITED AND COMPILED BY GREGG SHAPIRO

DEC. 17, SATURDAY

The exhibit "**Cleopatra: The Search for the Last Queen of Egypt**" continues at Milwaukee Public Museum, 800 W. Wells, featuring nearly 150 artifacts from Cleopatra's time. Visitors can experience the present-day search for the elusive queen, which extends from the sands of Egypt to the depths of the Bay of Aboukir near Alexandria.

Milwaukee Irish Fest's **Blarney Christmas Concert** returns to the Milwaukee Irish Fest Center, 1532 Wauwatosa Ave., Wauwatosa, at 8 p.m. Celebrate the music of Ireland with songs that reflect the rich history and spirit of the Irish experience. Admission is \$10, which benefits the Wauwatosa Community Food Pantry. Non-perishable food items are also requested. Call 414-476-3378 or go to irishfest.com/irishfest.htm.



Blarney Christmas Concert



"The Polar Express"

DEC. 20, TUESDAY

"**The Polar Express**" returns to the Humphrey IMAX Theater/Planetarium, 800 W. Wells St., Milwaukee, for the holiday season. Call 414-319-IMAX (4629) or go to www.mpm.edu/imax/showtimes.



WinterFest

DEC. 21, WEDNESDAY

WinterFest, 10 days of fun-filled seasonal activities, arrives at Frontier Airlines Center in downtown Milwaukee. From the giant slide to the skating rink to the cookie-decorating classes, there's something for everyone. Learn more at www.milwaukeewinterfest.com/mwf.

DEC. 22, THURSDAY

Foxy Veronica's Peach Pies Caburlesque Show begins as 10:30 p.m. at Club 5 Bar, 5 Applegate Court in Madison. Call 608-277-9700.



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