

DANCING TO HIS OWN BEAT

Out dance music artist Chris Willis talks about his debut album.

WiGOUT! Page 23



THE VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR WISCONSIN'S LGBT COMMUNITY

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Protests force Komen retreat on Planned Parenthood

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Petitions, protests and pledges forced the Susan G. Komen for the Cure to apologize and retreat on its controversial decision to defund cancer prevention programs at Planned Parenthood clinics.

But a week after the furor reached its peak, doubts lingered as to whether the nation's leading breast-cancer charity could fully recover from the fallout.

Debate over whether right-wing politics played a role in Komen's initial decision continued, as did scrutiny of other Komen policies, such as its position on stem-cell research. Attention focused on the political interest and associations of

Komen leaders, including Karen Handel, who resigned as VP of public policy on Feb. 7.

The Komen-Planned Parenthood partnership began in 2005, with Komen money paying for some breast exams and mammogram referrals for low-income women at Planned Parenthood.

On Jan. 31, Komen said it was eliminating grants for Planned Parenthood because of a policy adopted in late 2011 that prohibits Komen from funding groups under government investigation.

"We regret that these new policies have impacted some longstanding grantees, such as Planned Parenthood, but want to be absolutely clear that our grant-making decisions are not about politics," the foundation stated.

But while at least three Komen grant recipients, including Penn State, are under investigation, only one Komen partner, Planned Parenthood, was cut. Last September, Planned Parenthood came under a congressional review by U.S. Rep. Cliff Stearns, R-Fla., an abortion-rights foe who was responding to the right-wing claim that the health service used federal funding to subsidize abortions, a charge the national office and its affiliates say is false.

Stephanie M. Wilson
KOMEN page 20



AP PHOTO/THE SACRAMENTO BEE, RENEE C. BYER

VERDICT: LOVE RULES

Partners Ellen Pontac (left) and Shelly Bailes (right), who have been married since June 2008, hug Tina Reynolds (center) as they watch the ruling of Proposition 8 at a restaurant in Sacramento, Calif., on Feb. 7. A federal appeals court ruled California's same-sex marriage ban unconstitutional, upholding a federal judge's decision. **Story on page 9**

BLOCKING THE VOTE: GOP's voter suppression campaign ready for polls

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The first year Ruthelle Frank voted, "Kiss Me, Kate" premiered in the theater, moviegoers buzzed about Technicolor and Harry S. Truman defeated Thomas E. Dewey in what is hailed as the greatest election upset of all time.

The 84-year-old resident of Brokaw, Wis., has voted in every election since 1948. And Frank intends to vote this year – provided she can get into a

polling booth.

Frank is one of the plaintiffs in the federal suit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin against the state's new voter photo ID law.

Frank is an eligible registered voter in the state, but she has no photo ID and lacks the certified copy of her birth certificate that's needed to obtain one.

Some might wonder why a woman who has lived in the same place for more than eight decades and has

served on the village board since 1996 lacks a state photo ID.

The answer is: It's complicated.

And complications, along with discrimination and disenfranchisement, are what civil rights advocates have tried to eliminate from the voting system for years – since long before the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.

The 2008 election, with the highest turnout in a presidential election in

SUPPRESSION page 18

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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

READY FOR 'I DO'

U.S. Rep. Barney Frank, longtime congressman and gay rights icon, plans to marry partner Jim Ready in Massachusetts. The two have been partners since 2007. Frank decided not to seek re-election this year, meaning his service in Congress ends in January 2013 and his time with Ready increases. "Look, I have a partner now, Jim Ready; I have an emotional attachment. I'm in love for the first time in my life," the 71-year-old Frank said recently on the "Charlie Rose" show.

I DO, IT DOES

A Seattle community activist protesting gentrification married an old warehouse being leveled to make way for luxury apartment buildings. Inviting witnesses to the Jan. 29 ceremony, Babylon Aivaz said, "Yes, I'm in love with a 107-year-old building! Yes, ITS A GAY MARRIAGE! How is that possible? Well there must obviously be a deeper story." About 50 wedding witnesses turned

out, as well as some gay rights advocates who complained Aivaz's mock wedding mocked gay marriage.

NIXON'S CHOICE

Actress Cynthia Nixon caused a stir in gay circles when she told The New York Times Magazine that, for her, being gay is a conscious choice. Nixon was in a 15-year relationship with a man and is now engaged to a woman with whom she's been involved for eight years. "I understand that for many people it's not, but for me it's a choice, and you don't get to define my gayness for me," Nixon told the magazine. Gay rights advocates complained that the remark was flippant and irresponsible and Nixon later clarified her position: She's bisexual, and that isn't by choice. She's in a lesbian relationship, and that is by choice.

LUSTY KATE

A tell-all memoir by a bisexual man who ran a prostitution ring in Hollywood from the 1940s

until the advent of AIDS details the sexual proclivities of some of filmdom's greatest legends. Among other tidbits, former Marine Scotty Bowers, now 88, recalls fixing up Katherine Hepburn with more than 150 women for trysts. Bowers told The New York Times that he decided to talk now because, "I'm not getting any younger and all of my famous tricks are dead by now. The truth can't hurt them anymore."

DUELING DIVAS

Reigniting a longstanding cat fight, Sir Elton John offered this piece of advice to Madonna on "Good Morning America" prior to her halftime show at the Super Bowl: "Make sure you lip-synch good," he advised. John was heard during the event's broadcast as a pitchman in a Pepsi commercial. Would he ever appear as halftime entertainment? "No," John said. "I've never seen a decent one. Never ever!"

JET-SET WEDDING

Gay activists in Russia are

organizing a boycott of Aeroflot over reports that the nation's leading airline forced a gay flight attendant to marry a woman in order to keep his job. Gay flight attendant Maxim Kupreev, 25, claims the airline demanded that he enter into heterosexual marriage with his former high school girlfriend after he tried last year to create an LGBT group within the company.

LOOK THE PART

Mickey Rourke is working overtime to prepare himself for his upcoming biopic about out gay rugby star Gareth Thomas. Rourke reportedly had surgery on his eyes to look more like Thomas and has hired the personal trainer who got Ralph Fiennes buffed to play Coriolanus. Rourke also physically transformed himself for his Oscar-nominated role in "The Wrestler."

HE SAYS, SHE OUSTS

Tennessee Sen. Stacey Campfield, promoting a bill that

would ban discussion of homosexuality in public schools, says the "facts are out there" to support his on-radio claim that AIDS originated from a gay airline attendant having sex with a monkey and that "it is virtually ... impossible to contract AIDS through heterosexual sex." And a Knoxville restaurant owner says she was justified in telling Campfield he was no longer welcome at the Bistro at the Bijou's popular Sunday brunch. "It's just my way of standing up to a bully," said owner Martha Boggs.

TAX MATTERS

GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney gives more to the Mormon Church than he pays in taxes. According to recently released tax returns, Mitt and Ann Romney have given more than \$4 million to the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints since 2010. During the same period, they paid \$3 million to the IRS. The Mormon Church is one of the nation's leading anti-gay activist groups.



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Center asks public for second chance

By Louis Weisberg
Staff writer

Fighting to keep its doors open in the face of a budget deficit, the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center held a public meeting on Jan. 26 to re-engage with supporters and spur them into action. More than 150 people jammed the center's community room to hear about the financial situation, express their support for the center's mission and air grievances, mostly about former executive director Maggi Cage.

Interim executive director Sheldon Walker, who led the meeting, began by apologizing for the period under Cage's leadership, during which the center became estranged from its constituents. The former board co-chair, Walker tried throughout the 90-minute meeting to steer the dialogue toward the future.

"We, too have strong feelings, and what we're doing is channeling those feelings into positive solutions," Walker said, speaking on behalf of the board. "We owe a sincere apology (for) the problems

that have occurred under our watch. We are really very focused at this time on correcting those wrongs."

Walker disseminated statistics from the center's 2011 unaudited income statement showing that the organization lost \$243,734 last year. The center needs \$110,000 immediately to take care of accounts payable and a bank loan, as well as an additional \$100,000 to restore operating cash levels.

Expenses at the center last year totaled \$992,724, while revenue was \$748,990. About 70 percent of revenue came from contracted services and program-specific grants, which cannot be used to pay for such overhead costs as rent and salaries unrelated to the programs.

Individual gifts to the center during 2011 amounted to \$18,067, workplace giving was \$31,969 and membership dues brought in \$5,775.

Due to the center's dire financial situation, recently announced merger talks with Diverse & Resilient have been suspended. "The negotiations committee from the two agencies agrees that the center must first address its current financial crisis," said a statement released just days after the community meeting.

Many of the supporters who attended the center's January community meeting spoke passionately about its mission and its critical role in the community. They also

reached into their pockets to contribute about \$1,000 to the center, Walker said.

The tone of the meeting was respectful but sometimes emotional. Supporters voiced some tough criticisms and opinions. Several called on the remaining four board members to resign, complaining that they'd failed in their oversight duties.

"The board really forgot that the board is the boss of the executive director," said Denise Cawley.

Walker said he and the board were unaware of the extent to which Cage had alienated the center's members and offended other LGBT groups.

"It's unbelievable that you didn't know what was happening here for the past year," responded Chuck Grosz, office and event coordinator for the Cream City Foundation. He pressed for an accounting of the compensation deal that Cage received on her departure - information Walker said he could not provide due to privacy laws surrounding personnel matters.

Attendees voiced strong support for changing the organization's bylaws to allow members to elect the board. That was how the center operated before Cage pushed through a change to permit only existing board members to elect new members.

Several supporters com-

plained that the action had muted public input and isolated the board from its membership.

Speakers also complained that the center had evolved under Cage's direction into essentially a social services provider rather than a community gathering place. The idea was floated of a survey to determine what sort of programming the community wants at the center.

The center's downtown location also drew criticism - for its cost as well as for inadequate parking. The center moved into its current space at 252 E. Highland Ave. a little over a year ago, signing a 10-year lease for the expansive, loft-like space.

According to the statement provided at the meeting, that space cost the group \$170,208 last year for rent and parking.

Jamie Woods said the parking situation is particularly burdensome for transgender people, who fear being harassed on the street when they have to park several blocks away and walk through the busy surround-

ing neighborhood. Walker said the board is in the process of negotiating lower rent payments to reduce costs. The center received nearly \$31,000 last year in rental income, and the space is sufficient to add additional tenants.

Despite all the concerns raised during the meeting, the prevailing sentiment was that the center is worth saving - and that the community is up to the task.

"This is the beginning of a grassroots movement again to rebirth the center," said former executive director Neil Albrecht. "I see so many familiar faces of the people who were there in the early days. ... It's difficult for me to fathom how we got here ... but the past is the past."

"This feels like a family reunion to me," said Jane Ottow. "We are a strong community, we're a very loving community and we're a very forgiving community. We've been through worse things than this and we can overcome. We need to find our strength again. ... The healing will occur."

TO CONTRIBUTE

The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center is struggling to keep its doors open and critical programs going. To make a donation, go to mkelgbt.org or phone 414-271-2656. Checks made out to the center can be mailed to interim executive director Sheldon Walker at Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 252 E. Highland Ave., Milwaukee WI 53202.



PHOTO: DENISE CAWLEY
Former executive director Neil Albrecht addresses the center's Jan. 26 meeting.

UWM completes transgender histories project

By Lisa Neff
Staff writer

Listen up about listening in: The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries archives department invites researchers to listen in to a history of the local transgender community.

The department, which collects materials documenting LGBT life and culture, has completed a history project focusing on Milwaukee's transgender community from the 1960s to today.

The Milwaukee Transgender Oral History Project consists of eight oral histories, preserving the recollections of social activists, community leaders, health care workers, service providers and drag queens.

Dr. Brice Smith, author of "Yours in Liberation: Lou Sullivan and the Construction of FTM Identity," conducted the interviews with Jay Botsford, Josie Carter and Jaime Gays, Loree Cook-Daniels, Gretchen Fincke, Meredith Leischer, Jolie McKenna and Michael Munson.

"I sought out individuals who have played a significant role in making the community what it is today," said Smith, who conducted the interviews mostly in homes and used a digital recorder.

A press release from the archives said the interviewees "self-identify across a broad spectrum of gender identities, and some resist identification entirely."

In the interviews, they cover a

The UWM collection is the largest bank of LGBT primary sources in the state.

range of topics - drag pageants before and after Stonewall, community activism, building organizations and dealing with access to medical services, transitioning and marginalization within mainstream and LGBT culture.

The history, open for review in the archives department at UWM Libraries, includes about 10 hours of audio and more than 200 pages of transcriptions, said department head Michael Doyle.

"I cannot emphasize enough the significance of this project in strengthening the LGBT History Collection," Doyle said of the new addition. "Our goal is to develop a collection that is genuinely inclusive and representative of the diversity of the Milwaukee LGBT community. Transgender people were not previously well documented in the historical record, and this collection helps to address that."

The UWM collection is the largest bank of LGBT primary sources

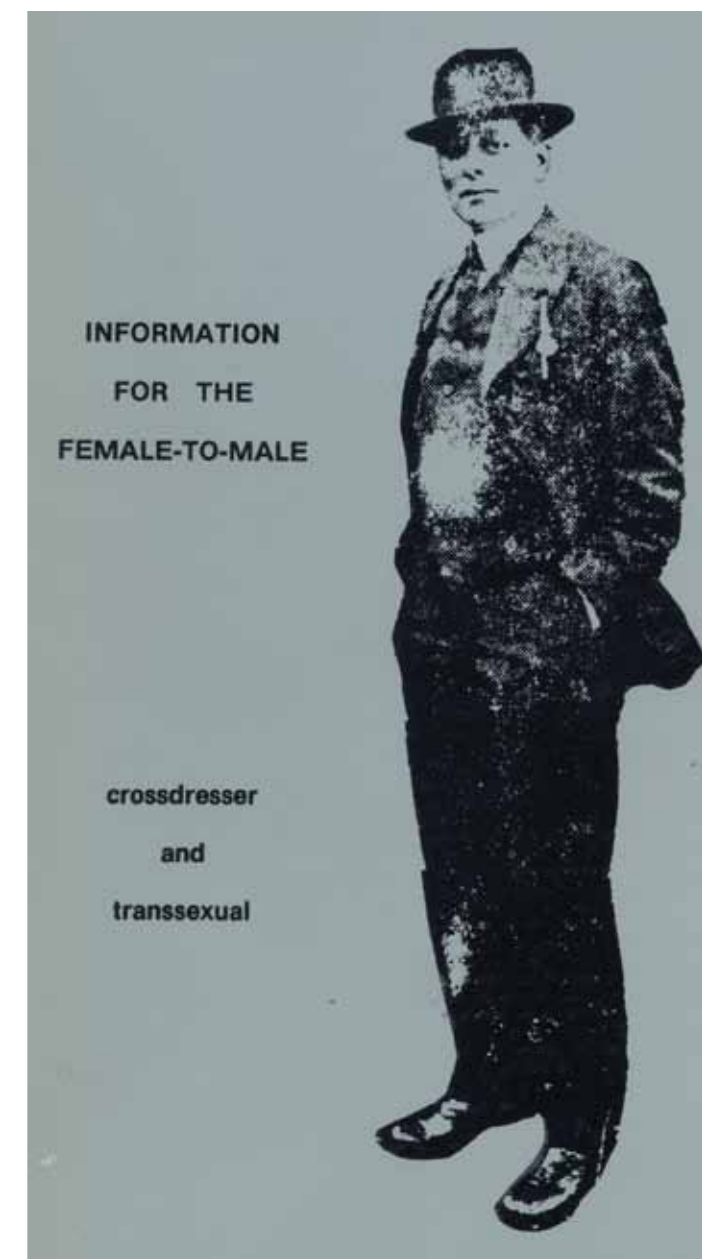
in the state, containing personal papers of history-makers at the national and local level, including Eldon Murray and Miriam Ben-Shalom. The collection also includes the archives of community groups such as Brady East STD Clinic, Cream City Foundation, Gay Peoples Union and the Lesbian Alliance of Metro Milwaukee. Community newspapers, such as Wisconsin Light, InStep, Queer Life and Wisconsin Gazette, are archived in the collection.

UWM associate professor Cary Gabriel Costello, who coordinates the LGBT Studies program, called Smith's interviews a vital addition to the collection: "The individuals interviewed present a picture of the rich and multifaceted history of transgender life in Milwaukee during the past half century."

The project was funded through gifts from Joseph R. Pabst, the Johnson and Pabst LGBT Humanity Fund of the Greater Milwaukee Foundation and the Eldon E. Murray Foundation Fund.

Pabst, a major supporter of the LGBT collection, listened to the interviews several weeks ago, and said he hopes they "promote not only tolerance, but compassion."

"Hearing the powerful voices of these remarkable people at the forefront of the transgender community was astounding and touching," Pabst said. "Their stories reveal the transgender experience with such depth and grace."



Right: The cover of a pre-Stonewall pamphlet that is part of the LGBT History Collection of the UWM Library Archives.
COURTESY UWM ARCHIVES DEPT.

ON THE WEB

A guide to the Milwaukee Transgender Oral History Project collection is at <http://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/wiarchives.uw-mil-uwmms0302>. Plans are under way to place interview excerpts online.

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New executive director joins Equality Wisconsin

By Louis Weisberg
Staff writer

In late January, Jason Burns did something that few Floridians do mid-winter. He climbed into his car in Ft. Lauderdale and headed north for his new job in Milwaukee as executive director of Equality Wisconsin.

As the palm trees receded from his rear view mirror, Burns thought about the chilly weather and warm people ahead in his future.

"There's just something about people from the Midwest and their values and the things they hold important," Burns said. "We had a going-away dinner with some friends from Ft. Lauderdale. People kept telling me, 'By March, you're going to have more friends than you know what to do with. People in the Midwest are so genuine.'"

Not that Burns, 28, is a stranger to Midwesterners. He grew up in Ludington, Mich., which is where the Manitowoc ferry lands on the other side of the lake. His partner is a native of Ohio.

Burns is not a stranger

either to the sort of political activity he'll handle in his new job. He got involved in his first campaign at age 16 and, more recently, worked on a successful effort to elect Broward County's first out gay commissioner. He's worked as both a paid and volunteer consultant on numerous political campaigns.

Before beginning his new position at Equality Wisconsin on Feb. 1, Burns' most recent job was at The Pride Center of Fort Lauderdale, one of the nation's largest LGBT community centers. He served as the organization's development director and major gifts officer.

He also has a strong record of local activism, having served on the board of directors for The Dolphin Democrats, as a member of the Broward County School Board's diversity committee, and as the co-chair of Oakland Park Main Street's events committee.

Burns said he and his partner have been looking for the

past two years for a way to return to the Midwest – to live closer to their roots and their families.

Equality Wisconsin found Burns through a nationwide search. The process began more than a year ago. The organization's board obtained a grant to hire a consultant who helped to identify strategies and funding sources to hire a full-time director, said board co-chair Ray Vahey.

The board reviewed about 35 resumes before conducting a dozen phone interviews, followed by five live interviews, according to Vahey.

"Jason is a very bright young man with a lot of energy and experience in raising money and also political campaigning," Vahey said. "Those were two things important to us."

For his part, Burns said he was excited by EVW's goal of getting more LGBT Milwaukeeans and their allies, including younger people, engaged in the community.

"A poll found that only

one of 10 people identified as LGBT or queer was involved with an LGBT charity or political organization," Burns said. "That speaks to the shame or stigma that's occurred all their lives. You have to find ways to empower them."

At The Pride Center, Burns developed a group called "varsity club," which engaged people under 35 through a program that combined socializing and community service activities. En route to Milwaukee, Burns met with Equality Florida to advise that group on creating a similar program, he said.

"It was a way of making (younger people) stakeholders in the organization, of letting them know their voices are valued and they don't have to give thousands of dollars to have their voices heard," Burns said.

Burns said he was inspired by EVW's Voices of Faith project, which involves local congregations and faith communities in the struggle for LGBT equality. Overcoming religious-based stigma is an



PHOTO: COURTESY

Jason Burns is the new executive director of Equality Wisconsin.

essential part of the movement, he said.

Burns said EW's long-term goal is the same as that of every other LGBT organization – "to get to a point where an organization like this isn't needed any more."

Court candidate Carolina Stark has a compelling story to tell

By Louis Weisberg
Staff writer

Carolina Stark's life would make a good story for a feature film. It would be a feel-good movie, the kind that makes you proud to be an American.

Stark's father, a small-town Wisconsinite, met her mother while serving in the Armed Forces in Colombia. She was born at Walter Reed Army Medical Center near Washington, D.C., on the Fourth of July.

The new family settled in the tiny rural community of Oostburg but traveled frequently to Bogota to spend time with Stark's mother's family, allowing her to grow up not only bilingual but also multicultural.

Although she started school in a two-room schoolhouse, Stark went on to become the first person in her family to complete college. After graduating magna cum laude from St. Louis University with a BA in criminal justice, she earned a JD from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 2002.

At 34, Stark is now an administrative law judge for the Department of Workforce Development. She hopes her next professional move, with the help of county voters, will be to the Milwaukee Circuit Court bench.

On Feb. 21, Stark's name will appear on the ballot as a candidate for circuit court judge, along with Scott Walker appointee Nelson Phillips III and Christopher Lipscomb, a three-time candidate. The top two vote getters will proceed to the April 3 election.

Although Wisconsin Supreme Court Judge David Prosser won his retention campaign after promising to rubber-stamp Gov. Scott Walker's legislative agenda, judicial candidates are prohibited by law from partisan politicking. Stark takes the ban to heart, refusing to address specific issues



PHOTO: COURTESY

Carolina Stark and her husband Michael Stark celebrated their 10th wedding anniversary with a trip to Peru in September 2010. This picture of the couple was taken during the three days they spent with an indigenous Quechua family on a floating reed island in Lake Titicaca.

that might arise in a legal case. But Stark acknowledges that she supports full LGBT equality.

"I think all citizens deserve full equality," she said, adding that all Americans deserve equal access to education, health care, housing, transportation and other essential services provided by government.

Stark attributes her commitment to social justice to her unique upbringing. As the only woman in the race, the only bilingual candidate and the only candidate who resides in the city

of Milwaukee, she believes she has a fresh perspective to bring to the bench – an underrepresented perspective but one that reflects a large portion of the county's population.

Stark said that while she can't answer specific questions about her views, her actions should provide voters with a guide to her philosophical mindset. "Draw your conclusions from what I do, not from what I say," she said. Stark's actions have included working as a defense attorney for immigrants and serving on the Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission. (Editor's disclosure: WIG CEO Leonard Sobczak chaired the commission for the first six months Stark served.) She also serves regularly as a poll watcher and as a community volunteer.

Stark and her husband Michael Stark, also an administrative law

ON THE FEB. 21 BALLOT

Administrative law judge Carolina Stark is running for Milwaukee County Circuit Court judge in Branch 17. She faces incumbent Nelson Phillips III, a recent Scott Walker appointee, and Christopher Lipscomb, a three-time judicial candidate.

judge, live in the city's historic Concordia neighborhood, one of urban Milwaukee's few racially diverse areas. They are heavily involved in the local neighborhood association.

The couple owns one car that both use, not only because they're avid environmentalists but also because they believe it's important for them as judges to have the experience of using public transportation.

"Riding the bus reminds you that it's harder when you have to depend on public transportation to get to work or school or the grocery store," she said. "It gives you a different perspective."

Stark said her background and her Fourth of July birth date have inspired many of her life choices. Because of her unique story, she's always been drawn to a career "participating in the institutions of our democracy," she said.

Stark's belief in the democratic process is so strong that she decided to run for circuit court judge even after being told the race would cost her at least \$100,000 – far more than she and her husband can afford.

"I thought, 'Where can my experience and skills serve the public?' I think this is a good fit with my previous experience," she said. "I like working with people, and to work in the circuit courts you have to be able to work with people. I have a lot of experience in the circuit courts working as a defense attorney."

Whatever the outcome of the race, Stark's story is undoubtedly one of the most compelling behind the names appearing on the Feb. 21 ballot.

"I feel very fortunate," Stark said. "I feel like I'm living the American dream."

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DON'T MISS WIG'S TAXES & FINANCES ISSUE FEB. 23

Washington moves closer to marriage equality

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Washington Sen. Ed Murray is planning this year to send invites to his wedding – even to those who didn't vote for the marriage equality bill that passed in his chamber on Feb. 1.

Murray, who is openly gay, sponsored a bill to legalize same-sex marriage that the state's Senate passed on a 28-21 vote after a lengthy debate.

The measure faces likely success in the House, which was expected to vote as WiG went to press on Feb. 8. Democratic Gov. Chris Gregoire pledged repeatedly in January to sign the bill into law if it reaches her desk.

With Gregoire's signature, Washington would become the seventh state in the nation to legalize same-sex marriage. Same-sex couples can marry in Connecticut, Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Vermont and the District of Columbia.

Washington same-sex couples, including Murray and his longtime partner Michael Shiosaki, could marry as early as June.

However, opponents, who have funding commitments from the National Organization for Marriage, have pledged a ballot measure to block the marriages. If they file at least 120,577 valid signatures by June 6, the issue would be put on the November ballot and same-sex weddings likely would be delayed.

The Senate vote followed a debate that was broadcast to a state audience via cable and a world audience on the Web. Senators considered



PHOTO: COURTESY

A crowd in the gallery applauds the announcement that the Washington Senate passed a marriage equality bill.

about a dozen amendments, including several changes intended to protect religious freedoms that were adopted and one rejected proposal that would have allowed wedding professionals to refuse gay customers.

The 28-21 vote went largely along party lines, with the majority of Democrats voting in favor. Democrats Tim Shelton, Paull Shin and Jim Hargrove voted against the bill.

Four Republicans – Joe Fain, Andy Hill, Steve Litzow and Cheryl Pflug – voted for the measure despite NOM's offer of up to \$250,000 for primary candidates who decide to challenge them.

Murray, on the historic evening, urged a spirit of tolerance as struggle over the issue continues.

Those who vote against same-sex marriage are not bigots, the senator said, and those who vote for same-sex marriage "are not, and we should not be accused of, undermining family life or religious freedom."

The morning after the vote in Washington State, a New Jersey Assembly committee held a hearing on the Garden State's marriage equality bill.

Republican Gov. Chris Christie has said he would veto such a bill because voters and not lawmakers

should decide the issue. After enduring a week of criticism for calling for a popular vote on civil rights, Christie said he believed the majority of voters would back same-sex marriage.

Maryland lawmakers also are dealing with a marriage equality bill. Democratic Gov. Martin O'Malley testified on behalf of legislation before the Maryland Senate Judiciary Committee on Jan. 31.

"It's not right, and it is not just, that the children of gay couples should have lesser protections than the children of other families in our state," the governor said. Meanwhile, in Maine, activ-

ists announced plans to ask general election voters to legalize gay marriage through an initiative. Petitions were delivered to the secretary of state's office on Jan. 26.

Voters in North Carolina,

Minnesota and possibly New Mexico will vote this year on constitutional amendments to ban same-sex marriages.

Follow the news at www.wisconsin Gazette.com.

FREEDOM TO MARRY DAY

Valentine's Day brings dining and diamonds, romancing and roses.

National Freedom to Marry Day, celebrated on Feb. 12, brings demands and debates, protests and petitions.

In some locations, such as Chicago, protests for marriage equality will take place.

But a focus this year for Freedom to Marry is on citizens lobbying local, state and federal lawmakers to join the Freedom to Marry campaign. For details, go to www.freedomtomarry.org.

Activists organizing for massive April actions

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Activist Joe Knudson looks at the calendar for April and sees "a perfect trifecta" for protesters.

A three-day weekend that month includes the Day of Silence on April 20, the Worldwide LGBT Civil Rights Marches on April 21 and Earth Day actions on April 22.

The most established of the three campaigns, Earth Day marks its 42nd anniversary this year. The Earth Day Network is hoping to mobilize a billion people for "a billion acts of green" that Saturday and throughout the weekend.

The Day of Silence, sponsored by the Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network, dates to 1996. The national day of action involves students and educators taking a vow of silence to illustrate the effect of anti-LGBT bullying and harassment in schools. Adult allies in the campaign participate in after-school forums on bullying, safe schools and coming out,

as well as write letters to former school principals and teachers about their experience as students.

Still coming together are plans for the first Worldwide LGBT Civil Rights Marches.

Knudson is chair and spokesperson for the international organizing committee. Other organizers include Jonathan Wolfman, James Vivian, Arturo Schultz, Marc Holcomb, Jesse D. Greer, Spencer Aiello and Isidro Gonzales.

Their statement of intent reads, "This is grassroots organizing of hungry, aggressive and eager LGBT and LGBT-friendly activists, advocates and all other allies worldwide, working at planning and organizing various marches, after parties, watch parties, etc., ... with the trust and hope that ... human rights organizations worldwide will put all egos aside and come together in unity for this historic event."

The committee is encouraging people to organize at the local, grassroots level to build an international effort



PHOTO: COURTESY

Activists are organizing on Facebook – the Let's Reach 1 Million People page – for Worldwide LGBT Civil Rights Marches on April 21.

– a model that was hugely successful for clean energy, no-drilling protesters who carried out the 2011 and 2010 Hands Across the Sand

demonstrations.

Much of the organizing is taking place on Facebook in the Let's Reach 1 Million People Campaign group.

Already, plans for marches are being made in Dayton, Ohio; Washington, D.C.; Cincinnati; Chicago; Atlanta; New York City; Albany, N.Y.;

Oklahoma City; Portland, Ore.; and Hampton, Va. Outside the United States, march sites include Pakistan and the Philippines.

"The window of opportunity worldwide is about as far open as it will ever be ... with the earlier speech by U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, in addition to actions at the United Nations," Knudson said. "The LGBT communities worldwide must continue this drive and build on this momentum in advancing our chances for basic human rights worldwide."

LGBT march organizers are not working directly with the Earth Day Network, but Knudson said activists recognize a synergy. March organizers observed that it is the 42nd anniversary of Earth Day, but also 42 years since the first gay Pride parade took place.

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NYC'S INFINITE FOREST

The AIDS Memorial Park Coalition recently named "Infinite Forest," with its evocative groves of trees and mirrored glass surfaces, as the winner of a design competition for a proposed park in New York City's West Village. The competition challenged architects and designers to combine a public park with a place of commemoration and memorial. Pending New York City Council approval, the coalition aims for completion of a memorial park by World AIDS Day 2014. However, the private owner of the space has raised concerns about potential construction delays and favors its own park plan.

FORMER STUDENT WINS SCHOOL SETTLEMENT

A former student who endured severe harassment in junior high and high school recently won a major settlement from the Aberdeen, Wash., School District.

The ACLU represented Russell Dickerson III in the lawsuit against school district officials who knew the student was being harassed but did not take steps to end the torment.

Under terms of the settlement, Dickerson will receive \$100,000 from the district. Dickerson, now 20, said, "I learned from my parents that you should never give up. You should fight for your rights - you don't just walk away."

WHITE HOUSE TO HOLD LGBT CONFERENCES

The White House's public engagement office and other federal agencies will hold a series of conferences around the country this year to focus on LGBT issues.

NATIONAL BRIEFS



PHOTO: PRNEWSFOTO

The winning design for a proposed AIDS memorial park in New York City's West Village.

The inaugural event, the White House LGBT Conference on Health, will be held in Philadelphia on Feb. 16, and will feature remarks by Health Secretary Kathleen Sebelius.

Future conferences will be held in other locations throughout the country and focus on topics such as housing and homelessness, safe schools and communities and HIV/AIDS prevention.

NEW HOUSING REGS BECOME OFFICIAL

U.S. Housing Secretary Shaun Donovan announced new anti-discrimination regulations during an address at the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force's Creating Change conference.

Thousands of activists attended the annual event in Baltimore.

On Jan. 28, Donovan delivered a speech in which he announced the implementation of draft anti-discrimination regulations announced a year ago.

The changes include:
• Language that ensures same-sex couples are recognized as families covered by federal housing programs.
• Prohibiting owners and operators of assisted housing, or housing whose financing is insured by HUD, from inquiring about sexual orientation or gender identity.
• Prohibiting consideration of factors other than credit-worthiness in the awarding of mortgage loans insured

by the Federal Housing Administration.

COLLEGE FRESHMEN MORE LIBERAL IN 2011

First-year college students' political and social views shifted in a more liberal direction in 2011, according to an annual survey of freshmen in four-year schools.

The survey is administered nationally by the Higher Education Research Institute at the UCLA Graduate School of Education and Information Studies.

An unprecedented 71.3 percent of incoming college students indicated that same-sex couples should have the right to legal marital status, compared with 64.9 percent

in 2009. While support for same-sex marriage is highest among female students and those who identify as liberal, a significant proportion of conservative students (42.8 percent) and an increasing number of male students (64.1 percent in 2011 vs. 56.7 percent in 2009) expressed support for this issue.

ARMY SOUGHT FOR BREAST CANCER RESEARCH

The Dr. Susan Love Research Foundation is seeking to build an Army of Women for breast cancer research. The goal is to recruit 1 million women of all ages and ethnicities.

The initiative, with funding

from Avon and a partnership of the research foundation and the Boston University School of Public Health, will include telephone interviews with more than 600 lesbian and bisexual women who have or have had breast cancer.

KANSANS SEEK TO PURGE SODOMY LAW FROM STATUTES

The Kansas Equality Coalition wants legislators to remove an unenforced and unconstitutional sodomy law from the statutes.

The law, voided by a 2003 U.S. Supreme Court decision in a Texas case, makes consensual same-sex sex a crime.

The group also has asked Republican Gov. Sam Brownback to seek the law's repeal, but the administration declined.

Earlier this year, Brownback released a list of 51 "out of date, unreasonable, and burdensome" laws to be repealed. That list did not include the law against consensual same-sex sex.

"There is nothing more unreasonable than Sam Brownback's preserving an unconstitutional law that's used by government officials to harass gay and lesbian Kansans," said KEC's Thomas Witt.

KANSAS CONGRESSMAN INTRODUCES ANTI-GAY MILITARY BILL

U.S. Rep. Tim Huelskamp recently introduced the Military Religious Freedom Protection Act to ban celebrations of same-sex partnerships in the U.S. military.

The Kansas Republican said the measure would allow a chaplain to refuse to participate "in any duty, rite, ritual, ceremony, service or function that is contrary to their own conscience, moral principles or religious beliefs or those of their faith group."

Additionally, the measure, which as of this week had 10 co-sponsors, would make U.S. military facilities off-limits for same-sex weddings or partnership ceremonies.

Responding, Joe Solmonese of the Human Rights Campaign, said, "Huelskamp and other right-wing Republican members of Congress appear to have missed the memo from military leaders who say that open service is working just fine."

- Lisa Neff



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Pets aid cancer researchers

By Todd Ackerman
AP writer

Leading Texas veterinarians are mobilizing to enlist pets in the testing of experimental cancer therapies, a potential benefit to not just dogs and cats – but also people.

The veterinarians recently set up a registry they hope will connect pet owners and cancer researchers and show that diseased pets – dogs in particular – are better predictors of the efficacy of new cancer drugs and devices in people than mice, oncologists' favorite test subject historically.

"Dogs may be man's best friend in more ways than one," said Dr. Theresa Fossum, a Texas A&M professor of veterinary surgery and founder of the Texas Veterinary Cancer Registry. "Because they suffer from cancers that are nearly identical to those in humans, but

quicker to run their course, they can speed up and make more reliable the process of determining whether a therapy will work."

Veterinarians are just starting to get the ear of cancer researchers, who don't reflexively think of naturally occurring disease models that go home with their owner, Fossum said. The Cancer Prevention and Research Institute of Texas recently rejected a grant application because "housing the dogs would be so expensive," Fossum said. The application will be resubmitted to specify that the treated pets would remain with their owners.

Texas veterinary oncologists are hoping the registry can help change attitudes by providing a database of dogs and cats diagnosed with cancer that could be candidates for clinical research. The reg-

istry identified its first patient in November, an 8-year-old Great Pyrenees with bone cancer.

Instead of the standard treatment, amputation, Rowdy got an experimental procedure: radiation injected into 22 tiny holes drilled directly into the bone cancer. Two months later, Rowdy's owner reports he is running around symptom-free, though Fossum stresses the six-month check-up will be the big test.

The procedure's success in a dog trial would bode well for people with the disease – particularly children. Osteosarcoma, Rowdy's cancer, is the sixth most common form of childhood cancer. One in three diagnosed with the disease die from it.

The idea of using animals' naturally developing cancers as models for human disease goes back a decade but has

never taken off.

"It's a great concept, but the problem has always been the lack of infrastructures pairing researchers and patients," said Dr. Peggy Tinkey, chair of veterinary medicine and surgery at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center.

That's where the new cancer registry comes in. Owners of dogs and cats diagnosed with the disease are being asked to register their pet at <http://texasvet-cancerregistry.com/>, already up and running though the official launch isn't scheduled until this spring. Registry staff will contact the pet's vet for more information, then look for potential research matches.

There should be no shortage of candidates. There are 77.5 million owned dogs in the United States and a fourth will develop cancer – includ-



ing those in the bone, breast, pancreas, liver, prostate, lung and skin. Veterinarians report that owners increasingly want to treat them, at around \$5,000, but the options can be limited.

The technology used in Rowdy's case was pioneered at a Houston company, Valco Instruments, which makes very small, precise instruments used in laboratories. After his dog was diagnosed

with bone cancer, the company's president developed a drill that can open holes the size of human hairs to deliver radioactive isotopes that pinpoint the tumor and do not damage surrounding tissue. "It sounded perfect," said Rowdy's owner, Kate Cordts, a librarian in San Antonio. "Rowdy's such an active, happy-go-lucky dog – I just didn't have the heart for amputation."

Continued on next page

From page 16

For all their benefits, pets won't ever replace lab mice as cancer test models. For one thing, mice are perfect specimens for engineering genetic impairments and studying precisely targeted genes or pathways suspected to be involved in a disease. For another, they're better

for establishing initial safety, necessary before experimenting in pets.

Still, Fossum thinks pets can play an important role. She notes that one reason it costs \$1.2 billion, probably more, to get a new drug on the market is that most fail in clinical trials. Mice simply aren't good disease predic-

tors, she said, not like dogs and cats, which live with people, have intact immune systems and probably develop cancer for the same reasons.

The pet cancer registry is just the beginning. Fossum has plans, once she gets grant money, to launch pet registries for heart and kidney disease too.



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'There has never been a conviction for voter fraud in Wisconsin'

SUPPRESSION from 160 years, suggested significant success in that effort. A wave of young voters went to the polls and results showed the most racially diverse turnout in U.S. history.

BLOCK THE VOTE

But with the rise of the Tea Party movement after that election, conservative state legislators moved to restrict voter access with reduced early voting periods, restrictions on registration drives and, most commonly, new requirements for photo IDs. Fourteen states enacted voter suppression bills after the 2010 elections. The American Legislative Exchange Council, which gets funding from Wisconsin's political barons, the Koch brothers, provided templates. "The 47-year-old Voting Rights Act has stood the test of time, but there are new obstacles to the ballot springing up in today's America," said Democratic National Committee vice chair Donna Brazile. "The latest vogue in anti-suffrage legislation is mandato-

ry photo ID laws," she added. Defenders of the new laws, citing arguments largely from ALEC, maintain the restrictions are needed to combat voter fraud.

Detractors, noting the measures were pushed in states that were highly competitive in 2008, say there clearly is a GOP effort to keep young people, minorities and the poor — traditionally Democratic voters — from casting ballots.

"There has never been a single prosecution or conviction of a Wisconsin voter misrepresenting his or her identity at the polls," said Milwaukee NAACP president James Hall. "This law is nothing but vote suppression of minority voters."

A study by the Brennan Center for Justice found that 15 percent of low-income voting-age citizens, 18 percent of young eligible voters and 25 percent of black eligible voters do not have current photo IDs.

Separate studies show transgender citizens are less likely than the general public to have current photo IDs. The

new laws, said Rea Carey of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, have "a devastating effect on the ability of transgender people to vote."

She added, in her recent State of the Movement address at a major activist conference, "If we do not protect the right to vote, we will not win on immigration, we will not win on non-discrimination, we will not protect affirmative action and we will not win on marriage."

DEFEND THE VOTE

In defense of voting rights, activists recently lobbied at capitols in Florida and Texas, rocked the vote at a concert in Arizona and marched in Alabama, Georgia and South Carolina, as they marched 50 years ago.

"We have seen the greatest attack on voting rights since segregation," said NAACP president Benjamin Todd Jealous, who attended a massive Martin Luther King Jr. Day rally in Columbia.

U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder, the keynote speaker at the event, said, "The right to vote is not only the cor-

nerstone of our governance, it is the lifeblood of our democracy. And no force has proved more powerful, or more integral to the success of the great American experiment than efforts to expand the franchise. Let me be very, very clear — the arc of American history has bent toward the inclusion, not the exclusion, of more of our fellow citizens in the electoral process. We must ensure that this continues."

Legal challenges to the new voter laws are being fought in Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Kansas, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and Wisconsin.

"Wisconsin's photo ID law is the most restrictive in the country," said Stacy Harbaugh of the ACLU of Wisconsin. "In other states, a wider variety of identification is accepted. Other states also accept a signed affidavit from voters who don't have an ID. In these states, people who have concerns with the security of their ballot have the freedom to show their ID and confirm their identity to the poll worker. However,

no one is not allowed to vote for not having ID."

In its 54-page Wisconsin complaint, the ACLU argues that allowing only certain types of photo ID imposes a severe burden on the right to vote in violation of the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. The complaint also claims the law violates the 24th and 14th amendments because it effectively imposes an unconstitutional poll tax.

The law, signed by Republican Gov. Scott Walker last May, takes effect with the Feb. 21 primary.

ACLU of Wisconsin legal director Larry Dupuis has cautioned "countless Wisconsin residents" — veterans, minorities, seniors, young people — may be turned away for lack of acceptable IDs.

Concern compelled the League of Women Voters of Wisconsin Education Network to sue, alleging the



PHOTOS: COURTESY AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
ACLU plaintiff Ruthelle Frank.

Continued

state Legislature lacked the authority to enact the photo ID law. They argue that the law creates an entire class of people and then denies them an essential right.

The Milwaukee NAACP, along with the immigrant rights group Voces de la Frontera, also is challenging the law that Hall has said "disenfranchises scores of thousands of qualified African-American voters. About half of all African-Americans in Milwaukee currently lack a

driver's license. This new law is tantamount to a denial of the right to vote for many."

Christine Neumann-Ortiz of Voces de la Frontera said, "The Wisconsin Constitution guarantees all citizens and Wisconsin residents the right to vote and we intend to jealously protect that right."

Frank's passion for protecting that right has made her an ACLU plaintiff at the age of 84.

She was born in her home in Brokaw in 1927 — just seven years after women secured voting rights — and

her mother recorded the birth in the family Bible. The Wisconsin Register of Deeds has a record of the birth and can provide a certificate, but the record contains a misspelling of her maiden name. Before Frank can obtain an ID from the DMV, she needs to go through the process of correcting her birth record, a \$200 expense.

"I should not suddenly be barred from voting just because I don't believe in paying for identification in order to vote," said Frank. "That's like a poll tax and sends this country back decades ago when it comes to civil rights."

Barbara Oden is another ACLU plaintiff. She's 57, a resident of Milwaukee and lacks the documents — a Social Security card and birth certificate — needed to obtain the photo ID required to vote. Oden's in something of a catch 22 — when she applied for a Social Security card, she was turned away because she lacked a photo ID.

Carl Ellis, 52, is another of the 17 plaintiffs in the Wisconsin suit. He resides in a homeless shelter for military veterans. He has a veterans photo ID card, but

that isn't acceptable under the new law. To obtain a Wisconsin ID, the homeless veteran with no income needs to buy a copy of his birth certificate from the state of Illinois. He described the law as "un-American."

Civil rights attorney Heather Johnson of National Law Center on Homelessness & Poverty, a partner in the ACLU suit, said the new law silences homeless people.

"With homelessness rising by 12 percent in Wisconsin since the recession began, we cannot allow the state to set this dangerous and unconscionable precedent," she said.

The Walker administration has until mid-February to respond to the ACLU complaint, and it is uncertain whether an injunction will be issued to block implementation of the law until the case is decided.

There also is the chance the U.S. Justice Department will intervene, as requested by a coalition of 22 Wisconsin legislators led by Brett Hulse, D-Madison.

ID CHECK...

- IDs accepted at Wisconsin polling places:
- Wisconsin DOT-issued driver license, even if driving privileges are revoked or suspended.
- Wisconsin DOT-issued identification card.
- Military ID card issued by a U.S. uniformed service.
- U.S. passport.
- Certificate of naturalization issued not earlier than two years before the date of an election at which it is presented.
- Driving receipt issued by Wisconsin DOT (valid for 45 days).
- Identification card receipt issued by Wisconsin DOT (valid for 45 days).
- Identification card issued by a federally recognized Indian tribe in Wisconsin.
- Identification card issued by a Wisconsin accredited university or college that contains date of issuance, signature of student and an expiration date no later than two years after date of issuance. The ID must be accompanied by a separate document that proves enrollment.

Source: bringit.wisconsin.gov

vote just like civil rights leaders like Dr. King had to do in the 1960s," Hulse said in a Martin Luther King Jr. Day statement, adding, "Welcome to Gov. Walker's Wisconsin."

In the meantime, said Harbaugh, "we are still hearing from members of the public who are facing barriers to obtaining a photo ID to vote or who are paying money to obtain the docu-

ments required to get an ID to vote. Some schools are creating compliant IDs, but other students — such as technical college students — may not have an ID to vote."

And for the Feb. 21 primary, the ACLU of Wisconsin, Election Protection Coalition, NAACP, League of Women Voters and other organizations will be monitoring for complaints.

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'I've walked for the Cure for years. I'm seeing red, not pink these days.'

KOMEN from I of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin dismissed the Stearns investigation as "politically motivated ... the latest effort by some extreme Republican leaders to undermine Planned Parenthood and restrict women's access to essential preventative health care, like cancer screenings and contraceptive services."

Wilson said Planned Parenthood routinely works with government regulators and independent auditors to ensure compliance with all rules and regulations regarding funding.

THE REACTION

Within 24 hours of Komen's defunding announcement, the organization's Facebook page contained more than 10,000 comments, most of them from people denouncing Komen for putting politics over health care.

"I'm seeing red, not pink these days. I've walked for the Cure for years, but the next cancer event I do will be the Relay for Life," Pauline Herrick of Madison wrote, referring to the American Cancer Society's signature event.

The fallout brought more than a torrent of angry words: Komen affiliates appealed to their headquarters to reverse the decision. A coalition of 26 U.S. Senators urged reconsideration. The

American Association of University Women called off its Komen for the Cure race. Pro-Planned Parenthood demonstrators gathered near Komen headquarters in Dallas on Feb. 1 and Feb. 2, circulated online petitions and rallied across the country to raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to help Planned Parenthood fill any funding gap. New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg offered up to \$250,000 in a matching-grant pledge.

Komen grants – nearly \$700,000 in 2011 – paid for about 4.3 percent of the 4 million breast exams and 9 percent of the 70,000 mammogram referrals provided at Planned Parenthood clinics in the past five years.

"Women are deeply alarmed that the Susan G. Komen for the Cure Foundation appears to have succumbed to political pressure from a vocal minority," Tanya Atkinson, executive director of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin, said the day after the announcement. "For years, opponents of women's health have waged an aggressive pressure campaign aimed at the Susan G. Komen Foundation at the expense of women's health and lives."

PPAVV, a health care provider to 67,250 women, is not a recent Komen grant partner, but it received funding in the past. However,



Planned Parenthood supporters gather for a lobby day in Tallahassee, Fla. In addition to the fight over the Susan G. Komen grant funding, the organization and its supporters have battled at federal and state levels against funding cuts.

the Wisconsin group has become a target of right-wing politicking. Republican Gov. Scott Walker in 2011 eliminated funding for breast and cervical cancer screenings and birth control ser-

vices at Planned Parenthood and terminated a contract with PPAVV to coordinate cancer screenings and referrals in the Fox Valley earlier this year.

Atkinson said, "We will continue, despite these political attacks, to serve the women and families in Wisconsin who rely on Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin for access to quality affordable health care and accurate, non-judgmental information."

Many critics of Komen focused last week on the role of anti-abortion advocate Handel, who went to work for the charity last April as senior vice president of public policy.

In an article on The Atlantic website, three unnamed sources alleged the Komen board deliberately created the new policy to provide an excuse to terminate the Planned Parenthood partnership.

Those sources also said the funding cut was driven by Handel, whose Twitter profile reads, "Lifelong Conservative

Republican formerly Georgia's first Republican Secretary of State."

As a 2010 gubernatorial candidate in Georgia, she won the endorsement of former VP candidate Sarah Palin, presidential candidate and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney and Arizona Gov. Jan Brewer. Handel was one of Palin's "Mama Grizzly" candidates, but she lost her primary runoff with Nathan Deal, who went on to win the office.

Handel campaigned as an anti-abortion candidate, pledging in a Web post, "I do not support the mission of Planned Parenthood. ... In fact, state and federal law prohibits the use of taxpayer funds for abortions or abortion-related services, and I strongly support those laws. Since grants like these are from the state I'll eliminate them as your next governor."

Handel, last week, was not accessible to the press. But the Atlanta Journal-Constitution reported that a Tweet from her account said, "Just like a pro-abortion group to turn

a cancer org's decision into a political bomb to throw. Cry me a freaking river."

Handel became an instant martyr on the religious right. Bryan Fischer of the American Family Association, a designated hate group, hailed her as a hero for "standing in the gap" against "the enemy."

Critics of Komen also focused on CEO and founder Nancy G. Brinker, an ambassador to Hungary and chief of protocol of the United States for George W. Bush.

Two years ago, Brinker received the Presidential Medal of Freedom from Democrat Barack Obama, but her political ties are clearly to the GOP. Her federal political contributions include Rick Santorum, Bill Frist, John McCain, Mel Martinez, Arlen Specter, Clay Shaw, Kay Bailey Hutchison, Pete Sessions, the Republican National Committee, Republican Leadership Council and the presidential exploratory committee of Elizabeth Dole.

Continued on next page

DAMAGE CONTROL

Komen's first effort at containing damages was a Web video featuring Brinker titled "Setting the Record Straight."

Brinker said the new grant policy was mischaracterized and that Komen was seeking to streamline its grant program, seeking to directly fund centers that provide mammograms rather than referrals.

Komen would never bow to political pressure, Brinker vowed.

But Komen could not suppress the protests.

Pledges continued to Planned Parenthood – the organization raised a reported \$3 million in three days last week. Activists were organizing demonstrations and the social media missiles continued.

Early Feb. 3, the Komen board issued a statement: "We want to apologize to the American public for recent decisions that cast doubt upon our commitment to our mission of saving women's lives. The events of this week have been deeply unsettling for our support-

Komen clarified that grants can be withheld from organizations under investigation, but such investigations "must be criminal and conclusive in nature and not political."

ers, partners and friends, and all of us at Susan G. Komen."

Komen clarified that grants can be withheld from organizations under investigation, but such investigations "must be criminal and conclusive in nature and not political."

Planned Parenthood and its supporters cheered the news. Abortion foes said Komen caved. Evangelist Bill Keller warned of "the wrath and punishment of God unleashed on this wicked nation at any moment."

And Handel resigned. She wrote to Brinker on Feb. 7, "I am deeply disappointed by the gross mischaracterizations of the strategy, its

rationale, and my involvement in it. I openly acknowledge my role in the matter and continue to believe our decision was the best one for Komen's future and the women we serve. However, the decision to update our granting model was made before I joined Komen, and the controversy related to Planned Parenthood has long been a concern to the organization. Neither the decision nor the changes themselves were based on anyone's political beliefs or ideology."

FUTURE FUNDING

Yet questions about Komen continue: How secure is Planned Parent-

hood funding? And did Komen, despite denials, initially attempt to appease its anti-choice executive and the right?

Close readers of Komen's Feb. 3 statement say the organization's plan for Planned Parenthood is an open question.

And another Komen policy statement in line with anti-abortion organizations suggests a right tilt and politics trumping breast-cancer research.

In a decision last November that received far less attention, the organization issued a position on stem cell research: "Susan G. Komen for the Cure has never funded human embryonic stem cell research nor does Komen currently fund H-ESCR. Komen supports research on the isolation, derivation, production and testing of stem cells that are capable of producing all or almost all of the cell types of the developing body and may result in improved understanding of or treatments for breast cancer, but are derived without creating a human embryo or destroying a human embryo."



Susan G. Komen for the Cure's now ex-vice president Karen Handel, an anti-choice opponent who ran for governor in Georgia in 2010. Amid the furor over Komen's decision to cease funding for cancer screenings at Planned Parenthood, Handel tweeted, "Just like a pro-abortion group to turn a cancer org's decision into a political bomb to throw. Cry me a freaking river."



Susan G. Komen for the Cure CEO and founder Nancy G. Brinker offers some "straight talk" about the Planned Parenthood funding decision in a video on the organization's website.



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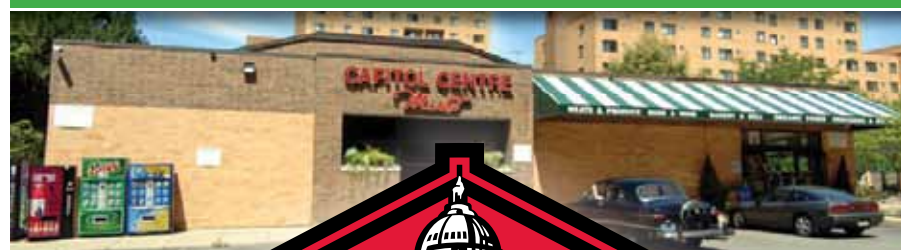


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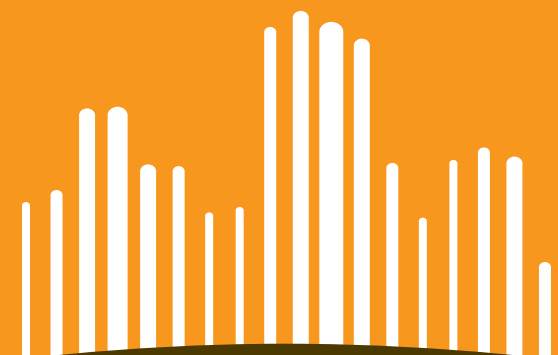
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WIGOUT!

WISCONSIN GAZETTE ENTERTAINMENT

By Gregg Shapiro

Staff writer

Chris Willis, an out electronic music artist with roots in the gospel music scene, first came to prominence on the dance charts as the voice of David Guetta hits such as "Getting' Over," "Love Is Gone," "Love Don't Let Me Go" and "Stay," among others. With his solo debut "Premium/Songs from the Love Ship, Volume I," Willis comes to the fore. Primarily a dance disc, the album also shows Willis has the ability to branch out in pop and rock directions without losing credibility. I spoke with Chris earlier this year.

Gregg Shapiro: **How did you come up with the title of your new full-length disc "Premium/Songs from the Love Ship, Volume I"?**

Chris Willis: If you remember Alanis Morissette's "Jagged Little Pill," that's a line she took from one of her songs. I wanted to find a catchy phrase like that to attach to my title. "Premium" comes from the line in my song "Louder" that says "take another sip of the premium," which, in my mind, infuses something really refined, top-of-the-line and something superior, elegant. "The Love Ship" typifies a reference to the Titanic. As morbid as that might sound; it wasn't my intention to be morbid. You find buried treasure in a ship, under water, classic, incredible, beautiful music that might never have seen the light of day if not for putting them on this collection. That convoluted explanation is where "Premium/Songs from the Love Ship," volumes one, two and three have come from.

Including the four remixes, a majority of the tracks are in the dance music genre, similar to your early work with David Guetta. What role has the Grammy-winning producer and DJ played in your music career?

David Guetta, I love so much. He played an enormous role in the influence not only of the work I do now, but the work I plan to release in the future. Until meeting David, I was heavily involved in gospel music. I had recorded several albums and had backed up just about every artist that came out of Nashville. At the time that I met David, I was in the process of shifting and going in a new direction in my career. Needless to say, meeting David was a major change, a major revival of just about everything that

Chris Willis is about, plus more. Before that I was mostly known in America. And it shined an incredible light on my vocal ability, melody writing and song-writing ability such as never before. To this day, I still continue to participate in and am involved in the electronic music genre and have witnessed an incredible evolution for other artists – Usher, Nicki Minaj, Kelly Rowland – and it continues to be a part of my musical and creative evolution.

"Faded" is what I would describe as a hardcore break-up song. Have you ever had a relationship that drove you to such extremes or was it based on what you'd heard from others?

This song was really fun to write. It was written with Kimberly Cole and Jean-Yves (Ducornet), a writing team in L.A. We stumbled across the concept for "Faded" and built the story around it. I'm in the clubs so much and so much of what we do in electronic music is designed for the party, the after-party. The lifestyle of clubbers and commitment to the club scene is rife with break-up, make-up and love stories. This is just an homage to that sort of story. I hope that I never have to feel that feeling of drinking my pain away. I think I've come close a time or two. I hope this song will connect with the fans and listeners.

Of all the songs to cover, why did you choose to record a version of "Stand By Me"?

Nicola Fasano invented this concept and they had this reinvented track of "Stand By Me." I happily collaborated with them on the song. It's always been one of my favorites. I grew up on music from '50s, '60s and '70s. To include this updated, new-and-improved "Stand By Me" was a wink to my parents and their peers and all the music lovers who love classic music.

I think your pop side comes to the surface on "Be There." What was the inspiration for that song?

Thank you. My inspiration for that song was Fergie's "Big Girls Don't Cry." I was lucky enough to see her perform in Atlanta. The contrast between everything she'd been doing with the Black Eyed Peas, and then she came out with this mellow pop ballad. I wanted a moment like that. I wrote this song, pitching it to another artist. But my management thought it was a good song for me and we kept it (laughs).

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Florentine goes romantic for Valentine's Day

By Michael Muckian
 Contributing writer

Milwaukee's Florentine Opera wants to capitalize on love, specifically the kind associated with St. Valentine's Day. With the production "Isn't it Romantic?," Florentine director William Florescu hopes to seize the Feb. 14 holiday by first of what he hopes becomes an annual musical ode to romance.

The production is billed as a celebration of love songs "from Vienna to Broadway." It's designed as a light Valentine confection that shines the spotlight on the company's studio artists in the intimate confines of Marcus Center for the Performing Arts' Vogel Hall on Feb. 10-12.

"One could argue that most operas have love as part of their theme," says Florescu, who is directing the performance. "We want to take hold

of this holiday in the same way that 'Nutmcracker' and 'Christmas Carol' have taken hold of Christmas."

The performances feature the works of everyone from Franz Lehár, famed for his early 20th-century operettas, to the great songwriting teams of Broadway. Love is the central theme of the evening, of course, but other considerations went into choosing the material, Florescu says.

"We certainly considered the specific voices in our program, as well as making sure to give the audience a wide stylistic and thematic palette," he says. "But at the end of the day I chose the music that I love, and I hope the audience will love it, too."

Lehar's "The Merry Widow Waltz" was a logical choice, Florescu says. But so were Rogers & Hammerstein's "If I Loved You" from "Carousel,"

Lerner & Loewe's "If Ever I Would Leave You" from "Camelot" and, of course, Rodgers & Hart's "My Funny Valentine" from "Babes in Toyland."

"We certainly have included songs strong in the 'ahh' factor, but I think the real gems may be 'I'll See You Again' from Noël Coward's "Bittersweet" and "Meine Lippen" from Lehár's "Giuditta," he says. "I think the audience will love those."

Some of the singers are familiar to Florentine Opera fans. Soprano Erica Schuller, mezzo-soprano Kristen DiNinno, tenor Matthew Richardson and bass-baritone Dan Richardson sing in various combinations, accompanied by pianist Eileen Huston. Schuller and Richardson are both in their second seasons of the Florentine Opera Studio Artists program, while Richardson is in his first season.

DiNinno was most recently a Gerdine Young Artist with The Opera Theater of St. Louis.

The Florentine, which had success in November with "Golden Days," a similar musical revue, would like to make the Valentine's Day program an annual event. Florescu says there are many more songs to explore in the future, including many in the Great American Songbook.

"There is such a wide variety of available material, that in certain years we may have a different focus," he says. "There are composers featured this year like Jerome Kern, who fits both the musical theater and songbook tag, but we really wanted a program that satisfied the audience whether they are deeply steeped in this repertoire or are just first-timers."

A dash of chocolate wouldn't hurt either.

Ruth Schudson and Mark Ulrich in Next Act Theater's "Vigil."
 PHOTO: NEXT ACT THEATER



'Vigil' is a deathbed comedy about transformation

Theater

MICHAEL MUCKIAN

Opinions differ, but actor Edmund Gwenn is generally attributed with the epithet, "Dying is easy; comedy is hard." Gay Canadian playwright Morris Panych brings the two absolutes together in "Vigil," his darkly lit, yet deeply touching, comedy being produced by Milwaukee's Next Act Theatre through Feb. 26.

The premise is as simple as the narrative is deep. The elderly Grace (Milwaukee actor Ruth Schudson) is dying. She summons nephew Kemp (Chicago actor Mark Ulrich), her closest living relative, to her bedside to keep vigil during her final days. It is the first time the pair have seen each other in 30 years, owing to a perceived slight Kemp suffered years ago at his elderly aunt's hand. The pair have little time to do a lot of catching up, not all of which is pleasant.

But things don't quite work out that way.

"This is a comedy, but it's very dark," says director Mary MacDonald Kerr, who directed this season's "Going to St. Ives"

for Next Act. "It's also hysterically funny, and I have two glorious actors who make it so."

The idea for the play grew from an actual experience that Panych and his partner Ken MacDonald had when visiting MacDonald's mother in a hospital, Kerr says. A woman in the next bed was dying. At one point a nurse came in to tell her that the nephew she requested a visit from refused to come.

"There was a pause and the nurse said, 'Shall I wipe away that tear for you, dear?'" Kerr says. "It's heartbreaking to think this woman was dying and had only a nephew to share it with, but it was from this kernel that Panych got the idea for his play."

As expected, given that "Vigil" is a comedy, the two characters are as different as day and night. Grace has less than a dozen lines in the entire play, which puts the onus for communication on Kemp, a person not used to talking. Now, finally given the chance to speak, Kemp finds he has no self-edit button, Kerr says.

"Kemp is a social misfit who struggles with his sexual identity, and this apparently is the first time anyone has bothered to listen to him," Kerr says. "It's almost a coming-of-age opportunity for the character and he takes advantage of it."

ON STAGE

Next Act Theater's production of Morris Panych's "Vigil" runs through Feb. 26 at Next Act's new facility at 255 S. Water St. For tickets and info, go to www.nextact.org.

Ulrich, who plays the character, agrees. "Kemp drops everything to come and be with an aunt he hasn't seen in 30 years, but his bedside manner has an expiration date and she doesn't hold up her end of the bargain," the actor says.

The pair spend more time together than either of them first anticipated, and a relationship develops. Kemp's unruhly, self-centered insensitivity begins to soften and change, the actor says.

"Kemp does all the talking, of course, so the change is self-granted," Ulrich says. "After the experience does change him, and I like to think it's been a positive change."

The arguments, inappropriate comments and gallows humor that mark the play is not out of line with what happens in real-life situations, says Kerr, who underwent something similar in her own life.

"Some years back, my brother, sister and I sat with our father for five days as he died, and we found ourselves fatigued, emotional and facing absurd situations that bring out all sorts of behavior, including humor," Kerr says. "As a society, we do a great job preparing people to bring a life into the world, but a really lousy job preparing anyone in helping usher a life out."

With very few lines, Schudson would seem to have the more difficult role. But for the veteran Milwaukee performer, last seen in the title role of Chamber Theater's production of "Driving Miss Daisy," it posed no challenge whatsoever.

"My favorite thing about acting is listening and reacting, and I get to do that a lot here," Schudson says. "(Ulrich's) character is so wordy and off-the-wall that one becomes fascinated with what he has to say."

Despite her relative silence, Grace is always the one in control, Kerr says. Like Kemp, Grace also evolves with the lengthening relationship. Both characters walk away better people than when they started.

"I hope the audience doesn't let the darkness scare them," Kerr says. "The play is also very moving and people will feel great when they leave the theater."

Peninsula Music Festival presents music from Jane Austen's playlist

By Michael Muckian
 Contributing writer

In addition to being one of the most influential writers in history, Jane Austen was an accomplished pianist, albeit at an amateur level. She is said to have practiced her piano-forte every day, usually an hour before her household awoke for breakfast. She hoped no one would hear her then.

Two performers from the Peninsula Music Festival chamber music series are taking some of Austen's musical favorites to prime time this month. "The Music of Jane Austen," presented at 7 p.m. on Feb. 17, introduces Door County listeners to the music most beloved by the famous author. The presentation also features anecdotes about the more tuneful side of Austen's life.

PMF associate conductor Stephen Alltop and soprano/violinist Josefien Stoppelenburg are presenting the concert at Ephraim Moravian Church, located in the Door County community of the same name. The concert was timed to help celebrate the 200th anniversary in 2011 of the publication of

"Sense and Sensibility."

"The Jane Austen Society of America contacted me to ask if I would do a musical presentation for their annual meeting this past June," says Alltop, who has worked with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and serves on the conducting faculty at Northwestern University. "I had previously done concerts based on Shakespeare, but after some research I found there was a great deal of material from which to formulate a Jane Austen program."

What Alltop uncovered were some obvious and not-so-obvious choices for a woman who had grown up in the 18th century. Given her amateur status, it's not surprising that the compositions occupied various levels of difficulty but tended to the simpler, more colorful side.

"Jane Austen had studied piano during the 1790s, so most of the music she played comes from that time and a bit before," says the Netherlands-born Stoppelenburg. "Some of the names that appear most often in her six bound volumes of music are Schobart, Storace and Pleyel, names not really

known today."

One of Austen's great favorites was Charles Dibdin, a highly prolific composer often referred to as "the British Schubert," according to Alltop. "Jane had two brothers in the navy and Dibdin wrote many a song based on the lives of sailors and those they left behind," he says.

George Frideric Handel also was on Austen's playlist, while Carl Maria von Weber and Ludwig van Beethoven were not, an oversight Alltop attributes to the lack of circulation of the two composers' music among amateur musicians at the time.

Music by Ignaz Pleyel appears on the Feb. 17 program, along with that of Muzio Clementi. Historical narrative is interspersed with the music in an attempt to aid audience understanding and create a more festive mood. This is especially true when Alltop performs František Kotzwara's "The Battle of Prague" while Stoppelenburg narrates.

"The Battle of Prague" is a musical depiction of 18th century warfare," Alltop says. "It's complete with horses galloping, cannons booming, bullets flying and cries of

the wounded. It is not profound in the least and is loads of fun."

"Prague" was a number Austen played at family gatherings, which were not that often according to history. Even though much of the music the author loved does not require virtuosic skills, the evening should be enlightening for Austen fans of all musical tastes.

In addition to the concert, Alltop and Stoppelenburg will stop by Gibraltar High School in nearby Fish Creek to meet with English students studying Jane Austen. Each student will be given a copy of "Sense and Sensibility" as a gift from PMF.

Preceding the Jane Austen-inspired event will be another chamber concert Feb. 11 at the Peninsula School of Art in Fish Creek. A trio consisting of Thomas Kluge on viola, Amy Thieman on flute, and Katie Wychulis on harp will perform Arnold Bax's "Elegiac Trio," Harald Genzmer's "Trio" and Claude Debussy's "Sonata." The trio performs at 3 p.m.

For more information on both concerts, contact the Peninsula Music Festival at 920-854-4060.

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This year's chapter on winter reading

Books

GREGG SHAPIRO

LITERARY DELIGHTS

- Eleanor Brown's marvelous novel, **"The Weird Sisters"** (Berkley, 2011/2012), about the three Andreas sisters, their ill mother and Shakespeare-quoting professor father, was one of 2011's more auspicious debuts. It's now available in a paperback edition.
- **"Coral Glynn"** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012, \$25) is Peter Cameron's first novel since his acclaimed Y/A novel "Someday This Pain Will Be Useful to You." Set in 1950s England, it examines how victims of circumstance learn to love one another.
- In the Y/A novel **"The Miseducation of Cameron Post"** (Harper Collins, 2012, \$17.99), Emily M. Danforth recounts the experience of a young lesbian dealing with being queer while staying with her ultra-religious aunt following the death of her parents in a car accident.
- Novelist Alvin Orloff explores the mid-1970s with teenager Leonard shedding his "good kid" image and joining the Burnouts, a gang of misfits, as he embarks on his personal journey of self-discovery in **"Why Aren't You Smiling?"** (Manic D Press, 2011, \$14.95).
- A software engineer-turned-writer, lesbian novelist Ellen Ullman sets **"By Blood"** (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2012, \$27) in the gritty, early '70s of San Francisco. The plot involves thin walls, eavesdropping, a patient, her therapist and a quest for identity.
- Teenage criminals Sarah, Jenna, Lauren and Cassie are sent to an experimental juvenile detention center on a farm to create something tangible. As three of the girls try to heal their wounds, one sets out to destroy everything they work for in **"Getting Somewhere"** (Penguin Young Readers, 2012, \$ 17.99) by Beth Neff.
- **"Monstress"** (Ecco, 2012, \$13.99) is award-winning, queer Filipino writer Lysley Tenorio's debut story

- collection. Included among the eight pieces is the National Magazine Award-nominated titular story.
- Controversial and prolific queer writer Dennis Cooper returns with **"The Marbled Swarm"** (Harper Collins, 2011, \$14.99), in which a young cannibal (yes, you read that right), tells the story of him and his late father.
- High school sweethearts Nate and Adam survived the strains of homophobic brutality. But as college life begins in different cities, their love is put to the test when new people enter their lives, forcing them to recognize what they really want in J.H. Trumble's novel, **"Don't Let Me Go"** (Kensington Books, 2012, \$15).
- The adult-oriented parody **"If You Give a Kid a Cookie, Will He Shut the Fuck Up?"** (St. Martin's Griffin, 2011, \$14.99) is Marcy Roznick's honest tale of a parent seeking to find peace with his noisy kids.
- The 11 entwined short stories in **"Wounds"** (Manic D Press, 2011, \$14.95) by Justin Chin explore intense emotions, as well as the characters that inhibit them.
- "Sweep-you-off-your-feet" stories by Steve Berman, Simon Sheppard, Rob Rosen and 10 other gay writers are included in **"Best Gay Romance 2012"** (Cleis Press, 2012, \$14.95), edited by Richard LaBonte.
- Out writer R. Zamora Linmark is having quite a year in terms of publishing. He follows up his Coffee House Press novel "Leche" with his third poetry collection **"Drive-By Vigils"** (Hanging Loose Press,

- 2011, \$18).
- The murder of music critic Dwayne Robinson is dismissed by the NYPD as a gang initiation. But his old friend D Hunter suspects there's more to it in **"The Plot Against Hip Hop"** by Nelson George (Akashic Books, 2011, \$15.95). The novel's story parallels the history of hip hop and its culture.
- Edited by Joyce Carol Oates, **"New Jersey Noir"** (Akashic Books, 2011, \$15.95) is dedicated to the Garden State and features a collaboration by out writers Edmund White and Michael Carroll, as well as contributions by Alicia Ostriker, Jonathan Safran Foer, C.K. Williams, Gerald Stern, Robert Pinsky and Oates herself, to name a few.
- In the novel **"Janet Planet"** (Mayapple Press, 2011, \$16.95), poet Eleanor Lerman rewrites the life of writer Carlos Castaneda, "godfather of the new age," for the Woodstock generation.
- **"Boundaries"** (Akashic Books, 2011, \$22.95), by award-winning writer Elizabeth Nunez, tells the story of a Caribbean husband and wife clinging to their Victorian notions of privacy while their daughter Anna yearns to assimilate into her new country. The resulting tension reveals the gap between her and American-born citizens.



PHOTO: JOE HENSON
Author Eleanor Brown appears at Barnes & Noble in Mayfair Mall in Wauwatosa on Feb. 29.

- ary theorist Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, is a collection of pieces from her final years, before she died of breast cancer in 2009. It's edited by her friend and literary executor Jonathan Goldberg.
- As a devoted father, husband and professor at the Orthodox Jewish Yeshiva University, Joy Ladin shares her transitions from a man to a woman in **"Through the Door of Life: A Jewish Journey between Genders"** (The University of Wisconsin Press, 2012, \$26.95).
- Particularly timely in light of the recent changes regard-

- ing gays in the military, **"Out of Step"** by retired journalist J. Lee Watton (A&M Books, 2011, \$17) takes readers back 45 years to the Office of Naval Intelligence's gay witch hunt to tell the true story of what happened during the summer of 1965.
- The updated and expanded edition of John-Manuel Andriote's acclaimed, Lambda Literary Award-winning 1999 book **"Victory Deferred: How AIDS Changed Gay Life in America"** (jmandriote.com, 2011), includes a revised preface.
- It also includes an entirely new chapter, "The Plague

- Continues," inspired by the author's own HIV diagnosis in 2005.
- Described as "the definitive collection of writing" by a "pioneering theorist and activist in feminist, lesbian and gay, queer, and sexuality studies," the substantial **"Deviations: A Gayle Rubin Reader"** (Duke University Press, 2012, \$23.95) compiles some of Gayle S. Rubin's "most influential essays."
- Including more than a dozen pages of color photos, **"It's Not Really About the Hair"** (It Books, 2011/2012, \$14.99) by Tabatha Coffey with Richard Buskin is the memoir by the out lesbian host of "Tabatha's Salon Takeover." It's now in a paperback edition.
- **"The Good, the Bad and the God-Awful: 21st Century Movie Reviews"** (Thomas Dunne Books/ St. Martin's Griffin, 2011, \$21.99) by Kurt Loder, of Rolling Stone and MTV fame, contains more than 200 movie reviews.
- **"Sacred Monsters"** (Magnus Books, 2011) is a collection of Edmund White's most recent writings on artists and authors, including Allen Ginsberg, Truman Capote and Vladimir Nabokov to name a few.
- In case you missed it the first time around, **"Prides Crossing: The Unbridled Life and Impatient Times of Eleonora Sears"** (Commonwealth Editions, 2009, \$27.95), about sports-woman and lesbian Eleo Sears (1881-1968) is a must-read in advance of this June's 40th anniversary of Title IX.



Josh Aaron McCabe & Molly Rhode (Photo Nick Berard)

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New DVDs explore the teen scene

DVDiva

GREGG SHAPIRO

'ABDUCTION'

The once-promising filmmaker John Singleton has been on a steady decline since his breakthrough directorial debut "Boyz n the Hood." His latest work, the Taylor Lautner vehicle "Abduction," does nothing to slow his downhill slide.

A few days ago Nathan (Lautner) was just another hard-partying, high school wrestler in a form-fitting singlet. That was before he discovered a picture of himself from his childhood on a missing children's website while doing research for a sociology project with classmate (and potential love interest) Karen (Lily Collins).

Nathan is in the process of confronting Mara (Maria Bello) and Kevin (Jason Isaacs), the people he believed to be his parents, when his home is invaded by Eastern European villains.

Not only are these bad guys with accents after Nathan, but so is a team of CIA agents, led by Burton (Alfred Molina).

While helping him escape the clutches of evil, Nathan's therapist Dr. Bennett reveals that not only is she his shrink but also one of his "keepers." Everyone, it seems, is trying to protect Nathan from the ruthless Kozlow (Michael Nyqvist). Kozlow is trying to get his hands on an encrypted list of people who have stolen or traded valuable intel, which just so happens to be in the hands of Nathan's birth father, rogue agent Martin (Dermot Mulroney).

This convoluted script might have worked better with a more capable director, not to mention a better cast of actors. Lautner, often in tight-fitting T-shirts (but rarely out of one) is easily one of the worst actors of his (or any) generation. Everyone else is completely miscast, including Sigourney Weaver. She delivers her lines as if she has just learned to speak again following a traumatic head injury.

If Lautner ever appears in a movie titled "Abdominals," watch it. But be sure to avoid "Abduction."

DVD special features include a gag reel, stunts and "making of" featurettes and more.



Taylor Lautner stars in "Abduction."

'DIRTY GIRL'

The well-intentioned, if flawed, "Dirty Girl," from out writer/director Abe Sylvia, unfolds as if the world's big-

gest John Waters fan wanted to write and direct an amalgam of "Thelma and Louise" and "Easy A" — and failed. In the "man's world" of

1987 Norman, Okla., high school hussy Danielle (Juno Temple) sets out to prove that girls have more power, especially dirty girls. But her less-than-acceptable behavior regularly gets her sent to the principal's office. Exasperated by her unwillingness to conform to Oklahoma standards, the principal puts her in the "challenger" special-ed program.

There she meets gay, overweight, Melissa Manchester-obsessed, hoodie-wearing Clarke (Jeremy Dozier), who is doing his best to be invisible and avoid being sent to military school by his red-neck father Joseph (Dwight Yoakam) and mousy mother Peggy (Mary Steenburgen). Paired up for a lesson in parenting, involving a sack of flour, Danielle and Clarke form an unlikely bond. Danielle, anxious to escape her own unpleasant home situation with single mom Sue-Ann (Milla Jovovich) and her Mormon boyfriend Ray (William H. Macy), goes on the lam with Clarke. Heading to Fresno to find Danielle's absent birth father, the teen transients encounter hot stripper Joel (Marquette grad

Nicholas D'Agosto), who helps Clarke out with his virginity (for a price), and more than a few bumps in the road. Promising but disappointing, "Dirty Girl" is too much (trash) talk and not enough action. This kind of thing has been done before and done better.

The DVD special features include deleted and extended scenes, as well as commentary by writer/director Sylvia.

OTHER TEEN RELEASES

Other teen tales on Blu-ray include "Dead Poets Society," from that late '80s/early '90s period where Robin Williams (as private school teacher John Keating) was making an effort to be taken seriously as a dramatic actor; and "The Art of Getting By," starring Freddie Highmore as unmotivated and depressed high school senior George.

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From "Dirty Girl." PHOTO: COURTESY

New releases are a li'l bit country

Music

GREGG SHAPIRO

THE LITTLE WILLIES

The Little Willies' second album "For The Good Times" features Richard Julian (who does a mean Lyle Lovett), Jim Campilongo, Lee Alexander and Dan Rieser. Not quite insurgent, it casts a respectful net over a set of comfy, twangy tunes. Ralph Stanley's "I Worship You," Loretta Lynn's "Fist City," Willie Nelson's "Permanently Lonely," Johnny Cash's "Wide Open Road," Kris Kristofferson's "For The Good Times" and Dolly Parton's "Jolene" all sparkle anew on this disc. The Little Willies' rendition of "Foul Owl on the Prowl" (from the movie "In The Heat of the Night") is a flight of delight.

MOUNT MORIAH

Mount Moriah, a duo consisting of out lesbian Heather McEntire and Jenks Miller, makes a stunning impression on the new self-titled CD/DVD. Backed by a stellar cast of hipster musicians, the pair creates boot-gazing glory on tracks such as "Only Way Out" and "Plane." On the other hand, you may find yourself wiping away eyes on "Old Gowns" and "Honey, We Don't Need That Much."

The DVD consists of must-see videos for "The Letting Go," "Lament" and "Old Gowns."

ELVIS PRESLEY

The double-disc, 40th-anniversary edition of Elvis Presley's "Elvis Country,"

aka "I'm 10,000 Years Old," includes 1971's "Love Letters from Elvis," as well as six bonus tracks. Looking south, Elvis covers country as only he can, remaking the Anne Murray hit "Snowbird," repossessing Jerry Lee Lewis' "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On," having the time of his life with Willie Nelson's "Funny How Time Slips Away" and breaking our hearts on "There Goes My Everything." With Presley in fine form, "Elvis Country" is a place worth visiting and setting a spell.

MY MORNING JACKET

Like it or not, My Morning Jacket is the face of 21st-century Southern rock. But that doesn't mean Charlie Daniels Band 2.0 (or 2.1). Instead, on "Circuital," MJM embraces its Southern soul and gently steers it toward the future on cuts such as the title track, "Victory Dance," "Outta My System" and "You Wanna Freak Out." The real pleasure of "Circuital," however, occurs on spectrum stretchers such as "The Day Is Coming" and "Holdin' on to Black Metal," indicating that these jacket pockets contain surprises.

JODY MILLER

Jody Miller is perhaps best known for the novelty hit answer song "Queen of the House" (the video on YouTube is priceless). A campy response to Roger Miller's "King of the Road," it was clearly a song of its day — 1965. Miller released a series of country albums during the early to mid-1970s on which she performed Nashville-

style versions of hits by others ("He's So Fine," "Baby, I'm Yours," "Natural Woman") as well as songs by Billy Sherrill and other country songwriters of the day. The album "Complete Epic Hits" compiles 25 of Miller's hits from the period on a single disc.

THE LOW ANTHEM

The Low Anthem, My Morning Jacket's Yankee country cousins, puts their fondness for unusual and vintage instrumentation to good use on "Smart Flesh." The numbered first edition of the Rhode Island-based band's album featured a bonus CD containing "three passable strays that missed the cut." Closer in spirit to the insurgent country scene, "Smart Flesh" is simply stunning from start to finish, especially such songs as "Apothecary Love," "Love and Altar," "Ghost Woman Blues," the 9/11 heartbreaker "Boeing 737," and the exceptional "Hey, All You Hippies!" The Low Anthem hits the heights on "Smart Flesh."

JIM WHITE

Jim White stirs in a folksy flavor to the 11 alt-country songs on "Where It Hits You." Beginning with the acoustic flair of "Chase The Dark Away," White brightens "Sunday's Refrain" with brass, brings a banjo to "The Way of Alone" and turns on the waterworks for the tragic tale of "My Brother's Keeper." But when he cuts loose on more experimental songs such as "What Rocks Will Never Know" and "Here We Go!," he knows exactly where to hit us.



PHOTO: COURTESY

The duo Mount Moriah.

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FEB. 9, THURSDAY

The Milwaukee Rep's lauded production of "To Kill a Mockingbird" has been extended through March 11 at the Powerhouse Theater, 108 E. Wells St. Go to www.milwaukeekeerep.com or call 414-224-9490.

The Milwaukee premiere of Jonathan Larson's "tick, tick... Boom!" runs through Feb. 11 at Soulstice Theatre, 3770 S. Pennsylvania, Suite 2, in St. Francis. Call 414-481-2800.

Off The Wall Theatre, 127 E. Wells, presents Wendy Wasserstein's "The Sisters Rosensweig" through Feb. 12. Call 414-327-3552.

Skylight Opera Theatre presents "Gershwin & Friends," starring Cynthia Cobb, Parrish Collier and Paul Helmm, through Feb. 12 in the Cabot Theatre at Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway. Call 414-291-7800.

Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, 400 W. College Ave. in Appleton, presents "Million Dollar Quartet" through Feb. 12. Call 920-730-3760.



WIGOUT ON THE TOWN

EDITED AND COMPILED BY GREGG SHAPIRO

FEB. 11, SATURDAY

Beer And A Movie! presents the "Grease" Sing-Along at 6:30 p.m. at Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth. Call 414-286-3663.



Brewcity Bruisers roller derby begins at 7 p.m. at The U.S. Cellular Arena, 400 W. Kilbourn.

Steely Dan tribute band Steely Dane plays "Make Tonight a Wonderful Thing," a Valentine's Day-themed show for lovers at 8 p.m. at the Barrymore Theatre, 2090 Atwood in Madison. Call 608-241-2345.

As part of its annual chamber music series, Peninsula Music Festival presents a concert featuring three famous trios: "Elegiac Trio" by Arnold Bax; Harald Genzmer's "Trio"; and "Sonata" by Debussy, at 3 p.m. at the Peninsula School of Art, 3900 County F in Fish Creek. Go to musicfestival.com or call 920-854-4060.

Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, 19805 W. Capitol Dr. in Brookfield, presents dance troupe Ailey II at 8 p.m. Call 262-781-9520.

FEB. 12, SUNDAY

The Peking Acrobats perform spellbinding acrobatic stunts at 3 p.m. at Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison. Call 608-258-4141.

FEB. 14, TUESDAY

Karl Denson's Tiny Universe performs the Rolling Stones album "Sticky Fingers" in its entirety at 7 p.m. at the Majestic, 115 King in Madison. Call 608-251-2582.

FEB. 15, WEDNESDAY

Gabriel Prokofiev, London-based composer, producer, and founder of the NONCLASSICAL record label, returns to Milwaukee at 8:45 p.m. at The MOCT, 240 E. Pittsburgh.

FEB. 16, THURSDAY

Milwaukee Chamber Theatre presents "A Thousand Words" through March 11 in the Studio Theatre at Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway. Call 414-291-7800.

Learn more about relationships when Milwaukee stage veteran Laurie Birmingham stars in the Marcus Center for the Performing Arts' engagement of "Miss Abigail's Guide To Dating, Mating, & Marriage" in Vogel Hall, through Feb. 19. Call 414-273-2787.

FEB. 17, FRIDAY

Barrymore Theatre, 2090 Atwood in Madison, hosts "An Evening Of Progressive Comedy" to benefit The Progressive Magazine (www.progressive.org), featuring lesbian comic Kate Clinton with special guest Michael Feldman, at 7:30 p.m. Call 608-241-2345.

South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center, 901 15th in South Milwaukee, presents its fifth annual Mystery Dinner Theatre Fundraiser "And the Killer Is..." featuring a three-course meal catered by Skyline Catering and a humorous awards show/murder mystery featuring local actors, February 24-26. Call 414-766-5049 or go to www.southmilwaukeekeerep.org.

FEB. 18, SATURDAY

Alverno Presents brings "Sexy Results: Cedar Block's Dig for the Higgs and How the Quest was Won," a mash-up of rock, spoken word, artist installations and video at 8 p.m. to Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth. Call 414-286-3663.

FEB. 19, SUNDAY

At 3 p.m. in the UWM Recital Hall, 2400 E. Kenwood Blvd., Vocal Tapestry performs the vocal music of cultures around the world, including selections from the Caribbean accompanied by steel drums; from the Balkans with accordion; and from Irish, Samoan, South African, Japanese and Yiddish traditions. Call 414-229-4308.

FEB. 21, TUESDAY

Boldt Arts Alive! Series presents "Doubt: A Parable" at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, 400 W. College Ave. in Appleton. Call 920-730-3760.



The Peking Acrobats on Feb. 12

Carini's La Conca D'Oro Valentine's Day Menu "Dinner for Two" advertisement featuring a wine glass and text about a \$100 menu and celebrating 15 years in business.

Milwaukee Ballet Winter Series advertisement featuring a ballerina and text about three world premieres at The Pabst Theater from February 16-19.

Milwaukee Art Museum ACCIDENTAL GENIUS advertisement featuring a portrait of a man and text about art from the Anthony Petullo Collection opening Feb 10, 2012.

sips n strokes advertisement for a Valentine's Day menu at centro cafe, including details about a painting workshop and contact information.

centro cafe advertisement for a very special Valentine's Day Menu at centro cafe, featuring 1/2 off selected bottles of wine on Mondays & Tuesdays.



"To Kill a Mockingbird" through March 11 at the Milwaukee Rep



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