

STILL FLYING HIGH
Idina Menzel, star of "Rent," "Wicked," and "Glee," explains the magic of her career.

WiGOUT! Page 29



THE VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR WISCONSIN'S LGBT COMMUNITY

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PHOTO: U.S. Supreme Court



Supreme decision

Same-sex marriage cases on track for High Court

By Lisa Neff
Staff writer

The trains haven't left the stations but at least two marriage equality cases are on track for the U.S. Supreme Court – one likely to depart soon from San Francisco and another expected to leave this summer from Boston.

The final destination is the four-story, marble "temple of justice" at

1 First St., Washington, D.C.

"The momentum for the freedom to marry seems unstoppable," said Stuart Gaffney of Marriage Equality USA, referring to recent federal court decisions, improving poll numbers and President Barack Obama's evolution on the issue.

There's general agreement – in political, activist and legal camps

– that the High Court will take up marriage equality in 2013. But opinions vary on how the justices might explore the issues, whether narrowly or broadly, in two separate cases or in one.

FROM BOSTON

On May 31 in Boston, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit unanimously upheld a trial

judge's ruling that Section 3 of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act is unconstitutional. Section 3 bars federal recognition of same-sex marriages, which presently are legal in six states and the District of Columbia. Same-sex marriage is pending in two other states.

The plaintiffs in *Gill v. U.S. Office of Personnel Management* include seven married couples and

three widowers represented by the Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders, a New England group at the forefront of the marriage equality campaign.

The appeals court ruled against DOMA because "it targets a historically disadvantaged and unpopular group," said GLAD

SUPREME page 12

Pride-Fest breaks revenue records! See pix, p. 17

Wisconsin Dems say 'I do' to marriage equality

By Lisa Neff
Staff writer

Delegates to the Democratic Party of Wisconsin's state convention crafted a 2012 party platform that proclaims, "We support marriage equality for all couples."

Wisconsin was the first state in the nation to ban bias based on sexual orientation. And each year since 2006, delegates to the state Democratic Party convention have

called for laws protecting LGBT families and the repeal of anti-gay marriage laws.

"This year," said Tom Scharbach, co-chair of the state party's LGBT caucus, "Democrats in Wisconsin took the next step, endorsing marriage equality for all couples. We hope that our work will hasten the day when marriage discrimination comes to an end in Wisconsin."

The state party convention took place June 8-9 at the Radisson Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton, with caucus meetings, orientation and speeches on June 8. On June 9, there was a farewell speech by retiring U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl and votes on the resolutions, the platform and officers.

Party rules allow for each congressional district convention – there are eight

– to send 10 resolutions to the state convention for consideration. State convention delegates vote on the resolutions, and the approved resolutions are incorporated into the platform, which sets out where the party stands on the issues.

The LGBT caucus sponsored the marriage equality plank and 2nd, 5th, 6th and 7th congressional district conventions carried the res-

olution for marriage equality to Appleton, where it was approved June 9 without debate or amendment.

"The lack of debate, as far as I can tell, indicated strong support for the marriage equality resolution," Scharbach said.

"The resolution supporting marriage equality received strong support from county parties, delegates to congressional district conventions

DEMS page 22

LGBT news with a twist

WIGWAG

By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg

**HE'S OUT**

Alan Scott, aka the Green Lantern, is out. Actually, in the latest incarnation of the character, he was never in. DC Comics recently brought back the character first introduced to a super-fan base in 1940. The Green Lantern has had multiple personalities and names over the years, but he's always had his power ring, one of the most dangerous weapons in the universe. The newest Green Lantern is gay, partnered and all-American.

SHE'S NOT

Queen Latifah got caught in a gay Web whirlwind earlier this month. Even the most respected news outlets rushed to publish false stories that she'd come out at Long Beach's LGBT Pride cel-

ebration. Their proof was apparently nothing more than the fact that she'd performed at a Pride event – after all, only LGBT people perform at Pride events – and that she'd referred to her audience as “my people.” After all, she could only have been referring to gays, not to Californians or progressives or, um, her fans – right?

IN OUR FACE

In a Facebook conversation that took place shortly after Scott Walker was elected governor in January 2011, his son Alex Walker called a friend who was joking with him about his father a “fag.” The young Walker's public use of the homophobic slur brought back memories of Willow Palin's homophobic rant on Facebook in November 2010.

ZOMBIE CANNIBAL

A Miami man killed by a police officer as he mutilated a man's face was said to be an avid Bible reader who posted to his Face-

book page before the attack, “Deliver me from my enemies, O my Lord; Defend me from those who rise up against me. For the Lord God is my defense.” Rudy Eugene, known now as the “Miami zombie,” was suspected of being high on “bath salts” when he attacked, stripped and chewed off two-thirds of a defenseless homeless man's face.

PSYCHO KILLER

The tabloids are referring to a porn actor-prostitute as the “Canadian Psycho.” Luka Rocco Magnotta, arrested in early June in Berlin after fleeing Montreal, is accused of sexually assaulting another man, then killing him and dismembering the body. Authorities say the killer then mailed body parts to various government and political entities in Canada, including the prime minister. Police say Magnotta posted a video of the killing on the Web, along with a series of other short films. In one, Magnotta, casually smokes and says, “What's up and hi to all my fans” while Madonna's “Isla Bonita” plays.

IMPORT, EXPORT

At Ikea, Jättebra is the name for a type of plant pot. In Thailand, it sounds like a slang word for sex. Redalen, an Ikea bedframe, also sounds like a sex-related activity to Thai ears. So when the company began exporting its Swedish-style Poang rocking chair and other furnishings to its store in Bangkok, it hired linguists to make sure it didn't also export pornographic names.

VROOM, VROOM

Chevy celebrated Pride in Detroit with an outing for the Volt. In an ad, the Volt announces, “Mom, Dad, I'm electric.” Under a photo of the car and its “parents” is a rainbow stripe and then the print, “Volt runs on an electric battery and a gas generator. So, whatever revs your engine, we support you 100%. Happy Motor City Pride from the entire Chevrolet family.”

GOING GAGA

Lady Gaga met Thailand's premier “lady boys” at a Bangkok drag show featuring busy danc-

ers who were not born that way. The pop diva and an entourage from her “Born This Way Ball” took in a show at the Calypso Cabaret, featuring a drag review of Broadway show tunes. La Gaga's Asian tour has generated controversy at nearly every stop. In Seoul, fans younger than 18 were banned from her concerts after Christian groups complained the lyrics and costumes were sexually provocative. She canceled her Jakarta tour after Muslims there threatened violence.

'GAY' NOT SLANDER

A New York appeals court has ruled that it is no longer slander to falsely say someone is gay. The ruling goes against decades of findings that spreading a rumor about someone being gay was defamation. Those prior rulings, the appeals court found, are “inconsistent with current public policy and should no longer be followed.” The ruling came case in which one woman told people a guy was gay so his girlfriend would break up with him.

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GOP overstates meaning of Walker victory

Analysis

LOUIS WEISBERG

Was Scott Walker's recall victory the swan song of labor or the rallying point for a new era of progressive activism?

It depends on whom you ask.

Just hours after the polls closed on June 5, conservative pundits pronounced the U.S. labor movement dead and predicted another far-right sea change for America.

"What happened in Wisconsin signals a shift in political mood and assumption," opined conservative pundit Peggy Noonan. "Public employee unions were beaten back and defeated in a state with a long progressive tradition. ... The vote was a blow to the power and prestige not only of the unions but of the blue-state budgetary model."

Noonan's right-wing colleagues agreed heartily, but non-partisan political observ-

ers cautioned against reading too much into an election that was aberrant in so many ways. Exit pollsters found it likely that a significant number of Walker voters were not so much endorsing the governor's draconian corporate-right policies as they were objecting to the concept of the recall.

Sixty percent of voters surveyed said that recall races should be reserved only for cases of official misconduct. Although a potential indictment looms over Walker, no charges have been filed against him.

If voters were indeed more intent on expressing displeasure for the recall than pleasure with the governor, it would explain the surprising level of support for President Barack Obama among Walker voters. Seventeen percent of those who cast ballots for the governor told exit pollsters they plan to vote for the president come November.

At any rate, it's difficult to see Walker's victory as the first wave of a tsunami.



PHOTO: FACEBOOK

John Lehman

Walker did win decisively. But his 53 percent of the vote was not a landslide and it represented only a 1 percent gain from Walker's 2010 match-up against Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett.

But Walker spent \$30 million on advertising this time around — more than seven times the amount that Barrett spent. That's an insanely high price tag for such a measly gain. It suggests that

'Electing John Lehman is another nail in the coffin.'

voters are more entrenched than persuadable, more stuck than moving.

There is nothing in the scenario surrounding the recall that signals a "shift in political mood and assumption," as Noonan put it. Instead the election showed the intractable persistence of the nation's 50-50 political split. This was further demonstrated by the gain Democrats made in taking one of the four Senate seats up for grabs on June 5, giving them control of that chamber.

In Senate District 21, Democrat John Lehman of Racine turned out Sen. Van Wanggaard, a solid Walker supporter, even as Walker won his own race in that district. Yet Lehman stands galaxies apart ideologically from both Walker and Wanggaard.

There was no "shift in political mood" in Senate District 21 — just more of the confusion and volatility that we've seen at the polls nationwide. In fact, just a week after Walker's victory, a Democrat retained the congressional seat vacated by Gabrielle Giffords in an Arizona district that the GOP had expected to pick up.

COOPERATION

Lehman was backed by some of Walker's most ardent foes, including teachers, retired autoworkers and members of building trades unions.

Planned Parenthood sponsored its largest paid media campaign to date attacking Wanggaard's record, including his votes to limit women's access to cancer screenings, birth control, comprehensive sex ed and women's equal pay protections.

"While we have lost the opportunity to elect a women's health champion for governor, we have regained a pro-women's health majority with the election of Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin endorsed candidate John Lehman," said executive director Tanya Atkinson.

The Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters also campaigned hard for Lehman.

"Electing John Lehman in the Senate recall election is another nail in the coffin of the open-pit mining bill," said Kerry Schumann, the organization's executive director, referring to environmentalists' greatest challenge during the last Assembly session.

While Republicans earned bragging rights from the Walker recall race, their foes realized strategic gains. The recall races of the past year have brought together unprecedented cooperation among progressive groups in everything from allocating resources to messaging to getting out the vote.

Working together sometimes for the first time and across issue lines, progressive groups created a juggernaut that could pay off in future elections.

Dynamic new groups such as We Are Wisconsin also sprang up around last year's protests and the subsequent recall efforts, engaging a

new generation of progressive activists. Democracy for America said its representatives in Wisconsin knocked on over 140,000 doors and its members made over 200,000 calls in the final six weeks of this campaign.

"For the first time last February, we saw the intersection of many communities and constituencies that had not worked together as deeply or intensely as we did last year," said Katie Belanger, executive director of Fair Wisconsin. "I think those relationships will remain strong and will be the key to changing our state government."

"Wisconsinites are awake and paying attention," Schumann said. "Whether it was engaging their legislators on the open-pit mining bill or rallying at the Capitol last winter, people are involved in their democracy like never before."

Belanger was heartened that Wisconsin's LGBT community did not become the target of negative GOP campaigning, despite Walker's self-avowed "divide and conquer" style of leadership. "It indicates how far we have come in this movement," Belanger said.

She also drew hope from the Senate victory. "With a pro-fairness majority in the state senate we have a stopgap in the Legislature against any anti-LGBT legislation," Belanger said.

"We will continue to try to build bipartisan support for LGBT issues. And we will continue to advance equality in local communities and workplaces across the state and to defend our past successes."



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Anti-violence groups report increase in anti-LGBT killings

By Lisa Neff
Staff writer

A coalition of anti-violence programs is reporting the highest number of anti-LGBT killings since the data collection began in 1999.

However, the statistics, based on information from anti-violence centers around the country, are difficult to compare from one year to the next because of variations in reporting. The 2011 report, for example, includes the killing of a gay American flight attendant in Mexico City.

Data in the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs' report on 2011 hate crimes came from community-based groups in 16 states – Arizona, California, Colorado, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas and Vermont.

The NCAVP reported:

- The number of anti-LGBT murders reported was 30, three more than reported in 2010 and one more than the highest number on record. In 2008 and 1999, the NCAVP reported 29 deaths.

- Five of the deaths included in the report were in Puerto Rico.

- 87 percent of those killed in 2011 were people of color; 40 percent were transgender.

"Murders of LGBTQ people have increased over the last three years, indicating a pattern of escalating violence against LGBTQ and HIV-affected people," said Jake Finney of the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Community Center in Los Angeles. "Those most at risk for murder are transgender and gender non-conforming people, people of color, and gay men."

The NCAVP also reported:

- Anti-LGBT hate crimes decreased 16 percent, from 2,503 in 2010 to 2,092 in 2011.

- People of color, transgender people and undocumented immigrants were more likely to be the victims of violence and require medical attention.

- People under 30 were more likely to be the victims of sexual violence.

- People of color under 30 were more likely to be the victims of police violence.

- More than half of the known offenders in anti-LGBT hate crimes were white men.

- Just over 50 percent of victims reported the crimes to law enforcement.

The authors of the report and AVP representatives suggested that the decrease in



PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Robert Champion was killed in 2011. Authorities are prosecuting his death as a hazing crime. The NCAVP lists his death as an anti-LGBT murder.

incidents was not due to a drop in actual crime but because AVPs were overwhelmed with severe crime and involved in less public outreach.

"NCAVP members across the country have spent a tremendous amount of time and resources responding to murders and the tragic, ongoing suicides of our LGBTQ youth," said Rebecca Waggoner of OutFront Minnesota in Minneapolis.

The NCAVP's annual survey is dramatically different from the FBI's annual report on hate crimes, which is based on statistics reported not from community groups but from local law enforcement agencies.

In its 2010 report, the most recent year available, the FBI said of the 6,624 single-bias incidents, 47.3 percent were motivated by a racial bias, 20 percent were motivated by a religious bias, 19.3 percent were motivated by a sexual-orientation bias, 12.8 percent were motivated by an ethnicity/national origin bias and .6 percent were motivated by disability bias.

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Calif. Senate: No way to 'ex-gay'

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

California senators have said no way to "ex-gay" therapy for minors.

Lawmakers in all 50 states may someday say the same if a campaign to dismantle the so-called "ex-gay" industry is successful.

In California, an effort is under way to pass legislation barring "ex-gay" therapy for minors.

"The entire medical community is opposed to these phony therapies. Everyone agrees that this quackery needs to stop," says California Sen. Ted Lieu, D-Torrance, who introduced S.B. 1172. The bill contends that the state has a compelling interest to protect LGBT youth by prohibiting "ex-gay" therapy for children under 18.

The Senate passed the bill

on May 31. Approval from the Assembly and Gov. Jerry Brown is still needed before the state has the first law in the U.S. cracking down on a therapy denounced by lawmakers, medical professionals, mental health practitioners and former patients as phony, fraudulent and dangerous, with potentially fatal consequences.

After California, gay activist Wayne Besen says that he and others will work to pass similar legislation in other states, probably beginning in Vermont, where he lives and runs Truth Wins Out, a non-profit that counters the "ex-gay" movement.

"This bill is an inspiration," Besen says. "We believe that nobody should be subject to this ... quack therapy."

CHANGES IN

THE PRACTICE OF 'CHANGE' THERAPY

Known as reorientation, reparative, conversion and ex-gay therapy, the practice attempts to change a subject's sexual orientation.

The expansive 2007 "Report of the American Psychological Association Task Force on Appropriate Therapeutic Responses to Sexual Orientation" offers a history of sexual orientation change efforts and an analysis of their effects.

The idea of change is rooted in psychoanalytic therapy as it developed in the early half of the 20th century, when same-sex sex was seen as criminal and homosexuality was viewed as a problem to cure. But even then Sigmund Freud acknowledged that his effort to induce change failed,

and he wrote that psychoanalysts could not promise to "abolish homosexuality and make normal heterosexuality take its place."

In the 1960s and 1970s, behavior therapists used aversion therapy, inducing nausea or vomiting or providing electric shocks when patients showed same-sex arousal. Other techniques included hypnosis, orgasmic reconditioning, social skills training and religious prayer.

After the declassification of homosexuality as a mental disorder in 1973, the mainstream practice of "ex-gay" therapy began to fade. According to the APA, therapists "became increasingly concerned that aversive therapies designed as Sexual Orientation Change Efforts for homosexuality were inappropriate, unethical, and

inhumane" and study after study showed that enduring change was uncommon.

Still, the 2007 APA task force report on the issue observes, "The visibility of SOCE has increased in the last decade. ... From our survey of recent publications and research, most SOCE currently seem directed to those holding conservative religious and political beliefs, and recent research on SOCE includes almost exclusively individuals who have strong religious beliefs."

Lieu, whose district includes portions of Long Beach, Los Angeles and San Pedro, says he introduced his bill to protect LGBT youth from the practice because "being lesbian or gay or bisexual is not a disease or mental disorder for the same reason that being a hetero-

sexual is not a disease or a mental disorder. And the medical community is unanimous in stating that homosexuality is not a medical condition."

In the California Senate, there was no spoken opposition before the 23-13 vote on Lieu's bill.

However, some groups have complained that the measure would interfere with parents' rights to seek psychological care for their children. The National Association for Research and Therapy of Homosexuality opposes the legislation, as does the Pacific Justice Institute.

PJI maintains a blanket ban on one type of therapy or counseling is unconstitutional.

NARTH president Chris-
EX-GAY page 7



Congresswoman Gwen Moore

PRIDEFEST

*Congratulations
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Opponents of 'ex-gay' therapy are going after the suppliers, including in Wis.

EX-GAY from page 6

topher Rosik called the senate vote "another triumph of political activism over objective science" and his organization maintains the measure "transfers the oversight of proper psychological care from mental health professionals and licensing boards into the hands of politicians."

But numerous medical and mental health organizations in addition to the APA – the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy, American Counseling Association, American Medical Association, American Psychoanalytic Association, American Psychological Association, American School Counselor Association and National Association of Social Workers – have condemned the therapy.

In mid-May, the Pan American Health Organization, a division of the World Health Organization, issued a statement that ex-gay therapy has no medical justification and is "a serious threat to the health and well-being" of patients. The organization also called on governments, academic institutions and professional associations to expose "ex-gay" practices.

SPITZER'S APOLOGY

Also this spring, Dr. Robert L. Spitzer renounced a controversial 2001 study in which he concluded "the majority of participants gave reports of change from a predominantly or exclusively homosexual orientation before therapy to a predominantly or exclusively heterosexual orientation in the past year."

Spitzer, who has apologized to "any gay person who wasted time and energy undergoing some form of reparative therapy," decided the reports of change, based on 200 interviews with clients in "ex-gay" programs at NARTH and Exodus International, were not credible.

His study, introduced at a psychiatry meeting in 2001, was called "explosive" in an Associated Press report, because Spitzer had helped lead the campaign in the early

1970s to have homosexuality declassified as a mental disorder by the APA.

Spitzer's recent apology and request for a retraction of the study also proved explosive, because for 11 years Christian right groups have cited his work to defend "ex-gay" therapy as effective.

Besen says with the California legislation, opponents of "ex-gay" therapy are going after the suppliers in the industry; much of the focus in the past has been on diminishing demand – educating gays, their relatives and their spiritual leaders about the damage caused by "ex-gay" therapy and "ex-gay" ministries.

On the supply side, at least 70 therapists who advertise the practice in 20 states and the District of Columbia have been identified by the Southern Poverty Law Center. None of them are in Wisconsin. But Exodus International, which helps people find "ex-gay" therapists and describes itself as the "leading global outreach to churches, individuals and families offering a biblical message about same-sex attraction," lists four affiliates in Wisconsin. Those include two Christian ministries, Broken Yoke Ministries/The Grace Place in Milwaukee and Reclamation Resource Center in Oshkosh; and two churches, Good News Fellowship Church in Stevens Point and Christ the Rock Community Church in Menasha.

The RRC is associated with Parents and Friends of Ex-Gays and Gays. The RRC's website, which says meetings take place at the Freedom Center in Appleton, states, "Our goal is to help those who do not wish to be identified or controlled by their homosexual desires. It is also our goal to educate and motivate others (especially the church) to treat ALL with dignity and respect, regardless of how they choose to deal with their homosexual attractions.

"The issue of homosexuality and change is very controversial, but the needs of those desiring change should be met. The fact is there are many who have grappled with the issue of homosexu-

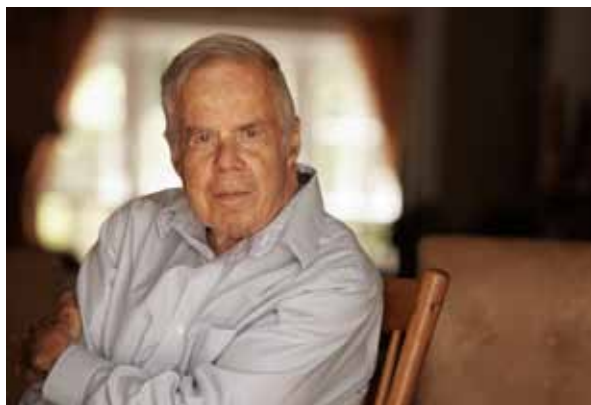


PHOTO: AP

Dr. Robert Spitzer recently retracted his gay "cure" claims.

ality and change in their own lives and found the real and lasting change they desired." The RRC did not respond

to an e-mail from WiG.

The website for Broken Yolk Ministries/The Grace Place states that its mission is to support "those who struggle with unwanted same-gender attraction and believe that such behavior is incompatible with God's design for their lives." The website promotes an Exodus International conference in St. Paul June 27-30. The co-directors listed on the Broken Yolk/The Grace Place website are Bob Van Domelen and Jill Rennick.

There was no reply to an e-mail from WiG to Broken Yolk, which Besen says "has been a mainstay of ex-gay ministries forever."

He notes that Van Domelen is a convicted child molester, an allegation that's confirmed in a biography. "These groups have no credibility, no standards," says Besen, who likens those in the "ex-gay" industry to pickpockets and compares "ex-gay" therapy to "consumer fraud."

"That's what it is," he says. "It is a scheme to make money."

If California succeeds as the first of 50 states to pass legislation regulating "ex-gay" therapy, it's a con that may some day come to an end.

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Exxon Mobil shareholders reject LGBT policy

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

A group of Exxon Mobil shareholders tried to help the Texas-based company get out of the tank with the LGBT community, offering – not for the first time – a resolution to prohibit workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity.

However, shareholders at the company's annual meeting in Dallas on May 30 voted down the proposal 80 percent to 20 percent.

The resolution has been introduced each year since 1999, when Exxon merged with Mobil Corp. Mobil had a gay-friendly equal opportunity policy protecting employees, one of the first in the nation, and also offered domestic partnership benefits. But Exxon did not, and the newly formed Exxon

Mobil rescinded Mobil's pro-gay employment policy and closed the domestic partnership program to new hires.

Exxon Mobil ranks No. 2 on the Fortune 1000 index, just ahead of Chevron Corp, but on the Human Rights Campaign's ranking of companies based on pro-LGBT workplace programs and policies, Exxon Mobil is in the tank. It is at the bottom of the ratings list with a minus 25 score, while Chevron Corp. soars at the top, with a perfect 100.

Exxon Mobil, which tried to convince the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission to block the pro-LGBT resolution from going to a vote at the shareholders' meeting, has said amending its equal employment opportunity policy is unnecessary and asserted that the company is a "meritocracy" for

its 82,000 workers.

At the annual meeting, shareholders approved a non-binding measure on setting officer pay.

In addition to the anti-discrimination resolution, shareholders rejected proposals to split the CEO and chairman jobs, prepare a report on the risks of community opposition to hydraulic fracturing and set goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

The vote against the anti-discrimination policy fueled protests by LGBT activists in Dallas and sparked praise from the Christian right.

The Family Research Council, which is labeled a hate group by the Southern Poverty Law Center, boasted, "It won't change how much we're paying for gas, but it might comfort you to know that at Exxon Mobil your business isn't fueling the



homosexual agenda. ... In a corporate environment dictated by wealthy, pro-homosexual activists, we applaud Exxon Mobil for refusing to cede the moral high ground to the special interests of the left. While other businesses

drift away from their principles or capitulate under pressure, this company is putting its stock in something other than political correctness."

Meanwhile, gay rights activist Heather Creighton, who demonstrated at the

EQUALITY AT THE PUMP

The Human Rights Campaign rates companies in the Corporate Equality Index for policies and programs to improve conditions for LGBT workers:

Chevron Corp:	100
BP America:	85
Shell Oil Co.	85
ConocoPhillips	55
Marathon Oil Corp.	15
Exxon Mobil Corp.	-25

Source: HRC CEI

meeting in Dallas, said, "I'll walk, bike, crawl to work before I fuel up my car at an Exxon Mobil station.



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Gay couples sue for freedom to marry in Illinois

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Twenty-five same-sex couples are marking the one-year anniversary of civil unions in Illinois with suits claiming they still are denied their constitutional rights because they are banned from saying "I do" in marriage.

In late May, the American Civil Liberties Union of Illinois and Lambda Legal sued the state, demanding the freedom to marry on behalf of 25 same-sex couples.

Lambda filed its complaint – Darby v. Orr – in the chancery division in Cook County Circuit Court. The lead attorney on the case for Lambda is Camilla Taylor, who successfully led the legal fight for marriage equality in Iowa.

She said that while Illinois same-sex couples can be joined in civil unions, they still "share a dream of being part of a married family."

"By excluding them from marriage, and relegating them to civil unions, our government has marked them as different and worth less than other Illinois families – and that is exactly how others treat them," Taylor said. "They have suffered disrespect in schools, workplaces, hospitals and in their everyday interactions with government for long enough. They should have the freedom to marry – it's just time."

Lambda argues that barring same-sex couples from marriage violates the Illinois Constitution's guarantee of equal protection and due process. Lambda's lead plaintiffs are Jim Darby, 80, and Patrick Bova, 73. Long-time activists, they've been together for 48 years. Darby worked in Chicago's stockyards before he enlisted for the Korean War. Bova was a librarian when he met and fell in love with Darby in 1963.

"After 48 years together, we know very well what it means to love, honor and cherish," said Darby. "I have lived in Illinois all my life, and I want to marry Patrick here. A civil union doesn't reflect what we mean to each other."

Tanya Lazaro, a detective with the Chicago Police Department, and Elizabeth "Liz" Matos, a system analyst with a trading firm, are the lead plaintiffs in the ACLU case. The women, who live on Chicago's Northwest Side, are raising two girls. They decided not to be joined in a civil union.

"We love each other; we are committed to one another," said Lazaro. "Anything short of marriage does not recognize that love and commitment."

John Knight, director of the ACLU of Illinois' LGBT Project, called civil unions "a

separate, novel and poorly understood status for gay and lesbian couples."

He said creating this separate category for gay relationships "does not honor the devotion of our families nor fully protect them, but instead sends a powerful message that our families are inadequate and undeserving. It is time for Illinois to join the growing list of states that provide same-sex couples with the dignity and respect that can only come through marriage."

Marriage equality legislation, introduced by three openly gay lawmakers, is pending in Illinois.

As the ACLU of Illinois and Lambda Legal announced their suits to secure marriage rights in courtrooms, the statewide group Equality Illinois announced its continued commitment to pursuing gay marriage rights with votes in Springfield.

"The lawsuits do not let lawmakers off the hook," said Bernard Cherkasov, EI's CEO. "The Illinois General Assembly is charged with passing legislation to make Illinois a better place for everyone to live, work, and raise a family."

"Civil unions have not proven to be the answer for tens of thousands of LGBT families in Illinois, who need the protections that only marriage can provide," he added.



PHOTO: ACLU

Tanya Lazaro and Elizabeth "Liz" Matos of Chicago are plaintiffs in an ACLU lawsuit seeking marriage rights for gay couples in Illinois.



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REGIONAL BRIEFS

SUSPICIOUS FIRE DAMAGES GAY CLUB NEAR CHICAGO

Fire damaged a gay club in Oak Park on June 3. The owner of the Velvet Rope Ultra Lounge, 728 Lake St., in the suburb just outside Chicago called the fire suspicious.

Owner Frank Elliott told WGN-TV that authorities found derogatory messages on a wall at the scene.

"My stomach has been in knots since 6:30 this morning," Elliott said. "My whole life, everything that I've worked for . . . my whole life is on the line and I don't know what to think or even begin with."

On its website, the Velvet Rope is described as "a place for the mature and sexy; the stylish and sophisticated; and anyone who likes being treated as a VIP."

ARCHDIOCESE NO LONGER PAYING PRIESTS TO LEAVE

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee and a former priest who received money to leave the ministry following allegations of sexual abuse say that payment and others were a form of charity meant to help men



PHOTO: WWW.TODAYSCATHOLICNEWS.ORG

Timothy Dolan, former archbishop in Milwaukee and now the head of the New York archdiocese.

transition to a new life following the priesthood.

The archdiocese acknowledged paying suspected pedophile clergy after an abuse victims' group produced a court document in late May that mentioned a 2003 proposal to pay \$20,000 to "unassignable priests" who agreed to leave the ministry. The document from the

archdiocese's bankruptcy proceedings includes minutes from a 2003 meeting of its finance council, which included then-Archbishop Timothy Dolan, now cardinal archbishop of the New York archdiocese.

Council members discussed how the church should handle sexual abuse complaints, a possible budget deficit and how to cut costs. The

\$20,000 payments were among the options mentioned.

The Survivors Network of Those Abused by Priests characterizes the payments as a payoff to priests who molested children.

"This was a signing bonus for signing papers that would be sent to the Vatican," SNAP Midwest director Peter Isely said. "They needed to have been fired. You don't pay someone who has committed a criminal act. You fire them. Period."

13TH PERSON GRANTED IMMUNITY IN JOHN DOE CASE

A former spokeswoman for Scott Walker was granted immunity on June 1 in connection with a Milwaukee County investigation that has led to criminal charges against six people close to the governor.

Fran McLaughlin, who served as spokeswoman for Walker from 2007 to 2010, while he was the Milwaukee County executive, asked for and received immunity, according to online court records. She is the 13th person whom prosecutors have agreed not to charge in exchange for their testimony in the

so-called John Doe investigation, in which hearings and court documents are private and only immunity grants are made public.

In a John Doe investigation, witnesses can be compelled to testify under oath about potential criminal matters.

The investigation centers on several aides and associates to Walker before he was elected governor in 2010. The allegations range from campaigning on county time to embezzling money from a veterans program. Walker has repeatedly said he's cooperating with the investigation.

McLaughlin's attorney, Michael A.I. Whitcomb, said court rules prevent him from discussing the case.

Walker hasn't been charged with wrongdoing, but he set up a legal defense fund. Such a move is only allowed if officeholders or their agents are targets of an investigation for election or campaign violations.

Walker has transferred a total of \$160,000 to the fund from his campaign account. The governor has told reporters he's simply relying on his defense team to deal with administrative issues he doesn't have time to handle.

POLL: MINNESOTA'S ANTI-GAY INITIATIVE LOSING

The proposed constitutional amendment to ban gay marriage in Minnesota appears to be failing, a reversal from a Public Policy Poll four months ago. At that time, the amendment was favored by a 48-44 margin.

The latest poll shows 43 percent of voters support the proposed amendment and 49 percent of voters oppose it.

The shift has come with independent voters. After previously supporting the amendment by a 50-40 spread, they're now opposing it 54-37.

Republicans continue to strongly favor the amendment (74-21) while Democrats are almost equally strong in their opposition (71-22).

Minnesota sees the same generational gap on this issue that exists in other states. Voters over 45 support the proposed amendment by a 50-42 spread. But those under 45 oppose it by an even greater 60-34 margin.



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'Our case has entered the final chapter'

SUPREME from page 1

attorney Mary Bonauto. "Second, DOMA intrudes broadly into domestic relations, an area of traditional state regulation. ... Congress does not get to put its 'thumb on the scales,' as the court put it, simply because it does not agree with Massachusetts' decision to allow loving and committed same-sex couples to marry."

The Justice Department and President Barack Obama decided the law is indefensible, prompting Republican leadership in the U.S. House, represented by the Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group, to take up the defense of DOMA in the Gill case.

FROM SAN FRANCISCO

On June 5 in San Francisco, less than a week after the Gill ruling, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit denied a request for an expanded panel to reconsider a ruling against Proposi-

tion 8. Approved by California voters, Prop 8 amended the state's constitution to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman, barring the recognition of same-sex marriages.

"Our case has entered the final chapter. ... The end is now in sight," said Chad Griffin, the new president of the Human Rights Campaign and co-founder of the American Foundation for Equal Rights, which has led the legal campaign to overturn Prop 8.

The Prop 8 case is Perry v. Brown, which AFER filed on behalf of two same-sex couples who want to marry in California.

In 2010, U.S. District Judge Vaughn Walker ruled Prop 8 unconstitutional. His decision was upheld in February, when an appeals court panel ruled 2-1 that the marriage ban violates the 14th Amendment because it "serves no purpose, and has no effect, other than to lessen the status and human dignity of gays and lesbians in California, and to officially reclassify their relationships and families as inferior to those of opposite-sex couples."

After the Ninth Circuit declined another hearing, Griffin said, "Should the United States Supreme Court decide to review the 9th Circuit's decision in our case, I am confident that the justices will stand on the side of fairness and equality."

Protect Marriage attorney Brian Raum also predicted a positive outcome – for his side.

"The ProtectMarriage.com legal team looks forward to standing before the U.S.



PHOTO: HRC

Chad Griffin, co-founder of AFER and the new president of the Human Rights Campaign.

Supreme Court on behalf of people's right to preserve the fundamental building block of civilization," Raum said. "The democratic process and the most important human institution – marriage – shouldn't be overthrown based on the demands of Hollywood activists."

AT THE COURT

ProtectMarriage representatives already are preparing to petition the Supreme Court – they have 90 days from June 5 to file.

In Gill, House Republicans must decide if they want to petition the Supreme Court within 90 days of May 31. First, they may ask for a larger appeals court panel to consider the case.

For the Supreme Court to take a case, four votes are needed from among the nine justices. There's general agreement that those votes exist. Unknown is whether

the justices will take Perry and Gill together, take one case first or take only one case to be briefed and heard, probably in the spring, followed by a decision before the 2013 summer recess.

The trial court ruling in Perry was big, overturning Prop 8 based on the due process and equal protection clauses of the 14th Amendment. The court found that the state has no rational basis or vested interest in denying gays and lesbians marriage licenses.

The appeals court's decision in the case was narrower, focusing on the unique development in California, where voters took away a right to marry that had been established when the state Supreme Court struck down a marriage ban in 2008. So, conceivably the Court could avoid the largest constitutional questions in Perry.

In Gill, the Court could

ON THE DOCKET

- Perry v. Brown is a federal case challenging the constitutionality of Proposition 8, California's constitutional amendment barring recognition of same-sex marriage. A federal judge has ruled Prop 8 unconstitutional. A panel for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit has upheld the ruling, and the court has denied a request from Prop 8 proponents for a review by a larger panel. The case is likely to be appealed to the U.S. Supreme Court in the next three months.

For marriage equality: American Foundation for Equal Rights on behalf of two same-sex couples.

Against: Protect Marriage-Yes on 8.

- Gill v. Office of Personnel Management is a federal case from Massachusetts challenging DOMA and the federal definition of marriage. A federal judge has ruled against DOMA. A panel of judges for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the First Circuit has upheld the ruling. The next likely step is for proponents of DOMA to ask for a larger panel review, which would be followed by an appeal to the Supreme Court.

For marriage equality: Gay and Lesbian Advocates and Defenders on behalf of seven couples and three individuals.

Against: Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group on behalf of the Republican leadership in the House of Representatives.

– L.N.

ON THE COURT

With the Court leaning 4 to 4 on marriage equality, Associate Justice Anthony Kennedy is considered the crucial fifth vote. Chief Justice John Roberts and Associate Justices Antonin Scalia, Clarence Thomas and Samuel Alito are considered "no" votes on marriage equality. Associate Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan and Stephen Breyer are considered "yes" votes.

focus on the issue of discrimination but avoid the question of whether same-sex marriage is a right guaranteed by the Constitution. But some legal scholars say Gill raises a more urgent question than Perry for the Court: Does DOMA, a federal law, trump Massachusetts' same-sex marriage law?

If court-watchers' counting is accurate, the Court is 4-4 on marriage equality and there's only one unknown vote – that of Justice Anthony Kennedy.

Kennedy wrote the majority opinion in Lawrence v. Texas, the 2003 case that voided state laws that criminalized consensual same-sex sex. He also wrote the Romer v. Evans decision in

1996 that struck down Colorado's amendment barring the state and its municipalities from enacting anti-discrimination laws. Both Perry and Gill cite Romer, as does the Ninth Circuit ruling in Perry.

IN THE POLITICAL REALM

While the fights over Perry and Gill are in the judicial realm, there are political factors involved.

In Perry, a petition for a Supreme Court review is due in September, two months before the November general election.

In Gill, either a request for another review at the appeals court level or a petition to the High Court will have to be made by Republicans before the election.

Further, a question about DOMA's defense arises if the Democratic Party regains a majority in the House.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., repeatedly has criticized House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, for defending DOMA under a \$1.5 million contract.

Pelosi recently said if Democrats control the 113th Congress, the House will "stop spending taxpayer dollars on the Defense of Marriage of Act, which is a waste of money and not the right thing to do."



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

FAIR WISCONSIN PLANS MEMBER-SHIP MEETING

Fair Wisconsin holds its annual membership meeting on June 30.

Members can meet the board of directors and hear reports from the board president and treasurer.

The meeting starts at 10 a.m. at AFSCME, 8033 Excelsior Drive, Madison.

For questions or to RSVP, contact office manager Mary Sykes at mary.sykes@fairwisconsin.com or 608-441-0143, ext. 310.

For more about Fair Wisconsin, go to fairwisconsin.com.

WOMEN'S MUSIC FEST RETURNS TO MADISON

The longest running national women's music festival kicks off June 28 at the Marriott Madison West. The capital area is hosting the 37th National Women's Music Festival for the fifth time.

Headliners include folk-singer and social justice activist Holly Near, classical/jazz pianist Mary Watkins, rocker Toshi Reagon and comedians Julie Goldman and Dana Goldberg.

The NWMF also features new performers who won talent competitions held in Kansas City, Mo., Chicago and Madison. The most popular act at this year's talent competition will perform for a main-stage performance at next year's NWMF. Last year's winner, Big Bad Gina of Fayetteville, Ark., will perform on June 30.

Local acts include the all-woman big band Ladies Must Swing and jazz singer Lynette Margulies, accompanied by pianist Jane Reynolds.

A total of 28 musical and comedy acts and over 50 performers are featured at the event, sponsored by the nonprofit group Women in the Arts Inc.

"This is one of the most exciting lineups we've had at the NWMF in recent years,"

said WIA board president Linda Wilson. "Musical performances will range from folk to rock to rap to classical, plus comedians and daytime workshops on topics from performance to women's spirituality to writing."

The festival runs June 28-July 1 at the Madison Marriott West in Middleton.

For more, go to <http://wiaonline.org>.

MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM HOSTS FRENCH POSTER EXHIBIT

The Milwaukee Art Museum is hosting an exhibit of 19th century French posters designed by Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Jules Chéret, Pierre Bonnard, Alphonse Mucha and others.

Exhibition curator Mary Weaver Chapin says the posters covered billboards, scaffolding, Morris columns, kiosks and shop windows throughout Paris in the late 1800s.

She says the works cel-

ebrated the dawn of new entertainment, new products and new technology.

"Posters of Paris: Toulouse-Lautrec and His Contemporaries" runs through Sept. 9.

For more about the museum and the exhibit, go to mam.org.

JAZZ IN THE PARK RETURNS FOR SUMMER ENGAGEMENT

Jazz in the Park returns on Thursday nights from now through Sept. 6 at Cathedral Square in downtown Milwaukee.

The series is produced by the nonprofit Music in the Park and features a happy hour at 5 and music from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.

— Lisa Neff

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PHOTO: MAM/COLLECTION OF JIM AND SUE WIECHMANN/
JOHN R. GLEMBIN PHOTOGRAPHY

A Jules Chéret's lithograph from the collection of Jim and Susee Wiechmann.



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{ Editorial }

The real loser

The Democratic Party of Wisconsin, working with volunteers from groups such as We Are Wisconsin and We Are One, put together the most aggressive and effective get-out-the-vote effort possible in our recent gubernatorial recall election. Tom Barrett worked harder and showed more passion and command than ever before in his distinguished career of public service. He did not by any stretch blow this race. He and his backers should be proud of his performance.

The real loser on June 5 was not Barrett or the state's Democratic Party. It was government. The people of Wisconsin preferred Scott Walker because he represents a view that resonates with everyone who's ever paid an accountant to fill out a needlessly elaborate tax form: He hates government (except for government jobs and contracts he gives to his supporters, but that's for another editorial).

Walker outspent Barrett by more than seven to one, with most of the governor's money coming from out-of-state industrialists who saw the race as a test case for their corporate legislative agenda. But it would be disingenuous to blame Barrett's loss on political advertising, since the more than \$30 million spent by Walker did not change many minds. Walker beat Barrett by only about 1 percent more than he did in the 2010 gubernatorial race.

Walker won simply because more than half of Wisconsinites bought his line of reasoning that government is the enemy of business.

That view is easy enough to understand. The government benefits that U.S. citizens enjoy are taken for granted. Few American citizens have lived with impure drinking water, ramshackle highways and bridges, garbage blowing through the streets, lack of sewage treatment and an unregulated food supply.

Americans forget that their Medicare and Medicaid are government programs. They forget their lives are saved by advanced medical research paid for by government or that they fly in planes and airways made safe by government. Instead, they resent the government worker who pats them down to keep deadly weapons off the plane they're about to board.

The electorate never hears about the value of our government – only about its inefficiencies, which are many, and its costs, which are needlessly high due to the built-in graft that's equally utilized by liberals and conservatives.

Americans are more likely to be exposed to a sensational story about welfare fraud than about the thousands of good deeds performed by government workers every day. They think of government officials as bloated, self-important bureaucrats who harass them over petty regulations, not as astronauts or Nobel Prize winners.

Progressives have failed to remind voters of what government does or take up the mantle of creating a cheaper, more effective and less-intrusive government that people might embrace. Unless we do this, we will continue to lose elections until we all wake up one day and realize that we have to change our own street lamp bulbs (this actually happened in a community in Colorado) and reach a call center in the Philippines to schedule a garbage pick up from a company owned by David Koch.

BY THE NUMBERS

Crimes against a community

30 Anti-LGBT deaths in 2011**27** Anti-LGBT deaths in 2010**10** Anti-LGBT deaths in 2005**29** Anti-LGBT deaths reported in 1999

SOURCE: NATIONAL COALITION OF ANTI-VIOLENCE PROGRAMS

{ Letters }

THE GOP AND THE FAIRNESS GAP

The U.S. Senate on June 5 failed to allow a vote on the Paycheck Fairness Act, a bill designed to strengthen laws prohibiting sex discrimination in wages. Nationally, women earn 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. African-American women earn 62 cents on the dollar and Latina women average only 54 cents on that dollar. The Task Force Action Fund has been lobbying for passage of the Paycheck Fairness Act.

Women work their tails off to feed their families and pay the rent. In many households, they are the sole breadwinners. So what do they get in return? Far less than what a

man earns for similar work. Something is seriously wrong with this picture, and yet the mostly male Senate diddles around and refuses to do anything about it.

We're not talking about a radical concept here. We're talking about passing a bill that would help reduce the discriminatory pay gap between women and men. This isn't simply a matter of principle, it's about women being able to put food on their family's table, it's about being able to pay the bills, it's about having a roof over one's head, it's about having a fair shake, it's about not being discriminated against in pay solely because of your gender.

Pay equity affects each of our lives, and the lives of all our families. It is shameful that many senators turned their backs on the economic security of American women and their families – this includes lesbian, bisexual and transgender women, particularly women of color, who are vulnerable to inequity.

The obstructionists in Congress who toy with our lives do so at their own peril. This is something women will not forget, especially when they're cutting that next round of checks to pay the bills – and especially when they cast their next ballot.

Rea Carey, National Gay and Lesbian Task Force

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To inform, engage and empower Wisconsin's LGBT community by providing a professional, independent print and online source for news and commentary, as well as coverage of political and cultural issues. – Louis Weisberg, publisher/editor in chief, 414-961-3240.

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Debra Brehmer, Mike Muckian, Kat Murrell, Jamakaya, Jody Hirsh, Adam Horwitz, Jay Rath

ON THE RECORD



"You don't give a bonus to a man who rapes children."

– SNAP Midwest director PETER ISLEY outside a federal courthouse in Milwaukee after it was revealed that the Milwaukee Archdiocese, then under Archbishop Timothy Dolan, paid \$20,000 to pedophile priests who volunteered to leave the priesthood.

"My daily life is filled with gay men and women, both socially and professionally. I am profoundly aware of the challenges these friends of mine face and I have openly advocated on their behalf. So, I can only apologize and I do. In comedy, timing is everything."

– Actor/comic JASON ALEXANDER apologizing for a homophobic joke he made on Craig Ferguson's "The Late Late Show."

"So, you're saying we should go out and start killing them? No. I'm saying the government should. They won't, but they should."

– Pastor CURTIS KNAPP telling his parishioners at the New Hope Baptist Church in Seneca, Kan., that the U.S. government should execute gays.

"I will not be singing tonight."

– President BARACK OBAMA, speaking at a private campaign fundraiser at the Beverly Hills, Calif., home of "Glee" creator Ryan Murphy and his partner David Miller.

"I don't believe most NFL players have a problem with having a gay teammate. I do get the feeling they have to protect who they are. At the end of the day it's a job, so all of these players have to make sure they're in a certain type of light."

– Former NFL player WADE DAVIS, who came out recently, talking about homosexuality and pro football.

"Forty-six percent of Americans believe in the creationist view that God created humans in their present form at one time within the last 10,000 years. ... About a third of Americans believe that humans evolved, but with God's guidance; 15 percent say humans evolved, but that God had no part in the process."

– The latest from GALLUP on Americans and religion.

"The momentum in Maryland right now for the adoption of the gay marriage law is fast-paced. I'm 43 years of age, and I've been gay my whole life and I just figured this is a good time to lend my name to the cause."

– STEFANY HOYER HEMMER, daughter of Democratic Whip Steny Hoyer, coming out publicly to the Washington Blade.

"Taken as stated, the president's position, proclaimed by his actress-spokesperson, is to personally advocate polygamous and even incestuous marriages."

– CARSON HOLLOWAY of CatholicVote, blogging about an Obama campaign ad in which actress Sarah Jessica Parker encourages support for "that guy" who "says you should be able to marry anyone you want."



Year-round Pride



June, which includes the anniversary of the Stonewall riots in 1969, is the traditional month to celebrate LGBT Pride. This year many things are boosting the spirit of our celebrations, from the growing acceptance of marriage equality to the increasing numbers of LGBT celebrities coming out of the closet.

I get caught up in the excitement each June and sometimes wish that the spirit of the festivities could be extended throughout the year. Of course, there are many ways it can, so here are some suggestions.

Come out and stay out. During Pride season, many of us don pink triangles, rainbow beads and other gay symbols, but how about showing Pride the whole year long? Wear your "colors" to work or church or non-gay community events.

Do it just to be a presence or to get a conversation going. When gay topics come up at work or elsewhere, be honest about who you are and how you feel. Polls show that people who know someone who is LGBT are more supportive of our rights. This is the simplest way to help change the world.

Get involved in community organizations. There are dozens of LGBT groups to join, whether your interest is sports, religion, dining, political organizing, books, dancing, music, biking, pets, history or cars. It's a great way to meet people with similar interests and to share your skills with the community. If you don't have the time to get involved, send a donation to a group you admire to help sustain it.

Be a mentor. A really nice way to become engaged in your community and give something back is to mentor a younger LGBT person who needs support and guidance. For mentoring opportunities in Milwaukee, call the Mil-

waukee LGBT Community Center at 414-271-2656 or Pathfinders at 414-271-1560.

Get politically active. Scott Walker's victory in the recall election means we face another three years of an anti-LGBT administration in Wisconsin. He and Lt. Gov. Rebecca Kleefisch not only oppose marriage equality, they'd like to see the domestic partner registry axed. Most Republicans in the Legislature have the same anti-gay bias.

Instead of feeling discouraged by the recent election, get motivated! Educate yourself about who represents you on the local and state levels. Find out their positions and work either to support them or to oust them.

Tammy Baldwin's U.S. Senate candidacy is an important reason to get involved in politics this year. Baldwin has been an outstanding public servant since her days on the Dane County Board in the 1980s. She served in the State Assembly before being elected to Congress in 1998.

Pro-gay, pro-labor, pro-environment and vociferously anti-war, Baldwin will be a staunch progressive voice for Wisconsin. She's apt to be slimed as a lesbian and "too liberal," so join the ranks of those pushing back and informing the public about her excellent record of service.

Study LGBT history and culture. The Web has made learning about our history and culture both easy and immediate. You can Google anything, but start by checking out history sites such as www.mkelgbthist.org or <http://archives.library.wisc.edu/oral-history/CampusVoices/LGBT/index.html>.

Make LGBT history. Don't be content with just reading about our history, create some of your own! Getting involved in any of the ways mentioned above will let your pride shine year round and make you an active participant in our ongoing history.

Fake lead on 'Early Start'



During a recent edition of CNN's "Early Start," co-anchor Ashleigh Banfield reported on comments made by Kansas pastor Curtis Knapp, who had called for the government to kill gays and lesbians.

In a CNN interview, Knapp clarified his comments, stating: "We punish pedophilia, we punish incest, we punish polygamy and various things. It's only homosexuality that is lifted out as an exemption."

Banfield wasn't pleased by Knapp's attempt to compare homosexuality to pedophilia and incest. In her attempt to discredit Knapp's explanation, however, she claimed that, unlike pedophilia and incest, "homosexuality is a lifestyle choice by people. It is voluntary."

Here's her comment:

"Pedophilia is not by choice, last I checked. In his sermon, Pastor Knapp blamed the Bush administration for its tolerance of gay people. Says that he claims that set the stage, in fact, for the Obama administration to endorse same-sex marriage. Like I said, you can't make this stuff up. Unbelievable. Speechless, right?"

She went on to say, "Again, we gotta outline here, when he says 'they punish incest and pedophilia,' please. Those things are often not by choice and are crimes. Homosexuality is a lifestyle choice by people. It is voluntary."

Banfield was clearly trying to condemn Knapp's anti-gay remarks and she later issued a clarification, but she ended up doing a lot more harm than good.

A person's sexual orientation is not a "lifestyle choice" or voluntary – it is an immutable part of their identity. According to the American Psychological Association,

"most people experience little or no sense of choice about their sexual orientation."

Scientific research has demonstrated that sexual orientation is not a matter of choice but rather "primarily neurological at birth."

According to molecular biologist Dean Hamer, sexual orientation is regarded in the scientific community as a phenotype and is "deeply rooted in biology."

More importantly, the claim that gay people can simply choose to not be gay is a favorite talking point of some of the country's most notorious anti-gay organizations.

Groups such as the National Organization for Marriage, Family Research Council and American Family Association have all used the idea that gay people can voluntarily change their sexual orientation as a justification for denying equality to gays and lesbians. The

"lifestyle choice" myth also is at the heart of efforts to "cure" gay people through "ex-gay" therapy, which has been discredited as ineffective and potentially harmful by nearly every major professional medical organization in America.

In other words, in her attempt to mock Knapp's extreme anti-gay remarks, Banfield ended up reinforcing one of the right's most damaging myths.

"Unbelievable" is right.

Carlos Maza's column first appeared on mediamatters.org. Media Matters is a Web-based progressive research and information center.

BANFIELD'S CLARIFICATION

"In no way did I ever want to suggest that being gay is a choice. It is not. And I probably used the word 'lifestyle choice' – not what I meant to say at all. Being gay is not a choice; being in a voluntary gay relationship is a choice."

Center provides safe space for personal growth

Why I need the center

DENISE CRAWLEY

The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center provides services and programs that make the lives of LGBTQ people better – healthier, safer, more fun.

Can you make sure the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center is there when we need it? Please support the center through a donation online at www.mkelgbt.org.

The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center provides meeting space to over 40 different community groups. It also provides services for LGBT youth through the Project Q program.

Pam Molina at the Out-

reach Community Health Center recently reported success with a youth she referred to the center's Project Q program. The young woman had been homeless for over a year, since her parents kicked her out because of her sexual orientation. She was smiling from ear to ear and so happy to find a place that is "so gay."

The youth checked out a book from the center library of more than 2,500 LGBTQ books. After coming to Project Q on a Friday, she abstained from drinking and drugs and has been sober for three days since Pam brought



PHOTO: COURTESY

Valery Jean Meyer

her to the center.

Pam can see an increase in her hopefulness after stopping by for just an evening. She expects the youth will come back again.

The center needs help through volunteering, donations and program assistance.

I asked board member and

'I still need the center as a part of my life because it was there for me through my journey.'

'longtime center user Valery Jean Meyer why she supports the center – how she got involved and what keeps her coming back. The following is her response:

"What originally brought me to the center was my need for a social and support group to help me and

my then spouse to develop an understanding of my gender identity issues and work through our feelings.

"Gemini Gender was meeting in the old downtown storage location on South Second Street because the church we had been meeting at wanted a fee that we could not afford. This was in the late 1990s.

"Since then I have progressed through my transition, developed my gender identity and determined my sexual orientation.

"I still attend Gemini Gender group meetings, but more as a mentor to the next generation of transgender individuals.

"The center provides safe space to meet that is affordable to the transgender community, many of whom have

underpaying jobs or none.

"It also affords a place for other LGBT community groups that I work with – such as Lesbian Alliance, Forge and Out to Brunch – to meet and connect. I hope there will soon be even more groups and meeting places at the center so that we can become a stronger force socially and politically.

"I still need the center as a part of my life because it was there for me through my journey, and I need to support it so it will be here for those in our community who need it in the future."

Denise Crawley is a board member of the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center. Go to www.mkelgbt.org to make a donation or learn about current volunteer opportunities.

Got a center story to share?

E-mail Denise Cawley at denise@circore.com.

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PRIDEFEST 2012

PrideFest 2012 reports record revenue

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

PrideFest Milwaukee's 25th anniversary event broke prior revenue records and increased attendance by 10 percent over 2011, its organizers reported. A total of 28,137 people attended the annual Pride festival, one of the nation's largest.

The organization faced serious challenges this year, including a significant budget shortfall incurred by the 2011 festival and the last-minute defections of some key volunteer staffers.

The community's response to requests for donations and volunteers played a key role in making this year's event a success. More than 400 individuals volunteered their time and a new membership program dubbed "the Proud Crowd" raised over \$5,000 in donations.

"We cannot say enough about the special people who reached a little deeper into their pockets and gave more of themselves this year to make sure PrideFest happened," said PrideFest president Scott Gunkel.

Warm, sunny weather and a strong entertainment line-up that included Belinda Carlisle, Taylor Dane, GOD-DES & She and Berlin, featuring Terri Nunn, helped propel the event to success.

"For PrideFest to survive another year, we really needed to meet attendance and revenue targets," said PrideFest president Scott Gunkel. "I am proud to say that we, as a community, exceeded both goals. We actually generated more revenue than any other PrideFest in our 25-year history."

At the opening ceremonies on Friday, June 8, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett officially dedicated the weekend as PrideFest throughout the city of Milwaukee.

"You should be proud of everything that you have done. I am very, very proud," Barrett said. "Milwaukee is a city that embraces diversity of all types. An open city where people respect each other for who they are. I think that is one of the great strengths of this community, and I can be proud of our city because of that."

PrideFest now directs its focus to strategic planning for 2013. People interested in becoming sponsors of next year's festival should contact Gunkel at 414-272-3378 or info@pridefest.com.



Clockwise from top: Headliner Belinda Carlisle, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett and PrideFest president Scott Gunkel, the opening night crowd, Steampunk couple showing off their threads.

PRIDEFEST 2012

Pridefest Milwaukee took place June 8-10 on the lakefront at Henry Maier Festival Park.





PARADING PRIDE

Photos of PrideFest and the Milwaukee Pride Parade on pages 17 and 18 reflect the sunny weather and celebratory spirit of the successful events.

Photos by Adam Horwitz.



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PRIDE 2012

Faces of Pride *PrideFest visitors share their stories*



Lisa Rowe, Milwaukee

I've been meaning to come for a long time, and my friend asked me to work in a booth. I said sure, and I've had more fun working at a booth here than I have at any other festival, whether working at or attending it.

here and seeing people I haven't seen in a long time. So we can come back and rekindle those moments we've had before.



Nathan Walker, Bayside

Coming together with our friends, celebrating our diversity, our lifestyles. We get to connect with people we don't get to see on a regular basis who come from different places and don't go out with normally. It brings the community together, and we enjoy that.



Allison Breske, Waukesha

I like seeing how comfortable the people are here without having to worry about being yelled at.



Savvy Bracero, Milwaukee

PrideFest means acceptance. For one, everyone is accepted here. You can come here looking however you want, with any backstory, and people accept you. Also, coming here and learning how to accept yourself and become comfortable in your own sexuality.



David Gundrum, Germantown

It's so relaxing here. Everything is so relaxing. I don't feel any tension or any problems.



Zach Kordsmeier, Glendale

My favorite PrideFest memory would have to be the first time I came. I was

15 or 16, and it's the only time I ever snuck out of the house. I didn't tell my parents where I was going or what I was doing. But, it was also so exciting to be here and take those first baby steps out into the world. It will always stick with me.



Jacob Grey, Milwaukee

PrideFest means a freedom of expression. I came here and see all of these people who've put a lot of thought into their costumes. They just get dressed up for it and have a good time with no fear. Whereas in day-to-day life you can't dress in the leather clothes that you'd like to or the rainbow Mohawk.



Lyjya Miles and Naleen Read, Madison

We can come with the person that we love and have a good time. It's all about having good times.



Eddie Valentin, Milwaukee

PrideFest is a gathering of all my friends and family. I get to see a lot of people I

haven't seen in years. I come here with family. I come here with friends. Last year I was here with my mom. It was very nice to expose her to who I am.



Cory Dilley, Arena

PrideFest means everybody can be what they want to be, whenever they want to be. It's beautiful. Seeing the diversity of people that have come out today.



Melissa Badertsher, Milwaukee

PrideFest is just a safe place where you can express yourself, meet new people, and be with other people that have the same views as you.



Maxx Fagan, Milwaukee

PrideFest is great because you can be yourself, and it's very fun to meet new people.



Ludvin Jacobson, Milwaukee

My favorite PrideFest memory is probably yesterday. I came with one of my good friends, and we just started the night great.



Vaughn Roeshcen, Milwaukee

I'm kind of a rebel. So, it angers me to see those activists outside of PrideFest. Whenever I see them, I make sure to walk right through it and dance and grind right up next to guy who's on the loudspeaker.



Jackie Laska, West Allis

I'd have to say the first year we brought our son. PrideFest is the place that got us on the foster parent train. We became foster parents, he was our first and only placement, we adopted him a year and a half after he was placed, and he is now ours.



Hector Luis, Chicago

One year I came, and it rained really hard. It was a disaster. It even came into the restaurant I was in. Water just came through the door. It rained so hard. I'll never forget that day.



Shayla West, Chicago

My favorite PrideFest memory is the girls.



Aaron Wycklndt, Milwaukee

I dance onstage, and every year it gets better. We're doing the Steampunk. I've met so many good people. Usually with the cast and the crew and stuff, there's the superstars and divas. But every single person in there are good people. And I'm just so happy to be around so many, because that's hard to come by.



Efrain Ramirez, Milwaukee

PrideFest means coming

Visit WiG at wisconsin Gazette.com updated all day.

Planet pride

2012 calendar crowded with Pride celebrations



PHOTO: TRUTHMONKEY/FLICR

A scene from Pride London's 2011 parade. Organizers plan a record-breaking event for this summer.

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Londoners are talking in superlatives these days, because the city is about to see a summer like no other: Drag performers singing torch songs and athletes running torch relays. Tower Bridge illuminated with Olympic rings and Trafalgar Square draped in rainbow flags.

The city this summer is hosting the conclusion of the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and two major international events – the summer Olympic Games and WorldPride 2012.

Pride London is the presenter of WorldPride 2012, which begins in mid-June and builds to a climatic weekend July 7-8.

Organizers promise the city's "biggest Pride event" ever – with a longer parade route from Baker Street, a monumental post-parade rally in Trafalgar Square and the celebration of the first-ever WorldPride Award honoring human rights advocate and U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton.

"We're expecting hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the world to join us ...

'We really want to show what Pride means in London.'

so we really want to put on the greatest Pride ever to really show what Pride means in London," says organizer Paul Birrell.

WorldPride traditionally has a political theme, and this year's event will focus on the push for the decriminalization of homosexuality in 41 countries where LGBT people can be punished with fines, prison or even death for same-sex relations.

"Considering that the criminalization of homosexuality and sodomy laws is a legacy of the British colonization of these countries, we have a responsibility to the LGBT people living in those countries to fight for their rights as human beings," says Pride London chair Patrick Williams.

London's celebration lands just a few weeks after the majority of

LGBT Pride events on the 2012 calendar take place.

A glance at the schedule:

- Through June 17: Vienna.
- June 15-17: Portland, Ore.; Nashville; Bozeman, Mont., Zurich.
- June 15-16: Louisville.
- June 16: Portland, Maine; Boise, Idaho.
- June 16-17: Denver.
- June 16-24: New York City.
- June 22-24: New Orleans, Harlem.
- June 22-July 1: Barcelona, Dublin, Toronto, Oslo.
- June 23-24: San Francisco, Minneapolis/St. Paul, St. Louis.
- June 23: Cleveland and Houston, also, Rome, Lisbon and Berlin.
- June 24: Chicago and Seattle.
- June 25-July 1: Helsinki.
- June 26-July 1: Paris.
- June 29-July 1: Madrid.
- June 30: St. Pete, Fla.; Omaha.
- July 5-Aug. 5: Stockholm.
- July 6-8: Cologne, Germany.
- July 14: Green Bay.
- July 21-22: San Diego.
- July 28-Aug. 4: Belfast.
- July 28-Aug. 5: Hamburg.
- Aug. 3-5: Amsterdam.
- Aug. 5: Vancouver.
- Aug. 6-12: Antwerp.
- Aug. 13-19: Prague.
- Aug. 14-19: Montreal.
- Aug. 15-19: Copenhagen.
- Aug. 18-19: Madison.
- Aug. 25-26: Charlotte, N.C.
- Sept. 6-10: Key West.
- Sept. 7-8: Las Vegas.
- Sept. 9: Salvador da Bahia, Brazil.
- Sept. 22: Austin, Texas; Burlington, Vt.
- Sept. 29: Richmond, Va.; Durham, N.C.
- Oct. 6: Orlando, Memphis, Tenn.
- Oct. 11-15: Rio De Janeiro.
- Oct. 13-14: Atlanta.
- Oct. 20: Columbia, S.C.
- Nov. 3: Buenos Aires.
- Nov. 4: Palm Springs.

Pride events took place in May in Washington, D.C. and San Juan, Puerto Rico. Pride was celebrated earlier in June in Milwaukee, Salt Lake City, Honolulu, Detroit, Kansas City, Mo., Indianapolis, Anchorage, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Boston, Philadelphia and Des Moines, Iowa in the United States and also Mexico City, Tel Aviv, Sao Paulo and Athens.

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Wisconsin Democrats are at the forefront of the national marriage equality push

DEMS from page 1

and at the state convention," said Erik Paulson, the LGBT caucus secretary.

Cindy Chelcun, an LGBT caucus member who steered the marriage equality resolution through the 7th congressional district convention, said, "Democrats are committed to ending marriage discrimination in Wisconsin. ... We stand with the majority of people in Wisconsin, who believe that everyone in Wisconsin should be treated equally. It will take years to bring marriage equality to Wisconsin, but Wisconsin will, in the end, do what is right."

Wisconsin Democrats also have been at the forefront of a campaign to add marriage equality to the national party platform.

Russ Feingold was one of the first Democrats to announce his support for Democrats: Say I Do, an activist campaign led by the Freedom to Marry to add

support for marriage equality to the national platform.

In addition to Feingold, U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin and DPW chair Mike Tate were early supporters of the Democrats: Say I Do campaign.

And Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett was a founding member of the Mayors for the Freedom to Marry, a broad-based and nonpartisan group of city chiefs formed this year to promote marriage equality.

The national platform will be adopted at the convention in early September in Charlotte, N.C. The inclusion of a marriage equality plank became more likely when President Barack Obama announced his support in early May.

"I think, at this point, following the president's statement, that the national platform will endorse marriage equality," Scharbach said.

Meanwhile, Democrats in other states also have adopted marriage equality provisions in their platforms

'I think, at this point, following the president's statement, that the national platform will endorse marriage equality.'

— California, Colorado, Connecticut, Iowa, Kansas, Massachusetts, Maine, Montana, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Washington and Wyoming.

The same day that Wisconsin adopted its platform,



PHOTO: DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF WISCONSIN

U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl says farewell at the Democratic Party of Wisconsin's 2012 convention. Delegates at the convention voted to adopt a marriage equality plank in the state party's platform.

delegates in Montana unanimously replaced an endorsement of civil unions and partner benefits with a statement calling for a repeal of the state's same-sex marriage ban.

And the new Democratic Party platform in Texas states, in part, "We, along

with our president and vice president, recognize that same-sex marriages should be valid and legal in America."

In some states, such as Iowa and California, the marriage equality provision isn't new to the platform.

"State conventions are being held this month and

next, so I can't tell how many other states will include marriage equality in the platform," Scharbach said. "But my guess is that it will be a high percentage."

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A mother puts love and Pride into action

By Will Fellows

Contributing writer

In one sense, Catherine Tuerk's story is not so remarkable: Soon after her son went away to college, he told her he was gay. "When my son came out to me," she writes, "I was deeply fearful that he could never be happy. And I felt profound sorrow, almost as though he had died."

What sets Tuerk's story apart is that her son's coming out marked the wrenching beginning of something extraordinary: His mother's commitment to breaking the silence, educating herself and others about gay people.

Tuerk became a leader in PFLAG, enjoying a successful and award-winning stint as president of the Metro DC chapter. She wrote articles for varied publications and appeared on many television and radio shows, sometimes in the company of her son, with the aim of dispelling homophobia and promoting pride-inspired advocacy.

Eventually Tuerk and her husband went international. On frequent vacation trips abroad – in Europe, South America, Africa, and Asia – the intrepid couple served as pro-gay ambassadors, going out of their way to get to know gay people and their parents in other cultures.

Concerned that the unique realities of gay and transgender children are often overlooked or ignored, Tuerk was instrumental in establishing the Gender and Sexuality Advocacy and Education Program at the Children's National Medical Center. The pioneering program supports and affirms gender-nonconforming children and their families.

Catherine Tuerk has been writing candidly about her journey all along the way. Her recently published book, "Mom Knows: Reflections on Love, Gay Pride, and Taking Action," is a selection from her writings of two decades.

"My hope for this book is that LGBT people will read

it and find the perfect essays to help their parents become more accepting," Tuerk says. "And that parents who love and accept their LGBT children, but uneasily, will read 'Mom Knows' as part of their parenting homework."

SELECTIONS FROM 'MOM KNOWS'

The power of PFLAG: "When my son came out to me ... he said, 'Go to PFLAG. If you don't, we will always be on a different page.' It took me a while. It wasn't easy. I cried a lot. I blamed a lot. But I didn't have the luxury of staying away, because my son would not let me or his father off the hook."

Her son's childhood: "Attending support groups for parents and gay people became my monthly fare, searching for the relief that I knew was possible. When it came, the sadness was replaced with anger and a new kind of sad realization. I realized that my son had suffered needlessly and he suf-

fered totally alone. My love for him never reached into the most painful part of his secret life."

'Good gay' vs. 'bad gay': "Other parents take a second direction. They may say, 'Tommy is fine, but all those other gay people are bad.' Their child becomes the 'immaculate exception.'"

Feeling different: "Recently, I spoke at an orientation program for school nurses. ... Squeezed between the 'Inoculation record-keeping' and 'How to handle stomach aches,' I was able to talk about the pain of being gay that begins with the very early feelings of being different. This feeling of being different can be apparent in the feminine interests of some gay boys. Sometimes these little boys need special support, even as early as nursery school."

Gay children: "People were reluctant to face the fact that all human sexuality begins in childhood, and they certainly did not want to



PHOTO: COURTESY/

Catherine Tuerk

IN PERSON

Catherine Tuerk will read from "Mom Knows" in Madison at 7 p.m. June 20 at the Madison Public Library, Sequoia Branch, 4340 Tokay Blvd.; and in Milwaukee, at 7 p.m. June 21 at Boswell Book Company, 2559 N. Downer Ave. PFLAG Madison, PFLAG Milwaukee and Bronze Optical are co-sponsors.

think about gay children. They much preferred the idea that some awful parenting style, or sexual abuse, was turning teenagers gay."

Learning about gay sex: "'How did you have your first sexual encounter?' I asked my good friend, a gay man. I was doing my homework. I knew that if I were ever going to be able to be fully affirming of gay culture, I had to get over my hang-ups about gay sex."

What our kids want: "Our kids are the way they are from the very beginning – not better, not worse, just a little different. When they fall in love, everything is exactly the same. All they want is a normal life. They want life partners. They want to nurture like the rest of us. They also might want to dance."

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Senate Republicans block equal pay bill

From AP, WiG reports

Senate Republicans on June 5 blocked a Democratic bill calling for equal pay in the workplace.

As expected, the pay equity bill failed along party lines, 52-47, short of the required 60-vote threshold.

"It is incredibly disappointing that in this make-or-break moment for the middle class, Senate Republicans put partisan politics ahead of American women and their families," President Barack Obama said in a statement.

"Even Mitt Romney has refused to publicly oppose this legislation," added Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid. "He should show some leadership."

The presumptive Republican presidential nominee was campaigning that day in Texas, where spokeswoman Amanda Henneberg said, "Of course Gov. Romney supports pay equity for women. In order to have pay equity, women need to have jobs, and they have been get-

ting crushed in this anemic Obama economy."

The forum for the showdown in Washington was a Senate debate over the Paycheck Fairness Act, a measure to strengthen the Fair Labor Standards Act's protections against pay inequities based on gender.

The legislation, sponsored by Sen. Barbara Mikulski, D-Md., would require employers to prove that differences in pay are based on qualifications, education and other matters unrelated to gender. It also would prohibit employers from retaliating against employees who ask about, discuss or disclose wages in response to a complaint. And it would make employers who violate sex discrimination laws liable for compensatory or punitive damages.

The bill's backers say it is the next step after the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act, which Obama signed in 2009. The law overturned a U.S. Supreme Court decision that

had strictly limited workers' abilities to file lawsuits over pay inequity.

Ledbetter said she didn't become aware of her own pay discrepancy until she neared the end of her 1979-88 career at a Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. plant.

She had received an anonymous tip that she was earning less than her male colleagues. She filed a charge with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

A jury initially awarded her more than \$3 million in back pay and punitive damages, a sum that a judge later reduced to \$300,000.

Ledbetter attended the vote and scolded Republicans for their filibuster.

"Do not let these Republicans keep us from getting paycheck fairness," she told reporters, with Reid at her side.

Asked if he was concerned about alienating women with the GOP filibuster, Senate Republican Leader Mitch McConnell said the bill

opened the door to more lawsuits against employers.

"We don't think America suffers from a lack of litigation," McConnell said. "We have a jobless problem. We have a debt problem. We have a deficit problem. We got a lot of problems. Not enough lawsuits is not one of them."

Outside the Capitol, activists with women's groups, LGBT groups, labor organizations and civil rights associations slammed Senate Republicans.

"Women work their tails off to feed their families and pay the rent," said Rea Carey of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force. "In many households, they are the sole breadwinners. So what do they get in return? Far less than what a man earns for similar work. Something is seriously wrong with this picture, and yet the mostly male Senate diddles around and refuses to do anything about it."

NGLTF reports that in



PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Lilly Ledbetter.

the United States, women earn 77 cents for every dollar earned by men. African-American women earn 62 cents on the dollar and Latin women average only 54 cents on that dollar.

NOW president Terry O'Neill said, "The people

of this country, women and men alike, believe in fair pay. The politicians who voted against the Paycheck Fairness Act will pay a price at the polls – and NOW activists around the country are already organizing to see that that happens."

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The legal gap between hearts and polls

By David Crary

AP writer

Poll after poll shows public support for same-sex marriage steadily increasing, to the point where it's now a majority viewpoint. Yet in all the states where same-sex marriage has been on the ballot, voters have rejected it.

It's possible the streak could end in November, when Maine, Maryland, Minnesota and Washington are likely to have closely contested gay marriage measures on their ballots.

For now, however, there remains a gap between the national polling results and the way states have voted. It's a paradox with multiple explanations, from political geography to the likelihood that some conflicted voters tell pollsters one thing and then vote differently.

"It's not that people are lying. It's an intensely emotional issue," said Amy Simon, a pollster based in Oakland, Calif. "People can report to

you how they feel at the moment they're answering the polls, but they can change their mind."

California experienced that phenomenon in November 2008, when voters, by a 52-48 margin, approved a ban on same-sex marriage

in the state constitution. A statewide Field Poll that September indicated Proposition 8 would lose decisively; an updated poll a week before the vote still showed it trailing by 5 percentage points.

California is an unusual case. It's one of a few reliably

Democratic states that have had a statewide vote rebuffing same-sex marriage. The vast majority of the referendums have been in more conservative states, which have a greater predilection for using ballot measures to set social policy. The 32 states that have

rejected gay marriage at the polls make up just over 60 percent of the U.S. population.

Voters in liberal states such as Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and New York, where gay marriage was legalized by judges or

legislators, might vote to affirm those decisions but haven't had the opportunity.

Most of the states that voted against gay marriage did so between 2004 and 2008. Since then, only Maine in 2009 and North Carolina on May 8 have rebuffed same-sex marriage in referendums, while legislatures in Washington, Maryland, New Jersey, Hawaii, New York, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Illinois and Delaware have voted for same-sex marriage or civil unions.

In all, there are now six states with legal same-sex marriage and nine more granting gay and lesbian couples marriage-style rights via civil unions or domestic partnerships. Together, those 15 states account for about 35 percent of the U.S. population.


Over the past year, there's been a stream of major national polls indicating that a majority of people support same-sex marriage. Accord-

POLL page 27



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'We know that people are conflicted'

POLL from page 26

ing to a recent Washington Post-ABC News poll, 53 percent of those questioned say same-sex marriage should be legal, a new high for the poll, while 39 percent, a new low, say it should be illegal.

Political consultant Frank Schubert, a leading strategist for campaigns against same-sex marriage in California and elsewhere, said such polls are misleading and he asserted that same-sex marriage would be rejected if a national referendum were held now.

"The pollsters are asking if same-sex marriage should be legal or illegal, and that phrasing is problematic because it implies some government sanction against same-sex couples," Schubert said. "People want to be sympathetic to same-sex couples, so polls that use that language aren't particularly useful."

The more useful question, Schubert said, is whether marriage should be defined

as the union of a man and a woman – the gist of the constitutional amendments approved in 30 states.

"If you ask that question, you get strong majorities," Schubert said.

Mark DeCamillo, director of the Field Poll in California, agreed with Schubert that same-sex marriage probably would lose in a hypothetical national referendum now. One important factor, he said, is whether there would be more intensity among supporters or opponents.

In California, same-sex marriage has such overwhelming support today that Prop 8 almost certainly would be overturned if a new state referendum were held, DeCamillo said.

The latest Field Poll, in February, measured voter approval of gay marriage among registered California voters at 59 percent, which was the highest in 35 years of polling on the issue, while only 34 percent disapproved. In the first Field Poll on the topic, in 1977, 59 percent

opposed gay marriage and 28 percent were in favor.

Nonetheless, the largest gay-rights group in the state, Equality California, remains cautious and isn't yet ready to begin a campaign to overturn Prop 8. A federal court has struck down the law, but that ruling likely will be appealed to the Supreme Court.

"We aren't confident that the level of support is stable enough to withstand the rigors of a referendum," said spokeswoman Rebekah Orr. "We know that people are conflicted. Their intellectual position can show up in a poll and their emotional position shows up in the voting booth."

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How Idina Menzel's star keeps rising

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Being dropped by her record label was one of the best things that ever happened to Broadway star Idina Menzel. The experience was painful at the time, but it empowered the performer to redirect her energy to the stage, where she's achieved an enviable career as both a singer and an actor.

"I had just finished 'Rent' and thought I was going to be a big rock star," says the singer/songwriter, who earned a Tony Award nomination for her performance as the revolutionary Maureen Johnson in the groundbreaking show. "After just one album, Hollywood Records dropped me."

The move forced Menzel, who turned 41 on May 30, to reexamine her career. After a few fallow years, she found her way back to Broadway and to her 2003 Tony Award-winning role as the green-skinned Elphaba in "Wicked."

"I learned that I loved the theater and I always feel good about coming back," she says. "I feel I belong there."

"Defying Gravity," Menzel's breakout number from the Stephen Schwartz-Winnie Holzman show, will no doubt be part of the song list June 20, when the celebrated performer brings her "Barefoot at the Symphony" show to Uihlein Hall at Milwaukee's Marcus Center for the Performing Arts. Menzel has performed the mix of pop songs and show tunes numerous times, often with composer/conductor Marvin Hamlisch at the helm. In March, she released both a CD and DVD of the performance that was recorded at Toronto's Koerner Hall.

"The Milwaukee show will be the result of a year-and-a-half of concertizing," Menzel says. "There will be a lot of new material, but I'm still barefoot. I really can't stand

ON VIEW

Idina Menzel's "Barefoot at the Symphony" tour stops in Uihlein Hall at Milwaukee's Marcus Center for the Performing Arts on June 20. Details: www.marcuscenter.org.

singing in high heels."

Menzel may well have been barefoot when she first started singing as a little girl on her native Long Island, N.Y. At 15 she got her first "professional" job as a wedding singer and worked her way through New York University's Tisch School of the Arts by singing at weddings and bar mitzvahs.

"After graduation, a friend helped me audition for 'Rent' and I got the job almost as a fluke," Menzel says.

Composer Jonathan Larson's rock adaptation of Puccini's "La Boheme" opened off Broadway on Jan. 26, 1996. Larson died the day before of an aortic dissection caused by undiagnosed Marfan Syndrome. Posthumously, he won both a Tony Award and a Pulitzer Prize for the hit musical.

Larson's death profoundly affected the cast of "Rent," Menzel says, helping to create a strong work ethic among the performers.

"Jonathan's passing kept us all very grounded," says Menzel, who ended up marrying "Rent" costar Taye Diggs. "The work ethic was incredible because we had to be true to his vision."

Her work ethic drove Menzel to a high level of versatility as a performer, making it difficult for producers to categorize and market her. Her return to the stage opposite Kristen Chenoweth in "Wicked" helped cement



Idina Menzel in "Glee."

PHOTO: GEEWIKIA.COM

her identity, both as a performer and as a woman.

"Elphaba has given me a higher profile and I love playing her," Menzel says. "As women, we're often afraid of our own power and fear alienating people. The character mirrors that aspect, harnesses it and turns it into something beautiful."

Elphaba is one of Menzel's favorite characters, but so is Vera, the alcoholic, codependent character she played in

"Ask the Dust," which she describes as "the best movie you've never seen."

"Vera is the opposite of Elphaba – she's a mess," says Menzel, who acted opposite Colin Farrell in the Robert Towne film. "I like her because I am known for playing empowered women, so it was nice to explore that balance. I found my confidence as an actor in that role."

Menzel's best known role may be that of Shelby Corcoran, the driven coach of Vocal Adrenaline on the hit FOX television show "Glee." Her experience on the program has been unlike most Hollywood productions, she said.

"It was a wonderful experience and great to be surrounded by so many talented people in one place – just like in New York," she said. "The show is groundbreaking and courageous in the issues it tackles and is giving a new generation of young people

a chance to be themselves." Such empowerment is part and parcel of Menzel's career, one that's been inspired, like those of so many of her contemporaries, by the music of Barbra Streisand.

"I was inspired by Barbra's incredible range, her breath control, and especially her emotional grasp of her material," Menzel says. "'A Star is Born' was the first record album I ever owned."

She's lived up to the title.

Michels' art reflects a life lived large

Art Gaze

KAT MURRELL

Lon Michels has a penchant for patterns and vivacious decoration – whether it's on the surface of a canvas, on a chair in the shape of a high-heeled platform shoe, a fur coat, or a mounted deer head. “Life Lived Large,” the current exhibition of Michels' work at Tory Folliard Gallery, gathers together all these disparate media.

Michels, an out Wisconsin native whose four-decade career has been spent in New York, Key West and now Wisconsin, uses acrylic paint to enliven surfaces with a hedonistic overflow of color. Just as his life is lived large, many of his paintings take on an enormous size, dense with meticulous detail.

“Freedom” (2004) is one such example. The canvas is about 9-by-12 feet, but the

ON VIEW

“Lon Michels: Life Lived Large” continues through June 30 at Tory Folliard Gallery, 233 N. Milwaukee St., Milwaukee.

linear details come down to mere fractions of inches. Michels is well aware of art history and quotes it quite freely, even including prints of source images in the exhibit. French artist Edouard Manet is clearly a favorite, as references to his famously scandalous 1863 painting, “Dejeuner sur l'herbe,” are readily picked up.

A figure based on Manet's model Victorine Meurent is recognizable, seated casually and nakedly on the ground, accompanied by fellow picnickers. Manet modeled his on male relatives, but Michels transforms the lot. We now have a sexy, big-eyed pin-up girl, a multi-limbed deity and a woman garbed in hedress

Acrylic paint enlivens surfaces with a hedonistic overflow of color.

wearing a large gold earring.

These are some of the largest figures in the composition, but forget about finding a single focal point. There is a veritable explosion of color, figures, pattern, and detail, making it hard not to move quickly from one place to another. This opens up a variety of visual paths. There are butterflies throughout the work, and if your eye alights on one, keep going and you'll find a trail of more and more. Wending through



PHOTO: COURTESY TORY FOLLIARD GALLERY

Lon Michels, “Birth & Death,” 2002.

the wilds of this composition, the viewer has quite a lot of freedom to wander, and to wonder.

One of the most intriguing pieces is Michels' “Modern Day Olympia,” again based on a Manet original of 1863. For good measure, Pablo Picasso's “Les demoiselles d'Avignon” is prominently included as a small picture hanging behind the lounging woman in the foreground (this painting forms the basis for the large-scale work “Les Demoiselles,” which is also on view).

The contemporary Miss Olympia nattily sips champagne and stares out disinterestedly. In a switch from the original, a brawny dude brings in a bundle of flowers, rather than a black female servant.

Other changes in Michels' conception make the work even more interesting; patio doors look upon a manicured landscape, but before we mentally escape to the

outdoors, there is a television to contend with in the corner of the room. The screen gleams white and a commercial for Oprah is shown. The famed host's commanding presence becomes an icon in a TV shrine. The original “Olympia” is about attention, desire, sexuality and the power of the gaze, among other things. Who really commands our gaze today – Olympia or Oprah?

This question of the gaze and complications in the way we look at things underpin these works. The colors are brilliant. Patterns dazzle the eyes, and even flesh looks like fabric when decorated with subtle sunbursts and florals. There are symbols with specific iconographical meaning, particularly in the massive “The Last Supper,” where Christ floats in a modified lotus pose, surrounded by various disciples and symbols of world religions past and present. The deft precision of Michels' brush makes it

intense, yet curiously disguises the hand of the artist.

Painterly, improvisational flourishes form especially interesting passages in the “Joshua Tree” paintings, which are small canvases of bare desert landscapes. Slashes of crossed marks in the sky display Michels' love of pattern but remain loose and vulnerable around the edges.

The balance of tight control, active surfaces, buried meaning, and subtle irregularities come together in his monumental diptych, “Birth & Death.” The palettes of each shimmer with candy-colored hues set off by predominantly white and black text respectively, spelling out the title of each panel over and over in various fonts and sizes. The common letters in each word, “T” and “H,” are highlighted in pink, making a connecting thread between these two points of life, spinning a thread that holds it all together.

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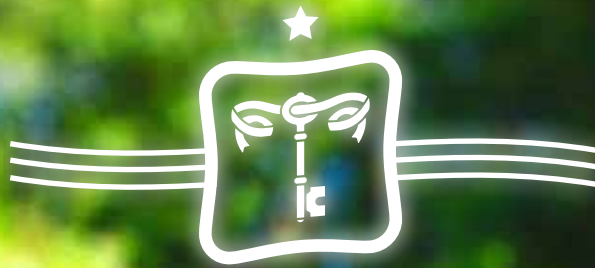
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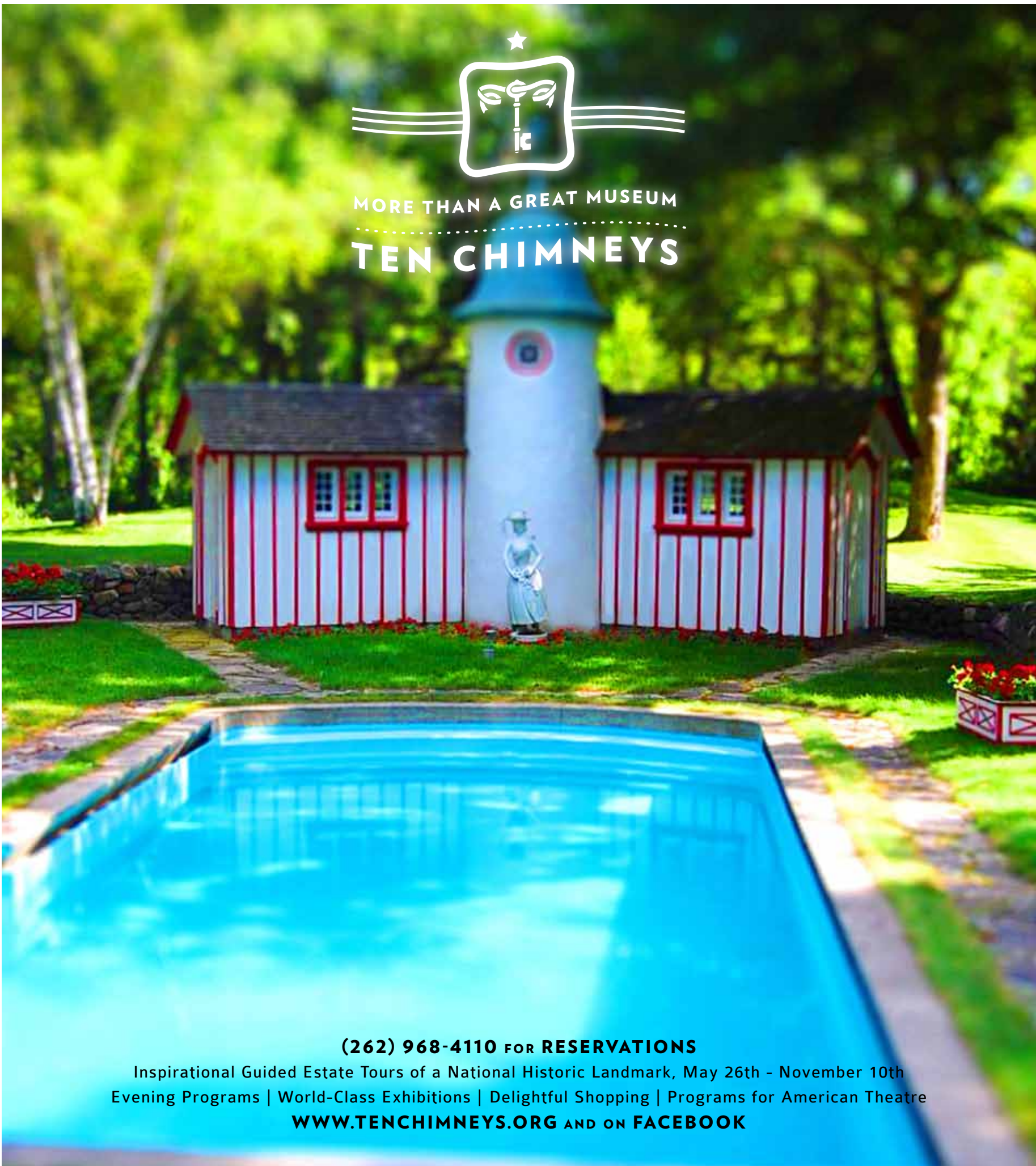
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Uniting people through electro house dance

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Milwaukee's electronic dance music fans have reason to celebrate, and the A.part DJ Collective knows just the place to do it.

A.part, owned equally by BJ Murray, Melody Spesard and Jessica Fenner, is planning the two-year anniversary performance of Taste It, the trio's electronic techno dance party, on June 15 at Studio 200. Like its previous performances, Taste It's anniversary is likely to bring gays and straights together for an evening of pulse-pounding, free-wheeling house music.

The event had its inaugural performance June 11, 2010, at the Triangle Bar, 135 E. National Ave. The group called that bar home until it was sold April 28. In the meantime, the group became a main attraction on Milwaukee's house music scene, "hauling sound equipment into a compact corner dive bar each Friday night and turning what was usually a

center for drag queen repertoire and karaoke sing-along into a sanctuary of sonic boom," according to a press release. Big name talent from all corners of the United States made guest appearances, and the parties provided a residency for a few Milwaukee DJs that helped put them on the regional electronic music map.

Today, Taste It makes its home base at Studio 200, 200 E. Washington St.

"Taste It is an event concept and brand," says Spesard who, like Murray, is gay. (Fenner is straight.) "We have plowed through misconceptions that a gay bar was just a place for gays to go to."

At two years old, Taste It has outlived comparable events, successfully vaulting the hurdles that have closed other house parties down. Unforeseen challenges, including noise complaints, code violations and upstart competition, all have been overcome to create a moveable musical feast that is pro-

moted through Facebook and other social media. In fact, Taste It has been attracting a growing number of attendees, according to Spesard.

"Taste It draws from a wide range," says Spesard, a former staff sergeant with the U.S. Air Force. "All ages, all races, all flavors of life regularly show up and stick around, making it sometimes confusing – albeit temporarily – for everyone involved."

Taste It features state-of-the-art sound equipment, visual effects and club lighting to create a party atmosphere. The musical content comes from the varied influences of its principals.

Murray, 31, an Elm Grove, native, cut his teeth on the New York electronic dance music scene, while Spesard, 38, from Marengo, Ill., brought with her the Chicago influence. Fenner, 38, a native of the United Kingdom, flavored the group with the European rave culture, as well as influences from Chicago and the West Coast.



PHOTO: MELODY SPESARD

From a Taste It party on Farwell Avenue. Taste It continues its Friday night parties at Studio 200, 200 E. Washington St.

Only Fenner (aka DJ Fortune) makes her living as a full-time DJ, holding residency slots on Monday at Sublime Bar & Lounge, 324 E. Mason St., and "Crave," held Thursday nights at Notte, 1033 N. Old World Third St. She also is managing partner of A.part Music Activism, a hybrid organization that stages electronic dance music performances in Milwaukee and represents A.part DJ Collective.

In addition to their work as DJs, Spesard is a freelance hair designer and Murray is contract commodity administrator at Quad/Graphics in Sussex.

Spesard is credited for naming Taste It. As a classic rock fan with a penchant for performers like Jimi Hendrix, The Doors and Led Zeppelin, Spesard fell head-over-heels in love with house music, she says, and wanted to give everyone a "taste" of her infatuation.

The three A.part principals express pleasure that Taste It attracts a following that breaks down the walls between various social groups through dance. Spesard credits the creativity and longevity of Taste It for building bridges important to society, despite some obvious challenges.

"Hosting any function at a gay bar where you want your draw to be from both sides of the field is a risky endeavor," Spesard says. "Fortunately, this one has had sweet results."

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New troupe brings summer dance to Milwaukee

Theater

MICHAEL MUCKIAN

The city's newest and perhaps most innovative dance troupe aims to fill the void that perennially affects the dance world during the warmer months.

Dancers are generally signed by specific dance companies from September through May, leaving summer open for other pursuits. NomadicLIMBS, conceived by out local dancer Thom Dancy, hopes to fill those pursuits for both dancers and their fans with the first of what he describes as an additional season – albeit a brief one – of dance.

"Milwaukee has an incredible wealth of talent in its very separate modern dance and ballet scenes," says Dancy, 24, who has performed with Milwaukee Ballet and other national troupes. "NomadicLIMBS was born out of a need for me to cre-

ate, a need for dancers to have a creative outlet, and a need to fill a void in a season lacking dance."

The newly formed troupe, which consists of three male and three female dancers as well as choreographers, opened its season with a June 2 preview performance at the Milwaukee Gay Arts Center. Next on the schedule is a fashion show in partnership with Luci Boutique on June 23 at Rumor Upbeat Lounge, 161 S. 1st St.

The final performance of the mini-season is June 29-30 at Milwaukee Ballet's Jodi Peck Center, 504 W. National Ave.

NomadicLIMBS consists of mostly local artists and dancers Dancy has met during his professional travels as a dancer.

"As a professional dancer your life consists of a lot of travel," says Dancy, a Winston-Salem, N.C., native who studied dance at both STEPS NYC and University of Oklahoma. "The name 'NomadicLIMBS' comes from

the fact that performing artists in general are constantly picking up and going."

In addition to Dancy, the "Nomads" include dancers Tara Gragg, Milwaukee Ballet's Alexandre Ferreira and Isaac Sharratt, Milwaukee native Mary-Elizabeth Fenn, Tyler Schnese and San Diego Ballet's Caitlin Sullivan; and choreographers Cheyla Clawson and Ariel Asch. The dancers represent a broad perspective, having performed with major companies in the U.S. Several, including Dancy, also have performed in China.

NomadicLIMBS is supported by grants from several donors. Tickets for performances are priced at an affordable \$7 to \$15 per show. The troupe is about halfway to its fundraising goal of \$5,000, which will pay the dancers and cover performance expenses.

Dancy, who describes himself as "the only openly gay director of a dance company in Milwaukee," didn't start out being a dancer. He origi-

nally trained to be a singer at the New England Conservatory of Music in Boston.

"I wasn't passionate about it and didn't really understand what 'passionate' meant until I took my first dance class," Dancy says. "I wasn't originally that good, but I realized that dance was what I wanted to do for the rest of my life."

Dancy trained in New York, Oklahoma and China before accepting a trainee position with Milwaukee Ballet. Next season he's dancing with the Minnesota Dance Theatre in Minneapolis but keeping his home base in Milwaukee. He hopes that NomadicLIMBS will continue performing in subsequent summers.

"We are even in talks with several groups on the East Coast about taking our dance collective on tour next summer," Dancy says. "But the one cool thing I like about the Midwest is that everyone knows how to appreciate nice weather. Milwaukee has the perfect summer in which



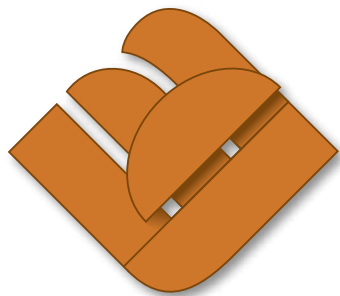
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NomadicLIMBS dancer Lauren Treat

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Lake Geneva: scenic beauty, fascinating history

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

College students are accustomed to dealing with peer pressure, but only in Lake Geneva do they face the summer phenomenon known as “pier” pressure.

June 15 marks the start of the mail-boat tour season, a three-month period during which college students on break test their courage and skills delivering mail to the residents of about 65 summer homes that line the lake. The task sounds simple, except that the mail boat never stops during its two-and-one-half-hour route.

The deliverers – most of them young women – must leap from the moving boat to the pier and back again after stuffing catalogues, utility bills, Sunday papers and other mail into the residents’ pier-side boxes. The jumpers are surprisingly nimble, but even the best ones can take an occasional misstep, ending up in the 65-degree lake water. The occasional mishap is likely to earn applause from tourists along for the ride on the Lake Geneva Cruise Line ship.

The mail boat, the only service of its kind in the country, is just one of the things that sets the Walworth County resort community apart as a vacation destination.

A community of about 8,000 residents, the town was christened the “Newport of the West” in the 1920s for attracting so many Chicago glitterati, many of whom built large summer homes there in the late 19th and

early 20th centuries. Montgomery Ward, William Wrigley Jr. and a host of other Windy City business barons had summer “cottages” along the lake, each unique in design and striking to the eye of those in passing boats. Even Al Capone is rumored to have visited the place, but his idea of a summer “get away” may have had other connotations.

During the summer months, Lake Geneva’s streets and shops bustle with visitors, while its lake is awash in sailboats and tour vessels. Boat tours skirting the shore of nine-mile long, 8.6-square-mile Geneva Lake may be the largest draw, but tourists also view the area aloft from one of the several ziplines that have gone up in recent years, offering a new look at the popular destination.

Known as Kish-Way-Kee-Tow, or “Clear Water,” to the area’s original Native American inhabitants, Geneva Lake was home to a series of flour and wool carding mills in the 19th century, thanks to the water power provided by the White River outlet to the lake. Contrary to popular belief, Lake Geneva is not named after the Swiss city of the same name, but after Geneva, N.Y., the hometown of government surveyor John Brink, who helped map the area in 1835.

By 1840, in addition to its mills and cabins, the community boasted two hotels, three churches, two general stores and a distillery. Railroad access from Chicago significantly enhanced the area’s evolution as a resort destination.



PHOTO: WISCONSINBEAUTIFUL.COM

A Lake Geneva mail-boat jumper in action.

In addition to the lavish vacation homes along its 26 miles of shoreline, the town has several other claims to fame. In 1954, Lake Geneva was named one of three finalists for the then-new U.S. Air Force Academy, eventually losing out to Colorado Springs, Colo. The late Kerwin Mathews, the gay Janesville resident and Hollywood actor best known for his fantasy film roles in the 1950s and '60s, once taught high school English here.

In 1968, Hugh Hefner built the first Playboy Club, Hotel & Resort in Lake Geneva. The club closed in 1981, and the site is now home

to the Grand Geneva Resort. Guns ‘N’ Roses singer Axel Rose owned property on the lake’s southwest shore from 1988 to 1998. The community also was home to “Dungeons and Dragons” co-creator Gary Gygax, who lived there until his death in 2008.

But Lake Geneva’s most notable history still rests in its lakeshore mansions. One of the most striking – and the only one open to the public – is the historic Black Point Mansion, which sits 90 feet above the lake at Black Point and is accessible only by boat.

Originally built in 1888 by Chicago brewing magnate Conrad Seipp, the 20-room mansion sports a four-story tower of distinctly nautical design that overlooks the lake. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the house was given to the State of Wisconsin by the late William Peterson, a Chicago attorney and a third-generation owner of the property, who wanted others to enjoy the home where he had spent his summers growing up. Lake Geneva Cruise Lines offers a combination lake and mansion tour for those interested in seeing how the other half used to live.

The mail boat may not stop at Black Point Mansion anymore, but the two features today combine to make Lake Geneva a one-of-kind destination. And you don’t have to get wet to enjoy its charms.

For more information, visit www.lakegenewavi.com.



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Reel Advice

GREGG SHAPIRO

THIS 'PROMETHEUS' SHOULD HAVE REMAINED BOUND

Cinematic technology has come a long way since Ridley Scott's 1979 "Alien." So at least his 3D pseudo-prequel "Prometheus" looks great, even if the movie seems all too vaguely familiar.

It's 2093, four years after archaeologists Shaw (Noomi Rapace) and Holloway (the yummy Logan Marshall-Green) discovered cave drawings that indicate the existence of life on other planets. The spacecraft Prometheus, funded by the evil Weyland megacorporation, lands a crew of 17 on a distant planet to explore. Among the crew is droid David (Michael Fassbender) and chilly corporate honcho Vickers (Charlize Theron).

The unwitting crew members are basically intended to be food for the alien beings that Weyland wants brought to Earth at any price (do the words "crew expendable" ring a bell?). The crew is also unaware that ancient Weyland (Guy Pearce in some of the worst old-age make-up ever) is aboard the spaceship hoping to gain insight into life extension.

Like its sequels (with the possible exception of "Aliens"), "Prometheus" fails to capture the thrills and chills of "Alien," a sci-



PHOTO: COURTESY From "Prometheus."

fi horror masterpiece close to perfection. Instead, it's a series of variations on the theme of retread.

A PORN-STAR PAST THREATENS A HOLLYWOOD ENDING

"Going Down in La-La Land," from prolific gay filmmaker Casper Andreas, is the big screen adaptation of Andy Zeffer's novel of the same name. The title, applicable to both a plummet from grace and the sex act, offers a good indication of the story's direction.

Young and pretty New Yorker Adam (Matthew Ludwinski) arrives bright-eyed and smooth-tailed in Los Angeles to become an actor. Rooming with fellow struggling actor Candy (Allison Lane), he quickly gets a lesson in the harsh realities of Hollywood. Not only is it hard to get acting gigs, but most food service slots are

also filled. A receptionist job at a talent agency also proves disastrous.

Flirty photographer/filmmaker Nick (Casper Andreas) hits on Adam and then convinces him to pose for pix. Soon the pair is dating. Nick, who also works in the porn field, gets Adam an administrative job at a porn studio and soon Adam is a rising star. Adam's boss Ron (John Schile) arranges a few escort jobs, including one with closeted sitcom star John (Michael Medico). But Adam wants to go legit. As Adam and John's relationship develops beyond that of hooker and john, John offers Adam a job as his assistant.

Meanwhile, Nick is in a steady, Tina-fueled decline. And John's bitchy beard Zinna (Judy Tenuta) could potentially make waves. Adam's pesky porn past threatens to destroy everything.

But a well-earned happy ending is lurking in the wings. Screenwriter/director Andreas continues to improve with each of his films, and Ludwinski is an actor to watch in more ways than one. "Going Down in La-La Land" is available for view on Video on Demand - contact your cable/satellite provider.

For breaking news go to wisconsin Gazette.com.

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Carlile's newest is a bear hug to her influences

Interview

GREGG SHAPIRO

From the opening train whistle of "Hard Way Home," the first track on "Bear Creek" (Columbia), it's clear that out singer/songwriter Brandi Carlile is heading in a country direction on her fourth studio disc. It's an earthy collection that embraces folk, pop, country, rock, gospel and blues. And woven into the fabric of "Bear Creek" are a number of daring musical experiments such as the rhythmic "100" and the dreamy "Just Kids."

I spoke with Carlile about "Bear Creek" shortly before its release this spring.

Gregg Shapiro: Following the strong pop sound of your 2009 album "Give Up the Ghost," much of "Bear Creek" feels more

IN PERFORMANCE

Brandi Carlile performs on June 23 at the Door Creek Auditorium in Fish Creek and July 6-7 in Elkhorn at Alpine Valley Music Theater.

country-driven. Was that a conscious decision?

Brandi Carlile: It just turned out that way. I think that "Bear Creek" is more roots-based, but it's not just musically – it's personally, as well. The reason we named the album "Bear Creek" is that it's so similar to home for us. It's in rural Washington state, it's in a big barn. It's just like my house. When you get comfortable with your roots, you tend to write from there.

Because of the record's sound, what would it mean to you if it was picked up by country radio and

became a Nashville hit?

Well, first of all, I don't think it will (laughs). But I have to say that I grew up listening to classic country and western music. It's definitely the bigger part of who I am than rock 'n' roll. It must mean that that's authentically who I am.

You take listeners to church on "That Wasn't Me." It's one of three songs on the album for which you get sole writing credit.

I was struggling with the concept of addiction with someone that I loved. Having to accept the fallout of what happens when somebody gets clean and they get this new beginning and you kind of get left with the past, the really damaging past. How hard it is for them to be able to reassemble it back into the lives of the people that they hurt. It's pretty significant for me.

"100" and "Keep

Your Heart Young" both deal with the subject of aging. Is that a subject that's on your mind?

I finished "Bear Creek" in May (2011) and then I turned 30 on June 1, and then I wrote those songs. I thought, "Shit, I can't put a record out and not put this experience on it." So I had to go back in and record those two songs.

Speaking of "100," it has a powerful dance beat. Were you aware that you had an inner dance diva lurking within?

No. And to be embarrassingly honest, that whole concept was my idea, too. Speeding it up like that. I was listening to that Arcade Fire record and that whole hypnotic, relentless beat going through the song came from a couple of ideas I got from listening to that album.

The album's closer "Just Kids" stands out

because it sounds like a new musical direction for you.

Writing in that genre is something I've been doing a lot on my own. It's weird – part of me feels really country and roots-based, and part of me feels really ethereal. One night, a guy named David Palmer came in to do the piano on "That Wasn't Me," and he had these Moog synthesizers that reminded me of my favorite movies from the 1980s. That's what the song was about, me and my brother in the '80s. That's what came out of it, this really dreamy thing.

Have things changed for you since coming out publicly?

No, not at all. And to be honest with you, it was completely non-strategic in every way. I can tell you exactly how it happened. One day I was helping my best friend Amy Ray release her record, "Didn't It Feel Kinder," doing press in New York for four



PHOTO: COURTESY

Brandi Carlile.

days straight with gay press. I'd never done any before. I didn't understand why they wouldn't want to talk to me. That's when I first realized, conceptually, I wasn't out. But I came out when I was like 14 years old. I've gotten involved in political things, and I've been part of gay Pride festivals, performing for them. I've done charity campaigns for LGBTQ events. I just never considered myself not out.

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Music

GREGG SHAPIRO

AMY RAY

More than any of her previous solo studio discs, Indigo Girl Amy Ray's "Lung of Love" sounds the most closely connected to her creative partnership with Emily Saliers. Strong as they are, songs such as "When You're Gone, You're Gone," "I Didn't," "From Haiti" and "Crying In the Wilderness" would have fit in comfortably on any of the recent Indigo Girls' albums. That said, Ray has always stretched musically and reached for unexpected places in her solo work. She succeeds here on the blistering "Give it a Go," the radiant rocker "Glow," "Little Revolution," the folk funk of the title cut and the gorgeous album closer "Bird in the Hand."

RACHAEL SAGE

Is Rachael Sage the queer Regina Spektor? In addition to sharing a monogram, they are also keyboard wizards and singers with distinctive vocal qualities. "Haunted By You," Sage's 10th full-length disc in about 15 years, opens with "Invisible Light," a song that doesn't veer far from Sage's standard musical formula. But on "Abby Would You Wait," with its tasteful horn and organ interplay and Seth Glier on backing vocals, Sage eases away from her comfort zone. Her trademark sparkles get the tribute they deserve on the lovely "The Sequin Song." "Birthday" ranks as one of Sage's prettiest tunes, while "Hey Nah" is one of her most joyous. That's Dar Williams on the reprise of "Invisible Light," which closes out the disc.

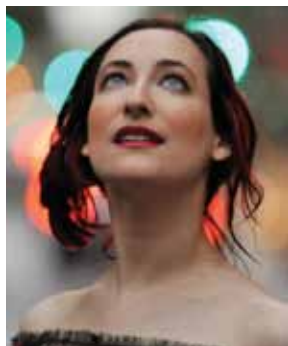


PHOTO: SONICBIDS.COM

Rachel Sage.

Sing out sisters



PHOTO: DAEMON RECORDS

Amy Ray.

YVA LAS VEGASS

You may recognize the name Yva Las Vegass from when the Venezuelan lesbian singer/songwriter teamed up with Krist Novoselic to form his short-lived post-Nirvana band Sweet 75. Las Vegass sings – or belts – in English and Spanish on "I Was Born in a Place of Sunshine & the Smell of Ripe Mangoes." There's a traditional quality to Las Vegass' performance, even on songs such as "Crack Whore" (because "the civil rights movement just wasn't enough") and "Pussy in Your Eye."

MARTHA BERNER AND THE SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

On her second full-length disc "Fool's Fantasy," credited to Martha Berner and the Significant Others, Berner benefits from a full-band sound. More Nashville than insurgent country, twangy tunes such as "Cry," "Some Stay a While," "Where Does the Day Go," "Irene" and "Burning Candles" have the potential to earn Berner an audience among Carrie Underwood's fans. However, "All the Rockstars" and "Never Talked to Oz," the album's best tracks, illustrate that Berner also has a gift for writing memorable pop songs, too.

SUSAN SURFTONE

Lesbian guitar goddess Susan Surftone certainly lives up to her name on "Shore." Like a female Dick Dale, Surf-

tone rides the rocking and rolling waves of surf guitar, hanging 10 on the frets and strings. You can practically smell the ocean and surfboard wax on such original tracks as "Jade," "Tide," "Compression," "Chance," "Subduction" and her cover of the Doors' "Riders on the Storm." Don't be surprised if you find yourself seeking out Frankie and Annette for a little beach blanket bingo or contemplating how to stuff a wild bikini.

SHARON ISBIN

On "Guitar Passions," queer, classical guitar diva Sharon Isbin is joined by a notable array of friends, including Nancy Wilson (of Heart), Stanley Jordan, Paul Winter, Steve Morse and Steve Vai. Aside from performing striking renditions of songs by Antonio Carlos Jobim ("Chovendo na Roseira"), Joaquin Rodrigo ("Adagio") and Isaac Albéniz ("Asturias"), Isbin covers the Heart classic "Dreamboat Annie," on which she is joined by Wilson.

PEGGY SEEGER

Recorded at a concert in Nelson, New Zealand, "Live," by bi singer/songwriter Peggy Seeger, the widow of Ewan MacColl and half-sister of folk legend Pete, is a pleasant mix of storytelling/social commentary and music. Seeger performs a variety of traditional tunes, ranging from the serious "I Been a Bad Bad Girl" to the humor-

ous "Mountaineer's Courtship." It's also a delight to hear Seeger sing her original work, including "Everyone Knows," "I'm Gonna Be an Engineer," "You Don't Know How Lucky You Are" and "Everything Changes," which is about her mother Ruth Crawford Seeger.

TENDER FOREVER

Like its predecessor, 2010's "No Snare," "Where Are We From" by Tender Forever (aka Melanie Valera) has a drum-machine at its heart. But don't expect a house-music rave-up. Tender Forever employs beats in a sparing, minimalist fashion. Tender Forever's bare-bones beat is most evident on "Wrestle" and "Runaway." But there are moments when the title track, "The Road Was Unkind" and "Blue" verge on aiming for the dance floor – and could go there in the hands of the right remixer.

ALBERTA HUNTER

In his book "Chicago



PHOTO: XLYRICS.DE

Tender Forever.

Whispers: A History of LGBT Chicago before Stonewall," St. Sukie de la Croix writes about a number of queer blues singers, including the late Alberta Hunter. The CD reissue of "Downhearted Blues: Live at the Cookery" (1981) found the groundbreaking blues diva having a gay old time performing her originals, such as "The Love I Have for You," "Remember My Name," "I've Got a Mind to Ramble," and, fittingly, "I'm Having a Good Time," as well as some standards.



PHOTO: MUSICBLOODLINE.INFO

Alberta Hunter

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GREGG SHAPIRO

Black, blue and broken

THE DARK SIDE OF GAY LIFE

The six "Black Briefs" referred to in the title of this compilation are all of a dark nature.

For instance, Hong Khaou's "Spring," the DVD's first film, involves a 20-year-old university student negotiating an intense sexual scene with a slightly older man. There's a noose, a blindfold and commands to bark and fetch like a dog. There's also respect and a sense of release and relief.

In "Remission," directed by Greg Ivan Smith, Sam (Michael Fitzpatrick), a gay man, weekends in a Maine cabin awaiting the Monday results of a biopsy. Accompanied by his Boston terrier, Sam finds his trip to the country quickly goes off the rails. His cell-phone is dying and he can't find the charger. Then he begins to hear, see and smell things. Is it just his anxiety or his meds? Or is

there really a shadowy figure lurking outside the window and in the cellar? Prepare to be horrified.

The other shorts follow a similar path to the dark side. "Video Night," the shortest work in the collection, manages to horrify viewers at warp speed. The most exotic short on the DVD, "Communication," features an Orthodox Jewish character in New Zealand.

As this kind of compilation goes, this one rates better than average.

LAVENDER AND BLUE

The six shorts compiled on the DVD "Blue Briefs" are more of a mixed bag. The best of the series, Sal Bardo's "Requited," deals with Nicholas (Christopher Schram) and Gregor (Max Rhyser), a couple in New York facing issues of commitment and separation. Nicholas and Gregor are spending their

last weekend together before Gregor relocates. Their time is not their own, as the weekend also includes a going-away party for Gregor and the wedding of Nicholas' best friend Aaron (Matthew Watson), with whom he is in love. Good writing and acting make this required viewing.

"Boys Like You," starring and directed by Sal Armando, examines the complicated relationships between gay men and straight men and the dangers of drinking and flirting. Alain Hain's "The In-Between," "based on true stories," incorporates interviews with men about infidelity while a story of infidelity is depicted on-screen.

FRANCO TAKES ON HART CRANE

"The Broken Tower," writer/director/star James Franco's non-traditional biopic about the late gay poet Hart Crane, is overly ambitious but admirable. It follows



PHOTO: MOVIEZER

James Franco as gay poet Hart Crane in "The Broken Tower."

Franco's impressive turn as gay poet Allen Ginsberg in "Howl."

Franco seems to want "The Broken Tower" to be a visual poem on par with Crane's work. Shot mostly in black and white, it is nice to look at, especially the New York scenes involving the Brooklyn Bridge.

For a film about someone so conflicted toward his family (Crane kept his homosexuality hidden from

his parents), "The Broken Tower" is a family affair, with Franco's brother Dave playing the younger Crane and his mother Betsy playing Crane's mother Grace.

Franco is brave in his frank and sometimes graphic depiction of Crane's gay life, including dalliances with truck drivers and sailors, as well as his relationship with Emile (Michael Shannon). Franco's appreciation for Crane's poems, whether

they're being read aloud in the background or at poetry readings given by the poet, is a valuable addition to the film.

Although the audience never gets a clear picture of Crane, Franco does what he can to inspire viewers to explore the poet's work.

DVD bonus features include Franco's Skype interviews with literary scholars.

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JUNE 14, THURSDAY

Jazz in the Park presents **JC Brooks and the Uptown Sound** at 6 p.m. in Cathedral Square Park, 825 N. Jefferson.

Carte Blanche Studios Theatre, 1024 S. Fifth, presents **"The Comedy of Errors"** through June 17. Call 262-716-4689.

JUNE 15, FRIDAY

The world's first science-fiction football musical comedy, **"Packer Fans from Outer Space"** runs through July 22 in Vogel Hall at Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, at the corner of Water and State. Call 414-273-2787.

Returning for its ninth season, the musical comedy **"Belgians in Heaven,"** set in southern Door County's Belgian-American farming district, is about the frolics of two Wisconsin farmers, an angel and a talking chicken. It runs through Aug. 24 at The Amphitheatre in Peninsula State Park in Fish Creek.

Present Music's **"Love"** concert features Grammy Award winner **Michael Daugherty** and Milwaukee's very own Robin Puer, at 6:30 p.m. in Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth. Call 414-286-3663.



Michael Daugherty.

JUNE 16, SATURDAY

Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus presents the world premiere of **"Heartlands,"** an original choral work, at 7 p.m. at the Madison Masonic Center, Wisconsin Avenue at E. Johnson Street in Madison. For more, visit perfectharmonychorus.org.

Danceworks Performance Company performs excerpts of its most recent and critically acclaimed concert **"Want or Need"** outdoors at noon at the Milwaukee Art Museum's Lakefront Festival of Arts, 700 N. Art Museum Drive.

Now in its final season after a 25-year run, Wisconsin Cream City Chorus presents two performances of **"Schlemiel, Schlimazel! Celebrating the Cream City,"** at 5 p.m. at the Unitarian Universalist Church West/Playhouse, 13001 W. North, Brookfield.

JUNE 17, SUNDAY

Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus presents the Milwaukee premiere of **"Heartlands,"** an original choral work by Arthur Durkee, at its 15th anniversary spring concert, at 3 p.m. at Plymouth Church UCC, 2717 E. Hampshire. Visit www.perfectharmonychorus.org.

American Folklore Theatre in Door County presents the world premiere of **"Victory Farm,"** set in World War II Door County, through Aug. 25 at The Amphitheatre in Peninsula State Park in Fish Creek.

JUNE 19, TUESDAY

"Cheeseheads, the Musical," a "modern day dairy-tale with a lotto heart," set at Schnaybel's Famous Cheese, a family-owned factory set in Sheboygan, runs through Aug. 25 at The Amphitheatre in Peninsula State Park in Fish Creek.

"Billy Elliot The Musical," with music by Elton John, runs



through June 24 at Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, 400 W. College Ave., Appleton, Call 920-730-3760.

JUNE 20, WEDNESDAY

Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, at the corner of Water and State, presents "Wicked" diva **Idina Menzel** at 7:30 p.m. Call 414-273-2787.

Boswell Book Company, 2559 N. Downer, presents Matthew Batt, author of **"Sugarhouse: Turning the Neighborhood Crack House into Our Home Sweet Home,"** at 7 p.m. Call 414-332-1181.



Idina Menzel.

JUNE 21, THURSDAY

Boswell Book Company, 2559 N. Downer, welcomes Catherine Tuerk, author of **"Mom Knows: Reflections on Love, Gay Pride and Taking Action"** at 7 p.m. Call 414-332-1181.

Jazz in the Park presents **Kokolo Afrobeat Orchestra** at 6 p.m. at Cathedral Square Park, 825 N. Jefferson.

"Before Bridging the Gap and After," abstract paintings by Ron Kosek, go on display at The Polish Center of Wisconsin, 6941 S. 68th St., Franklin through July 28. An opening reception begins at 6:30 p.m. tonight and continues through 8:30 p.m.

JUNE 22, FRIDAY

Lebowski Fest, the traveling festival celebrating all things related to the cult-comedy "The Big Lebowski," kicks off with the Movie Party, complete with bands, full bars, white Russians, Milwaukee's favorite food trucks and more festivities, in Cathedral Square Park, 825 N. Jefferson.



"The Big Lebowski."

JUNE 23, SATURDAY

AMF Lanes, 7505 W. Oklahoma, hosts the **Lebowski Fest Bowling Party**, featuring costume, trivia and other contests, 5 p.m.-2 a.m.

The Rock the Ark concert series at Noah's Ark Waterpark in the Wisconsin Dells presents **Critic**, an all-girl band from Rhinelander, performing on the Wave Stage 2-4 p.m. Visit noahsarkwaterpark.com.

Keane performs at 7 p.m. at The Pabst, 144 E. Wells. Call 414-286-3663.

JUNE 24, SUNDAY

Ravinia Festival, 200-231 Ravinia Park Road, Highland Park, Ill., presents **Steve Martin and the Steep Canyon Rangers** at 7 p.m. in the pavilion. Call 847-266-5100.

JUNE 25, MONDAY

Tony Award-winning Best Play **"War Horse"** runs through June 30 at Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, 400 W. College Ave., Appleton. Call 920-730-3760.

Ravinia Festival, 200-231 Ravinia Park Road, Highland Park, Ill., presents Grammy winner **Esperanza Spalding** at 8 p.m. in the pavilion. Call 847-266-5100.

JUNE 26, TUESDAY

"Miller & Shellabarger: Hiding in the Light," the collaborative work of husband and husband artists Dutes Miller and Stan Shellabarger, runs through July 15, at Inova/Kenilworth, 2155 N. Prospect.

JUNE 27, WEDNESDAY

Boswell Book Company, 2559 N. Downer, welcomes **Sapphire**, author of "The Kid," a companion novel to "Push," at 7 p.m. Call 414-332-1181.

The world premiere of **"Hero,"** a new musical by Aaron Thielen and Michael Mahler, runs through Aug. 19 at The Marriott Theatre, 10 Marriott Drive, Lincolnshire, Ill. Call 847-634-0200.

Mrs. Fun performs 6-9 p.m. at Hubbard Park as part of Shorewood's free Summer Concert Series.

JUNE 28, THURSDAY

Jazz in the Park presents **D'Calleson** in Cathedral Square Park, 825 N. Jefferson, at 6 p.m.



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