



October 18, 2012 | Vol. 3, No. 25

Record number of LGBT candidates seeking office

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

There's an easy bet on Nov. 6 – the majority of members elected to the 113th Congress will be male, Caucasian, Christian and heterosexual. That's the way it's always been, though in recent decades there have been changes in the demographics on Capitol Hill.

Still, this year, a record number of women have campaigned for federal elected office. And the same can be said of LGBT candidates for Congress – there are an unprecedented nine out candidates for federal office in the general election.

One of them, Democratic U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin, is running for the U.S. Senate in Wisconsin. She faces former Gov. Tommy Thompson in a close contest.

Eight other candidates are running in the general election for the U.S. House, including Democrat Mark Pocan of Wisconsin.

Currently there are no out members of the Senate and four out members of the House – Baldwin, Jared Polis, David Cicilline and Barney Frank, the Democratic titan from Massachusetts who is retiring after serving 16 terms in Congress.

Frank made history in 1987 when he came out to the Boston Globe, saying, "I don't think my sex life is relevant to my job, but on the other hand I don't want to leave the impression that I'm embarrassed about my life."

The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund, founded 21 years ago to elect LGBT candidates, is looking to Baldwin to make history and become the first openly gay person elected to the Senate; to Kyrsten Sinema to become the first openly bisexual person elected to the House; and to Mark Takano to become the first openly gay Asian-American elected to the House.

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Photo: AP/Collage: Laura Gronck

Frightful fun at local haunts

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Ghostly lore part of local heritage

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Wisconsin folklorist Robert Gard once proclaimed the Badger State to be one of the most haunted in the nation – and Milwaukee its most haunted city. But if you want to be treated to a visitation, you'll need to know

the spirits' favorite haunts. Here are some of the best-known hot spots – or cold spots, rather – for catching glimpses of Wisconsin's active ghost community.

MILWAUKEE

The 138-acre Lake Park on Milwaukee's East Side is home

to several haunted locations. The **North Point Lighthouse** and **Keeper's Quarters**, which opened in 1855 and once the tallest lighthouse on the Great Lakes, has reportedly been home to the ghosts of several children. There also have been reports of unfriendly laughter, cold spots

and the feeling of not being welcome.

The same manifestations have been reported at the nearby **Lion Bridges**, which span several gorges adjacent to the lighthouse. The children have been reported seen standing as senti-

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Endorsement: Forward with Obama-Biden, Page 10

News with a twist

WIGWAG

By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg

BUTT BONG OR BUST?

A University of Tennessee student is alleging an invasion of privacy after the Knoxville police released a report stating that he suffered poisoning from a wine enema. He's also saying the reports are false, as are insinuations that he's gay. Broughton says as a Christian he would never desecrate his body in such a way. Rather, he said, he consumed a six-pack of beer on an empty stomach and then played a wine-drinking game. When he passed out, his frat brothers hoisted him by his belt to take him to the hospital — and that's how he injured his private area, he said. But police say they have proof Alexander Broughton sought emergency treatment after a butt bong.

SEEKING JUSTICE

A criminal justice professor is being sued by a former student who says the Corinthian College educator discriminated based on sexual orientation. Denise Grecco was teaching a course on women in the criminal justice system when she allegedly

repeatedly referred to students as “dykes” and refused to approve other professors’ nomination of a student as a “distinguished graduate” because of her sexual orientation.

FATHER OF THE BRIDE

A flamboyant Hong Kong tycoon has offered \$65 million to any man who can woo his daughter away from her lesbian partner. Cecil Chao offered the marriage bounty after learning that his daughter, Gigi Chao, had eloped with her partner to France. Gigi said her father means well, “he just has a very interesting way of expressing his fatherly love.”

CELEBRITY SALUTE

Ellen DeGeneres collects the Mark Twain Prize for American Humor on Oct. 22 at the Kennedy Center. She'll be saluted — and roasted — by Kristin Chenoweth, Steve Harvey, Sean Hayes, Jimmy Kimmel, John Krasinski, Jason Mraz, Lily Tomlin and others.



For those who don't have the \$1,000-plus for a ticket: you can see DeGeneres collect her prize when PBS broadcasts the gala on Oct. 30.

A SUNNY FUTURE

Sam Champion, 51, the weather anchor for “Good Morning America,” announced plans to marry longtime boyfriend Rubem Robierb later this year. The weatherman and the Brazilian-born photographer plan to celebrate their nuptials on New Year's Eve in Miami, Champion told The New York Times. Champion's wedding announcement was included in a story about MSNBC anchor Thomas Roberts' wedding to Patrick Abner on Sept. 29 in New York.

BETTER WITH AGE

Cheese lovers who sampled 40-year-old cheddar cheese said they loved it, despite the fact that it was older than some of them. One couple drove from Minneapolis for the tasting at Wisconsin Cheese Mart in Milwaukee. Store owner Ken McNulty bought 10 pounds from Z's Cheese Shoppe

in Oconto. The owner of that shop said he'd found the cheese, which had been forgotten about for years, in a walk-in cooler this spring. At \$10 an ounce, McNulty sold out in the first half hour.

FOR SUGAR SEEKERS

If you're looking for a sugar daddy, New York is where you want to be. It's also the best city if you're a sugar daddy looking for a suitable companion with whom to share your largesse. A survey by SeekingArrangement.com, the world's largest sugar dating website, found that the Big Apple tops the heap of both the “Top 10 Gay Sugar Daddy Cities” and the “Top 10 Gay Sugar Baby Cities.” The website surveyed over 256,000 member profiles to find the winners, which also included Chicago, Los Angeles, Houston, Dallas and Las Vegas.

DEAR MINNESOTANS

The woman who pens Dear Abby has added her voice to those opposing a constitutional amendment that would outlaw marriage equality in Minnesota. Jeanne Phillips sent out a fundrais-



PHOTO: COURTESY

Jeanne Phillips.

ing letter on behalf of the pro-gay group Minnesotans United for All Families asking Minnesotans to oppose the amendment and donate to the group fighting it. Phillips writes the popular advice column that was started by her mother Pauline Phillips. The elder Phillips, now 94, was an early equality supporter.

RED SCARE

Two dozen masked men stormed one of Moscow's most popular gay bars and beat patrons — most of them women — with fists and bottles. More than 10 people were injured, including three women and a man hospitalized after the attack, which coincided with a “Coming Out Day” party at 7freedays.



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19 deaths from intimate partner violence in 2011

From WiG reports

The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center will observe Domestic Violence Awareness Month with a candlelight vigil in honor of LGBTQ survivors of intimate partner violence at 7 p.m. on Oct. 23 in the courtyard outside the center, 1110 N. Market Street.

The center operates Milwaukee's Anti-Violence Program (AVP), which launched in 2001 to provide services to LGBT survivors of crimes, including intimate-partner violence (IPV), hate crimes or sexual assault. Services include counseling, case management and legal advocacy.

"LGBTQ people often face additional barriers and discrimination when seeking help after IPV," said Anne David, who manages the center's AVP and counseling services. "Stereotypes contribute to these barriers, making it difficult for victims and service providers to recognize and address IPV in same-sex relationships."

She added, "Violence in the LGBTQ community is often invisible not only to the IPV service community but among LGBTQ

communities, as well, which increases isolation and creates further barriers to victims of partner violence."

The Milwaukee AVP is a member of the National Coalition of Anti-Violence Programs, which recently released a study reporting that intimate-partner violence led to at least 19 deaths nationally in 2011.

The NCAVP paper – "Intimate Partner Violence in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, and HIV-Affected Communities in the United States" – collected statistics from anti-violence programs in 22 states. The programs participating in 2011 were in Arizona, California, Colorado, the District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont and Washington.

In 2010, the NCAVP reported six homicides associated with intimate-partner violence – a term the coalition members say is more appropriate than domestic violence.

The majority of IPV homicides in 2011 were men; the year before two-

thirds of the victims were women.

The report also showed that transgender survivors of intimate-partner violence often are turned away from support services and shelters.

"Transgender and gender non-conforming individuals of all gender vectors are frequently unable to access both shelter and other support services ... which are also sex-segregated," said Michael Munson, executive director of Milwaukee's FORGE. "Unfortunately, 'sex-segregated' translates to 'sex-excluded,' resulting in trans survivors being at increased risk of continued/recurring violence and also dramatically impairing longer-term healing due to lack of core support services."

Other findings in the NCAVP report include:

- People under 30 were almost two times as likely to experience intimate-partner violence.
- People of color under 30 were nearly four times as likely to experience physical violence.
- Sixty-one percent of IPV survivors in 2011 reported being denied access to shelter, an increase from 44 percent in 2010.

Shelters often turn away trans-gender victims.

• Overall, the number of reports received by AVPs in 2011 was down 22 percent to 3,930. This was largely due to a 42.7 percent decrease in reports to the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center that can't be attributed to a decline in violence but because the center lost funding and staff for its program.

Terra Slavin at the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center said, "We need legislation such as the reauthorization of an LGBTQ-inclusive Violence Against Women Act that will help ensure that all people experiencing intimate-partner violence ... receive access to life-saving support and services."

Some other recommendations from the NCAVP:

- Fund intimate-partner violence prevention initiatives, particularly

for youth and young adults.

- Support LGBT training and technical assistance programs to increase the cultural competency of all victim service providers.

- Increase government funding for LGBT specific anti-violence programs.

About a week before the release of the NCAVP report and at the start of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, researchers with the LGBT-focused Williams Institute in Los Angeles published a journal paper on intimate-partner violence.

Naomi G. Goldberg and Ilan H. Meyer reported:

- Bisexual women were at elevated risks of experiencing intimate-partner violence compared with other women.

- In 95 percent of intimate-partner violence incidents reported by bisexual women, the perpetrator was a male.

- Gay men had elevated risk of experiencing intimate partner violence compared with other men. About 97 percent of the annual incidents of intimate partner violence occurring to male victims involved a male perpetrator.

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New laws put transgender voting rights at risk

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

LGBT groups say new, stricter voter ID laws in some states – and even confusion about what laws are enforceable on Nov. 6 – threaten the rights of thousands of transgender voters.

“New voter ID laws have created costly barriers to voting for many trans people,” said Mara Keisling, executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality. “And much worse, the debate about voter ID laws has made even the idea of voting harder, so many of us may feel discouraged from even trying to vote on Election Day. Our message is: Don’t let them scare you into giving up your vote.”

To minimize disenfranchisement, the National Center for Transgender Equality and GLAAD in mid-October released a series of public service announcements advising transgender people on how they can protect their right to vote on Election Day.

The announcements feature Keisling, writer and advocate Janet Mock, actress Laverne Cox, performance artist Ignacio Rivera, Charles Meins and poet Kit Yan. They are part of a nationwide “Voting While Trans” campaign to raise awareness about suppression of the transgender vote.

GLAAD and NCTE urge transgender people to verify whether their voter registration information matches the name and address on their identification and to consult NCTE’s “Voting While Trans” resources to find out how to protect their rights.

Getting accurate identification is an old challenge for many transgender people.

Some states have addressed the problem by modernizing laws on updating driver’s licenses. Most recently, Hawaii, encouraged by the ACLU and Equal-

ity Hawaii, made available a form intended to simplify the process of correcting gender identity on identification, including driver’s licenses.

But passage of new voter ID laws and stricter requirements may suppress the transgender vote, according to the Williams Institute at UCLA, which estimates that as many as 25,000 transgender people could be denied access to the polls as a result of revised election laws.

The institute, in an analysis released earlier this year, found that 41 percent of transgender citizens who have transitioned reported not having an updated driver’s license, and 74 percent lack an updated U.S. passport.

Moreover, 27 percent of transgender citizens who have transitioned reported they had no identity documents or records that list their current gender. Transgender people of color, youth, students, those with low incomes, and those with disabilities are likely to be disproportionately impacted, the institute concluded.

“The consequences of these laws for transgender voters should not be overlooked,” said the study’s author, Jody L. Herman.

Herndon Graddick, president of GLAAD, said, “Every day, countless transgender Americans face challenges trying to secure IDs that reflect their true identity, and as a result, experience hardships in fundamental freedoms including the right to vote.”

Meanwhile, LGBT groups are working with other civil rights organizations to guarantee that all eligible voters – including transgender people, people of color, the elderly and college students – can cast ballots in an election to decide who represents them in federal, state and local offices.

Photo IDs are required

in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Kansas, Mississippi, New Hampshire and Tennessee and requested in Florida, Hawaii, Idaho, Louisiana, Michigan and South Dakota. Enforcement of relatively new photo ID laws is on hold by court orders for the Nov. 6 election in Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas and Wisconsin.

The Koch-funded American Legislative Exchange Council, in concert with conservative state legislators, drove sponsorship of the stricter voter ID measures – 62 such bills were introduced in 37 states in

‘Our message is: Don’t let them scare you into giving up your vote.’

2011 and 2012 and 10 states, including Wisconsin, passed such legislation.

Keisling said the legislatures enacted the bills “attempting to solve a fake problem.”



PHOTO: NCEJ

Mara Keisling, the executive director of the National Center for Transgender Equality.



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ELECTION GAZE

By Lisa Neff



PARTISAN PLANKS

Activists in both major parties lobbied for equality statements in the national platforms.

In the end, the GOP and the Democrats delivered dramatically different platforms to convention delegates.

The GOP platform endorses amending the U.S. Constitution to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman, affirms the need to defend the anti-gay Defense of Marriage Act and implies that lifting the ban against openly gay service-members is a social experiment.

The Democrats' platform fully supports LGBT equality, including legalizing same-sex marriage. The plank says, "We support marriage equality and the movement to secure equal treatment under law for same-sex couples. We also support the freedom of churches and religious entities to decide how to administer marriage as a religious sacrament without government interference."

WEDDING MARCH

Voters in the United States are deciding 185 ballot questions in the general election. Some votes will be non-binding. Some votes will change lives – for better or worse.

In four states, marriage

equality is on the ballot.

In Minnesota, voters face a familiar issue – deciding whether to approve a constitutional amendment defining marriage as the union of a man and a woman. Voters in 28 states before Minnesota have faced similar proposed amendments – they always pass, though in Arizona it took two attempts.

In Maryland and Washington, voters are deciding whether to keep the marriage equality laws passed by their legislators and signed by their governors earlier this year.

In Maine, voters are deciding whether to legalize gay marriage. Voters revoked marriage equality in 2009.

Polls show tight, fluid races in each state as ads air in heavier rotation and volunteers amass for get-out-the-vote efforts.



STILL SWINGING

The battleground is shrinking as the presidential candidates – and their parties – lead the charge for 270 Electoral College votes. On Oct. 10, with four weeks to go to Election Day, analysis had nine states still in play – Ohio, Florida, Nevada, Colorado, Iowa, Virginia, North Carolina, New Hampshire and Wisconsin.



Florida remains one of the most important swing states in the race for the presidency.

These states are seeing the candidates, the campaign advertising money and the Super PAC dollars.

Meanwhile, voting rights activists are taking critical looks at polling procedures and registration rolls, especially in Florida and Ohio – two states not immune to election controversy.

GOT HIS BACK

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBT civil rights group, endorsed Barack Obama and Joe Biden for re-election long before Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan became the GOP nominees.

Obama-Biden has the obvious backing of the National Stonewall Democrats while Romney-Ryan has the support of GOProud, an unapologetic gay GOP group.

But as WiG went to press, Log Cabin Republicans, the nation's largest and best-known gay GOP group, had yet make an endorsement for president. LCR had sought an

October meeting with the Romney-Ryan campaign to see if it could get the nominees to at least support passage of the federal Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

IN THE BALANCE

Some congressional math: There are 33 races for the U.S. Senate. The Democrats have nine safe seats, four likely seats and four leaning seats.

The Republicans have five safe seats, one likely seat, one leaning seat.

Plus there's one safe independent seat and another leaning that direction.

So, it may be all about the statistical tossups in Nevada, Montana, North Dakota, Indiana, Massachusetts and, yes, Wisconsin, where Democrat Tammy Baldwin is battling Republican Tommy Thompson.

In the House, Roll Call identifies 27 tossup races.

The Democrats have 159 safe seats, nine likely seats and 15 leaning seats.

The Republicans have 198 safe seats, 17 likely seats and 10 leaning seats.

Might the election determine whether the tea party's brewed out?

Political analysts are closely watching three tight, Midwestern races – incumbent Steve King's race against Christie Vilsack in Iowa, Michele Bachmann's campaign against Jim Graves to keep her seat in Minnesota and incumbent Joe Walsh's fight against Tammy Duckworth in Illinois.

FOR THE RECORD

Some memorable quotes in the 2012 election cycle, which was long enough that WiG could fill a Bartlett's. The "47 percent" quote didn't fit.

"The higher a monkey climbs on the pole the more you can see his butt." – DAVID AXELROD, Obama campaign advisor, referring to Newt Gingrich's boost in the presidential primary polls.

"Corporations are people, my friend ... of course they are. Everything corporations earn ultimately goes to the people. Where do you think it goes? Whose pockets? Whose pockets? People's pockets. Human beings my friend." – MITT ROMNEY, in August 2011 in Iowa, responding to a heckler.

"Before we get started, let's all say 'Happy Birth-

day' to Elvis Presley today. We played you a little bit of 'Promised Land' when we pulled up. You can't do better than Elvis Presley."

– MICHELE BACHMANN, speaking at a campaign rally in South Carolina on the anniversary of Presley's death.

"Well, I don't think we should go to the moon. I think we should send some politicians up there."

– RON PAUL during a January 2012 debate in Florida.

"The third agency of government I would – I would do away with Education, the Commerce, and, let's see. I can't. The third one, I can't. Sorry. Oops."

– RICK PERRY, in a November 2011 debate, trying to recall what federal agencies he said he'd cut if he became president.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Texas Gov. Rick Perry launched a short-lived presidential bid.

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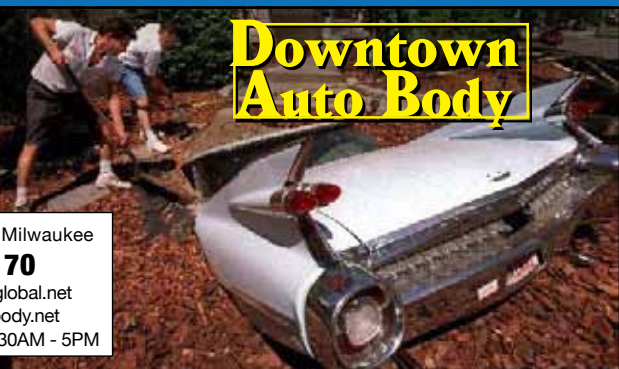
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San Fran supervisor wants to ban the butt

By Lisa Neff
Staff writer

A gay supervisor in a city long known for letting it all hang out wants to pass an ordinance curtailing public nudity in San Francisco.

The genesis of the campaign to cover up gay America's Eden? Concern, especially among its gay citizens, about the nudists gathering daily in noticeable numbers in every plaza in the Castro District.

In San Francisco, public nudity is allowed, with the exception of in parks and restaurants and on port property. But San Francisco Supervisor Scott Wiener recently proposed an ordinance to also bar nudity in city plazas, on sidewalks, streets and public transit. The measure would not bar nudity at parades and festivals.

Last year, Wiener passed legislation – nicknamed “the skid mark law” – that requires nudists to put a cloth under their bottoms before they sit on public property, particularly plaza benches.

The gay supervisor said that since then “the nudity situation in the Castro, rather than running its course, has gotten more extreme. Many in the community have reached the end of their rope.”

To his Facebook friends, Wiener said, “I

Gay official wants to end practice of letting it all hang out in his city's public areas.

know folks have a lot of different views about this – which I respect – but I believe this is the best course for keeping a sense of balance and mutual respect in our diverse neighborhoods. Public spaces are for everyone, and when a public space becomes dominated by one group, that's not OK.”

His proposal prompted hundreds of responses on Facebook – some of them serious discussions of the issue, many more endorsing or opposing the ordinance and a few mocking the matter and also the supervisor's last name.

“Really I don't see the point of sitting in a plaza playing checkers in the nude,” said Castro resident Joseph Verismo. “I like getting



PHOTO: NUDEWOOD

A “nude-in” in the Castro Commons in San Francisco last year.

naked, but really. Can we move on to post-naked San Fran?”

Said resident Jamie Marzell: “Naked lunch. That should just be a book, not something you see in the commons.”

Offering an opposing view, Castro resident Paul Harrelson said, “I moved here because San Francisco is the freest, grooviest place in the country – maybe the world. Why change it? Are people going to be hurt by my bare

butt?”

Wiener's ordinance, which would amend the city's police code, was referred to a committee on neighborhood services for consideration and a hearing, possibly in November.

If the measure passes, a violation would result in a \$100 fine for a first offense, a \$200 fine for a second offense within the same year and a \$500 fine for a third offense.

Coming Out Day draws allies from the closet

By Lisa Neff
Staff writer

With Americans coming out at increasingly younger ages in increasingly larger numbers, the focus on National Coming Out Day moved beyond the closet in 2012.

In addition to LGBT people who came out to friends and family, neighbors and co-workers on Oct. 11, LGBT voters came out for candidates.

Businesses came out for marriage equality. Politicians came out for LGBT constituents. Teachers came out for LGBT students.

Even TV characters came out – to challenge the Christian right.

National Coming Out Day marks the anniversary of the March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in October 1987. Four months after that milestone event, activists gathered in Virginia to discuss keeping the momentum and they arrived at establishing a national holiday to celebrate coming out. The holiday's symbol is a colorful Keith Haring image of a happy dude dancing out of the closet.

The Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBT civil rights group, has long been the highest profile promoter of National Coming Out Day.

This year, with the presidential election just weeks away, HRC partnered with Rock the Vote for NCOD and encouraged people to “Come out. Vote.”

Reciprocating politicians promoted the holiday – “On National Coming Out Day we

recommit to protecting & guaranteeing the rights of #LGBT individuals & all members of our society,” tweeted U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee, D-Calif.

Meanwhile, in another arena, Outsports celebrated athletes who came out in the past year, including boxer Orlando Cruz, rugby player Thomas Boswell, former football player Wade Davis, soccer player Meghan Rapinoe, gymnast Josh Dixon, poker player Jason Somerville, wrestler Stephany Lee and basketball player Seimone Augustus.

Celebrities who came out this past year – Matt Bomer, Jim Parsons, Anderson Cooper, Sam Champion, Mika and Frank Ocean – were trumpeted on NCOD at a Hollywood luncheon amid speculations about the next big name.

The day before NCOD – and a week after Mitt Romney declared in a debate that he'd eliminate federal taxpayer support for Big Bird, Jim Lehrer and PBS – the gay creator of the beloved yellow “Sesame Street” star talked about his partner. The Daily Beast profiled Christopher Lyall, who created Big Bird with his partner of nearly 50 years, the late Kermit Love.


On television, “The New Normal” came out – in good humor – against One Million Moms, the American Family Association affiliate that has called for a boycott of the show because it features a gay family.

And, in the corporate arena, Nordstrom, Inc. timed its endorsement of marriage equality for National Coming Out Day.

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{ Editorial }

Forward with Obama

Barack Obama's message of hope got knocked about, battered by the hard realities of war – two of them, started by another president – and the most severe economic troubles since the Great Depression.

Seizing on that, Mitt Romney and Paul Ryan have asked: Are you better off than you were four years ago? Interesting that the Greedy Old Party isn't asking if America as a nation is better off.

But to answer their question: Yes, we are better off. And no, we don't suffer amnesia. We remember the mess George W. Bush left behind. We aren't fully healed from eight years under No. 43's reckless reign and the Obama administration didn't do all we expected or desired, but we are on the mend.

The stimulus spending likely averted catastrophe. One war is over and another is drawing down. "Obamacare," while not the universal health care we want and need, may still prove to be one of the most important bills passed in decades. Two brilliant women took seats on the Supreme Court. And progress on equality for LGBT Americans? Consider: In four years: "Don't ask, don't tell" is dead. Hate crimes reform is passed. The Defense of Marriage Act is not being defended. A task force is battling school bullying. A new rule requires hospitals to recognize same-sex partners of patients. Family and Medical Leave is guaranteed to include same-sex households. The ban against HIV-positive travelers to the U.S. is lifted. The Social Security Administration's barrier to transgender Americans receiving accurate passports is gone. HUD bans bias based on gender identity and sexual orientation. Gay rights are seen as human rights at the State Department.

How far back might we fall with Romney and Ryan in the White House?

Ryan has a nearly perfect anti-gay record and shows no sign he even thinks of LGBT people as part of his America. He likes to talk about how vital Medicare and Social Security were to his family – how he and his mom went to college on Social Security survivor benefits. But he cares nothing for the lesbian who buries her partner of 50 years and then is denied those same survivor benefits.

Romney? Who knows what the real Romney thinks about health care, choice, immigration or LGBT equality. But the monster Romney that was built by the Christian right to run for president wants to amend the U.S. Constitution to brand gays as second-class citizens. He opposes civil unions and workplace protections for LGBT people and disagrees with lifting "don't ask, don't tell." He's mocked gay families and anti-bullying efforts, donated to anti-gay campaigns, pledged to create a commission to investigate rights groups and courted the far right.

In the broader picture, Romney shows no understanding of Americans who bank on Main Street rather than in the Caymans or Switzerland. He's shown only disdain for those who may not have the cash to cushion any bank account. He wants to run the United States of America like Bain Capital, which means the rich get richer, the jobs get out-sourced and the workers get the shaft.

Romney and Ryan. Their party pledged to put up obstacles to the president's program on Nov. 5, 2008, the day after he was elected. The GOP clearly didn't want us to get to November 2012, look back and say we're better off than we were four years ago. But we are.

Now, forward, with Barack Obama and Joe Biden.

BY THE NUMBERS

Total number of Wisconsin registered voters in recent elections

3,461,683 2012

3,419,127 2010

3,502,196 2008

Wisconsin voter turnout by election years

69.2% 2008

72.9% 2004

67.0% 2000

45.7% 1996

SOURCE: WISCONSIN GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY BOARD

{ Voter information }

ELECTION DATES TO REMEMBER

Oct. 22: Early voting, known as in-person absentee voting in the state, begins at your local municipal clerk's office and continues through Nov. 2. In Milwaukee, early voting is available 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m. on Mondays through Fridays at the Municipal Building, 841 N. Broadway. Early voting also is available 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on Saturday, Oct. 27, and Sunday, Oct. 28.

Voters who need to register and/or make changes to their current registration must use the Broadway entrance.

If you apply for an absentee ballot in your municipal clerk's office, you must vote immediately, seal your ballot in the proper envelope and return it to a member of the clerk's staff. No ballots may be taken from the clerk's office.

Nov. 1: Last day to request absentee ballots by mail (by 5 p.m.).

Nov. 6: General and presidential election.

NO PHOTO ID REQUIRED FOR VOTING – YET

Two different judges, on March 6 and on March 12, issued injunctions preventing

the Government Accountability Board from enforcing the photo ID requirements enacted by Republicans in 2011. The Wisconsin Department of Justice has appealed those injunctions, and the law is on hold pending a ruling.

WHERE TO REGISTER AND VOTE

Look up your voter registration and polling place at <https://vpa.wi.gov/>.

REGISTER TO VOTE ONLINE


Online voter registration is at <https://vpa.wi.gov/OnlineRegistration/Default.aspx>.

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CEO/PRINCIPAL

Leonard Sobczak

**PUBLISHER/
EDITOR IN CHIEF**

Louis Weisberg
lweisberg@wisconsin-gazette.com

NATIONAL NEWS EDITOR

Lisa Neff
lmneff@wisconsin-gazette.com

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Laura Gronek, Maureen M. Kane

SALES REP

Mike Reynolds
mreynolds@wisconsin-gazette.com

**NATIONAL
ADVERTISING**

Rivendell Media, 212-242-6863

ENTERTAINMENT

Gregg Shapiro
gshapiro@wisconsin-gazette.com

**DISTRIBUTION
MANAGER**

Robert Wright
rwright@wisconsin-gazette.com

OFFICE ASSISTANT

Anita Gielow

CONTRIBUTORS

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

ON THE RECORD

“

“We have an opportunity to send Barack Obama back to Chicago – or Kenya.”

– JASON THOMPSON, son of Republican U.S. Senate candidate Tommy Thompson, addressing a Kenosha County brunch on Oct. 14.

“Some girls rape easy.”

– Wisconsin state REP. ROGER RIVARD of Rice Lake restating advice his father gave him. The quote has come back to haunt his current campaign.

“I started crying. I almost died – and that’s not an over-exaggeration. That’s a fact.”

– ROSIE O’DONNELL telling People magazine about her reaction to learning she’d suffered a heart attack.

“Sam is what nature intended him to be.”

– Actress SALLY FIELD referring to her gay son Sam Grisman in accepting the Human Rights Campaign’s Ally Award.

“I just think employment is really important right now. So, as of now, Mitt Romney. As of now.”

– LINDSAY LOHAN announcing her intention to vote for Mitt Romney for president. There is no evidence that drugs or alcohol were a factor in her decision.

“I don’t believe we ought to be discriminating against people for their private lives. I’m a businessman. When you walk in the door, if you’re able to do the job and you’re focused on your job, that’s all that’s important”

– U.S. Rep. SCOTT TIPTON, R-Colo., explaining why he’s broken with his party and supports the Employment Non-Discrimination Act.

“Brutal summer heat yields to seasonable temps, just as election looms. Is it real, or rigged data from pro-Obama Weather Service?”

– Democratic operative DAVID AXLEROD spoofing Republican claims that a positive recent jobs report was rigged by supporters of the president.

“For anyone listening right now, know that you are not alone and that it’s OK to feel the way that you do. Life is very short. Know that you are loved, appreciated, and respected by more people than you realize. It really does get better.”

– AARON ROGERS, a radio DJ at Madison’s Z-104, coming out to his listeners on National Coming Out Day.

“It is our belief that our gay and lesbian employees are entitled to the same rights and protections marriage provides under the law as our other employees. We also believe supporting freedom to marry will help us create a more attractive and inclusive workplace for our current and prospective employees.”

– BLAKE NORDSTROM announcing his support for marriage equality in a memo sent out to Nordstrom’s employees.

”

Coming out and reading up

Opinion
JAMAKAYA

Oct. 11 was National Coming Out Day and the whole month is designated LGBT History Month. Join me in celebrating!

In the immortal words of Rob Eichman, who wrote the first and best book about the subject: Coming out is an act of love. It shows you love yourself enough to be honest with others about who you are. It enhances others’ love and understanding of you and gives them the opportunity – if they choose to take it, and most do – to demonstrate their unconditional love for you.

Coming out is an act of courage. It isn’t always easy. You have to be prepared to answer personal and challenging questions. You have to be willing to endure the consequences, which can sometimes include ridicule or rejection. You have to be

ready for everything.

Coming out is an act of defiance. Although it’s changing, social conditioning continues to promote the classic pink-blue/girl-boy heterosexual dichotomy. It’s strange realizing you tend more toward lavender or polka-dots or glitter. Once you work it out, shout it out, and tell others to get over it.

Coming out is an act of pride. It means the end of hiding and pretenses and the beginning of self-respect. You feel good about yourself and set an example for others. You join a community of people who have traversed the same path and come out stronger and wiser.

Coming out is revolutionary. Polls show that folks with friends and loved ones who are gay are more likely to support their right to equality under the law. Homophobes are wrong. We can’t “recruit” people into being gay, but we do have the power to recruit allies when we are honest about who

we are. With these allies, we are beginning to change the world.

If you haven’t done so yet, come out to someone in your family, workplace or neighborhood. You’ll feel great and the world will be a better place because of it.

For LGBT History Month, I recommend reading “Flagrant Conduct: The Story of Lawrence v. Kansas” by Dale Carpenter.

“Flagrant Conduct” is a fascinating account of the U.S. Supreme Court case that found the Texas sodomy statute unconstitutional in 2003. The court declared that the law was a violation of the due process rights of the plaintiffs. It essentially voided criminal sanctions against consensual homosexual relations that remained a huge impediment to our social and legal equality.

The story has many interesting, ironic dimensions. The two men arrested for violating the law never engaged in sexual relations. Testimony

by the cops called to the scene differed drastically. The original Houston prosecutor assisted the defense by agreeing to a fine larger than that initially imposed to meet a procedural requirement for the right to appeal.

The district attorney who bungled the state’s argument at the Supreme Court was a “family values” guy who later resigned in disgrace after admitting an extra-marital affair. The attorney who successfully argued the case had been a closeted clerk for Justice Lewis Powell who, in 1986, voted in support of Georgia’s sodomy law.

Reading the Lawrence v. Texas ruling, Justice Anthony Kennedy stated: “The petitioners are entitled to respect for their private lives. The state cannot demean their existence or control their destiny by making their private sexual conduct a crime.”

Observers in the court wept. You may too as the significance of this case hits home.

Nothing left to hide for gay boxer

Opinion
TIM DAHLBERG

For more years than he wanted to count, Orlando Cruz kept it a secret as best he could. He thought he had no choice, because of who he is and what he does.

Cruz is a fighter, and a pretty good one at that. He won 179 amateur bouts and represented Puerto Rico in the 2000 Olympics. By the time this year is over, he hopes to hold a piece of the world title at 126 pounds.

But his legacy won’t be defined with wins and losses, or gaudy green belts. Cruz made sure of that last week by saying words no professional boxer had ever dared utter before.

“I have always been, and always will be, a proud gay man,” Cruz said.

The words came easy, because for Cruz it was way past time. He was tired of hiding who he was,

tired of trying to pretend he was something else.

He came out to the world, and to his next opponent and the one after that. Then he held his breath and waited to see just how far society has really come.

It didn’t take long to get an answer.

The best fighter in Puerto Rico, Miguel Cotto, reached out to offer encouragement and support to his former Olympic teammate. Puerto Rican singer Ricky Martin – who came out himself two years ago – sent him a text offering the same.

And the rest of the boxing world more or less just yawned.

“People say, ‘It’s OK, Orlando, don’t worry,’” Cruz said in a phone conversation from Puerto Rico. “They tell me, ‘It’s your life and we support you.’”

If boxing can live with a gay fighter, could the NFL, Major League Baseball or the NBA be next?

Not likely, because there is still a stigma in the U.S.

against homosexuality in major sports played by males. Cruz will have to deal with his own issues after coming out, but he doesn’t have teammates he has to win over in the locker room.

That doesn’t minimize what Cruz did, or the courage it took to do it. The 31-year-old has been fighting since he was a kid, but this is one fight he couldn’t take on alone.

He spoke to psychologists, talked with his family. They were all supportive, but in the end the decision was his and his alone to make.

Cruz said he won’t respond to any slurs, and isn’t concerned what his opponent thinks or says. He’s the No. 4 ranked featherweight by the WBO and believes he is good enough to win a world title and, should he win his next fight, would be in line for a shot at the interim WBO belt.

“I don’t care if the other guy is homophobic,” Cruz said. “My focus and concentration will always be on winning the fight.”



PHOTO: EMC EVENTS:

Orlando Cruz

He has already become a champion of gay rights activists, who cheered when he came out. And he hopes that kids who are bullied will see what he did and understand that who you are or who you love shouldn’t be a barrier to what you can accomplish.

He’s happy with himself, pleased with what he’s done. Instead of dreading what might come next, Cruz feels a sense of liberation and relief.

For the first time in his life, he has nothing to hide.

Tim Dahlberg is an AP sports columnist.

REGIONAL BRIEFS *By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg*



PHOTO: SCOTT LONE

Honorary AIDS Walk chair Ryan Braun with AIDS Walk's Grand Walkers – those who raised at least \$1,000.

AIDS WALK PROCEEDS UP 23 PERCENT

Despite chilly weather, 2,255 people gathered at Milwaukee's lakefront on Oct. 6 for AIDS Walk Wisconsin 2012. According to AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, which presents and benefits from the annual event, walkers raised \$361,392 – 23 percent more than in 2011.

During the event's opening ceremonies, Brewers' all-star Ryan Braun, the honorary chair of this year's walk, offered a heartfelt

message about the importance of keeping the fight against AIDS strong.

"AIDS is impacting too many of our friends, family members and neighbors," he said. "I am excited and happy to be here today with you and to raise awareness and generate support to strengthen the fight against AIDS."

Braun noted his mother's support of AIDS fundraisers in southern California.

Artist Lon Michels, a long-term HIV survivor and the official artist of AIDS Walk 2012, also addressed the audience, detailing his



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REGIONAL BRIEFS

struggles with complications of the disease, including temporary blindness.

In addition to ARCW, other agencies benefiting from AIDS Walk Wisconsin include Common Ground Ministries Elena's House, One Heartland, Equality Wisconsin, Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, Sheboygan County AIDS Task Force and the Milwaukee Health Department.



PHOTO: DAVID LAUERSDORF

U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore addresses a town hall meeting at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center.

MOORE ADDRESSES MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

Addressing a town hall meeting at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore updated a crowd of about 100 attendees about pending federal legislation concerning LGBT civil rights.

Calling marriage equality a "human rights issue, not a religious issue," Moore said the federal ban on same-sex marriage amounted to "taxation without representation." Gay and lesbian couples pay the same taxes as their heterosexual counterparts, she said, but are denied the 1,138 federal benefits that come with marriage, including the right to share social security benefits with same-sex spouses.

Moore is the original co-sponsor of the Student Non-Discrimination Act, which would provide legal redress to youth who are bullied and harassed in schools.

"I'm in this fight as a gay ally as you continue to make a difference," Moore said. "As a child of the '60s, it's wonderful to be a part of a movement that dignifies everyone as you are."

REPUBLICAN WOULD INVESTIGATE MISCARRIAGES AS HOMICIDES

Republican Fond du Lac City Council President and state Senate candidate Rick Gudex has come out for a constitutional amendment that would recognize a fertilized egg as a living person. The result would be to outlaw abortion and most forms of birth control, stem cell research and in vitro fertilization. All abortions would be classified as forms of homicide, including abortions performed to terminate non-viable ectopic pregnancy (outside of the uterus) in order to save the

life of a woman.

In a radio interview, Gudex said he would consider ordering police investigations of miscarriages if elected.

"Rick Gudex's position to allow police investigations of miscarriage and a ban on birth control and all abortions highlights how out of touch Rick Gudex is with what matters to women and their families," said Tanya Atkinson, executive director of Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin. "Ninety-nine percent of all women rely on birth control at some point of their lives. Continued access to birth control is both an economic and personal rights issue that voters care about."

Vandals recently overturned campaign signs in Gudex's front yard. His Democratic opponent, state Sen. Jessica King, denounced the act, saying she "does not condone intimidation, trespassing or vandalism of any kind."

King acknowledged that she has received threats and intimidating letters at her home and legislative office.

LGBT YOUTH GROUP BARRED FROM PARADE

An LGBT youth group in Anoka, Minn., was told there was no room for them to walk in a Halloween parade on Oct. 27.

The city bills itself as the "Halloween Capital of the World" – it even trademarked the title. And a series of events take place celebrating the holiday, including a parade.

Justin's Gift, an LGBT youth group named for a bullied student who committed suicide, applied to march in the parade – in fairy tale costumes – but was denied access by a parade organizer. She wrote in a letter, "At this time we are unable to accept your application for the parade. We have reached our maximum for walking units."

If "Anoka" sounds familiar, it may not be because it is the so-called Halloween Capital of the World but instead because of a series of student suicides said to be tied to an anti-gay policy of the Anoka-Hennepin School District. The policy was changed after complaints, a lawsuit and an investigation by the U.S. Justice and Education departments.

VOTE ON IOWA JUSTICE SEEN AS TEST FOR GAY MARRIAGE

Iowa Supreme Court Justice David Wiggins isn't well known outside the legal community of his state, and even inside that group, he isn't particularly popular.

But the question of whether he should keep his job has become one of the most fiercely contested judicial issues on the Nov. 6 ballot because of what he symbolizes in the debate over gay marriage.

Three years ago, Wiggins and six colleagues ruled that the state's law banning gay marriage was unconstitutional. The decision triggered a furor among conservatives, who mounted an aggressive campaign a year later to defeat three of the justices up for retention.

Now, the future of Wiggins, whose term ends this year, is sparking an even bigger battle. The race is being watched not only as barometer of the public's changing attitude toward gay marriage and as a message for judges who might take up similar cases.



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COMMUNITY BRIEFS *By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg*



PHOTO: WWW.DERBYBABYTHEFILM.COM

BREWCITY BRUISERS SCREENING 'DERBY, BABY' DOC

Milwaukee's Brewcity Bruisers roller derby league hosts a screening of the documentary "Derby, Baby" on Oct. 19.

The screening takes place at Turner Hall Ballroom, 1040 N. Fourth St., Milwaukee.

The event, a screening and fundraising gala, features a silent auction, raffle, food and beverages. The showing of the film at 8 p.m., and a DJ follows. Doors open at 7 p.m.

Tickets cost \$10 and can be purchased at the Pabst and the Riverside Theater's box

offices from noon until 6:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, at the Turner Hall Ballroom the night of the event or online at www.pabsttheater.org.

For more about the film, go to www.derbybabythefilm.com.

For more about the nonprofit Brewcity Bruisers, go to www.brewcitybruisers.com.

LGBT CHAMBER ANNOUNCES CO-CHAIRS

The Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce recently announced the co-chairs of the organization's steering committee – Cris

Selin of Middleton and Leonard Sobczak of Milwaukee.

The steering committee is guiding the organization's strategic planning and outreach.

Selin is a broker associate for Stark Company Realtors in Madison. She previously served as the director of the division of management services at the Wisconsin Department of Regulation and Licensing under then-Gov. Jim Doyle.

Sobczak is an active member of the LGBT business community. He is the president/principal of Eastmore Real Estate and is the CEO/principal of the Milwaukee-based Wisconsin Gazette. He previously served on the board of the Cream City Business Association.

The newly formed organization includes gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and gay-allied businesses, professionals and individuals throughout the state of Wisconsin.

For more, go to www.wislgbtchamber.com.

LGBT GROUP: 'GAY IT FORWARD' AT HOMECOMING

Live Out Loud, a national nonprofit seeking to encourage role models for youth, wants LGBT people to return to their high schools for homecoming and talk about their lives.

The group says its Homecoming Project encourages successful LGBT adults to "gay it forward."

"Despite all the progress we've made in the LGBT community, students still struggle with lack of support. This program fills a very important gap at a critical time in their lives," said Leo Preziosi Jr., founder of Live Out Loud. "People in our community can make such an impact just by sharing their wisdom, skills and experience."

Deutsch, Inc., an ad agency, is doing pro bono work with Live Out Loud to promote the Homecoming Project. Photographer Martien Mulder and director Sorrel Ahfeld also are helping.

For more, go to www.liveoutloud.info.

CREAM CITY HOSTING EQUALITY LUNCHEON

The 2012 Equality Business Luncheon hosted by the Cream City Foundation takes place on Oct. 25 at the Harley-Davidson



BeOUTspoken is Equality Wisconsin's non-partisan get-out-the-vote effort, at www.beOUTspokenWI.org.

Museum, 400 W. Canal St., Milwaukee.

The event includes networking at 11:15 a.m., lunch at noon and a keynote address at 12:30 p.m.

The keynote speaker is Daniel B. Baer with the U.S. State Department.

Go to www.creamcityfoundation.org.

GROW GREAT WOMEN HEALTH FORUM ON OCT. 20

Grow Great Women, a project of Diverse & Resilient, hosts its fourth annual Lesbian & Bisexual Women's Health Forum on Oct. 20.

A full day is planned, including lunch.

The focus is community building and increased connections among women, as participants discuss health care, health disparities, reproductive justice and leadership among lesbian and bisexual women.

To register for the event, which takes place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., call 414-390-0444.

Diverse & Resilient is at 2439 N. Holton St., Milwaukee.

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Women's Voices Milwaukee hosts Halloween dance



PHOTO: COURTESY WVM

Women's Voices Milwaukee will perform at the gala.

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Women's Voices Milwaukee is inviting women to go "boo" and catch a beat at the Girls Ghostly Gala, a dance the group hopes to make a highlight on the fall social calendar.

The gala takes place on Oct. 27 at the Marian Center, 3211 S. Lake Drive, St. Francis, from 7 p.m. to midnight.

"This is one of the two major dances held each year in the lesbian community," said WVM president Liz Doan. "We're excited to have the opportunity to build it into the social event of the fall season."

A fall women's dance had been organized by Full Moon Productions and then, more recently, by Mary MacArthur in memory of Lynn Morgan, who died in 2008.

"One of Lynn's wishes was an activity that wasn't bar-focused for lesbian-identified women to have fun, be safe, and be themselves, and (she) left it to me to figure this out. Thus, I used her bequest seed money to startup the Halloween dance," MacArthur said.

This year's organizers plan a costume contest, prizes, a cash bar and treats for the event, which costs \$10 per person and supports WVM's mission to "entertain, inspire and heal through the power of choral music."

Doan said the group hopes to see women from around the state, as well as northeastern Illinois, attend the gala, which takes place in a gymnasium at a center that once housed an all-girls' Catholic school.

WiG caught up with Doan in mid-October, as plans were being finalized for the event.

WiG: How did WVM come to be the organizer of the gala?

Liz Doan: Women's Voices Milwaukee was asked to take over the organization of this dance from Mary MacArthur. ... Mary is a fan of WVM, knows several of our members and is aware of how we've been looking for ways to raise money to afford putting on a few concerts each year. She offered this

opportunity as a fundraiser and we jumped at the chance.

Will Women's Voices Milwaukee be performing?

Yes, we actually will. We have a special song we'll be singing, with Diane Bloom accompanying us on guitar. I can't tell you the song. People will have to come to the dance to hear us.

Is "The Monster Mash" on the playlist? What kind of dance steps should women be polishing?

We will definitely have "The Monster Mash" on the playlist. Chris Hill is our DJ, and she's done a wonderful job playing music for the monthly Ladies Night Out events held at Hot Water. As for dance steps, I say let those feet follow the beat and I'm sure the dancing will flow all through the night.

So, a women's dance taking place in the gym of a former all-girls Catholic high school. Do you think you'll see a lot of Catholic school-girl costumes?

You know, I hadn't thought about that. Thanks for the idea. One never knows.

There's a couple little ghostly stories of phantom nuns associated with the Marian Center. Have you heard them?

Personally, I don't think I've heard all of the stories. I might have heard one that had to do with their auditorium space for concerts. I guess if we're in their gym we should be safe. Unless there is a story about the gym I don't know about.

For more information, call Liz Doan at 414-364-4154 or email womensvoicesmilwaukee@gmail.com.

Diverse and Resilient is committed to the healthy development of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people in Wisconsin. We envision a state where we thrive & live satisfying lives.



Diverse and Resilient Youth

Services serves as a catalyst to help LGBT youth groups get started and continue to thrive by providing subcontracts to program partners, consultations, and leadership training and coaching. We promote health and prevent risks through programs and initiatives such as:

- **Youth HIV Prevention Programs** in four regions of Wisconsin that seeks to change community norms and reduce HIV risk among LGBT youth through small group interventions, social marketing, and community outreach.
- **Youth Health Institute** Biennial four-day leadership development workshop for LGBT youth and there adult allies with the emphasis on HIV prevention, mental health promotion, and prevention of tobacco and alcohol abuse.
- **Thinking Under the Influence** Milwaukee-based alcohol skills training program that seeks to increase knowledge about alcohol risks and to reduce binge drinking.
- **Youth Risk Behavior Survey** In concert with the Wisconsin Division of Public Health, analyze and report on the significant health disparities that exist for LGBT youth in Wisconsin.
- **Youth Development Specialist (YDS) Training and Consultations** Semi-annual two-day workshop that prepares and updates 20 adults who work with LGBT youth groups across Wisconsin as member groups of the Rainbow Alliance for Youth (RAY) network.
- **Dating Violence and Healthy Relationships** Statewide effort to foster healthy relationships among LGBT youth, alerting them to vulnerability to dating violence because of community social pressures and limited positive supports.



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Plymouth Church to become even more welcoming

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

For more than two decades, Milwaukee's Plymouth Church has been a welcoming and affirming place for LGBT people to worship. The church is affiliated with the United Church of Christ, perhaps the nation's most progressive Protestant denomination.

Located on the city's East Side, the church provides space for a number of community organizations, including several LGBT groups. Equality Wisconsin, SAGE Milwaukee and Festival City Singers have offices and meeting space on the premises.

But while the congregation is as welcoming as any to be found in Wisconsin, the building itself is not, according to pastor Andrew Warner. Designed by architect Alexander Eschweiler and completed in 1913, the church is a magnificent example of early 20th century Gothic architecture, but it offers minimal handicap access. And, except for the sanctuary, the building is divided into small spaces that discourage spontaneous conversations and a sense of openness and vitality.

The building's steep, narrow stairways are difficult for older people to navigate.

"We say, 'All are welcome,' but it isn't true," Warner said.

But the situation is about to change. Following a successful capital campaign last year called REACH – for "renovate, enhance and make accessible our church home" – Plymouth has begun a \$1.67 million renovation that will dramatically remodel 8,616 of the building's 35,628 square feet. Vince Micha, an architect with The Kubala Washatko Architects, has redesigned the space to make the church's interior more navigable, open and reflective of the congregation's core values.

"We want to physically embody the open and affirming ethos of the congregation," Warner said.

The church's most frequently used entrance is not through the sanctuary on Summit Avenue but rather a door on the north of the building at 2717 E. Hampshire St. The door leads into a tiny hallway where narrow stairs lead to other narrow hallways. The result is that the surrounding spaces – including the large dining room downstairs and upstairs offices – are cut-off from one another, concealing the building's many activities from each other rather than bringing them visually together to create a sense of shared community.



PHOTO: COURTESY

An artist's rendering of the new entrance to Plymouth Church on Milwaukee's East Side. A \$1.67 million renovation on the century-old building, which is home to several gay groups, is scheduled for completion next spring.

"The current entrance is kind of a choke point," Micha said. "It's never extended the arms of welcome. The building kind of frowns."

Eschweiler intended his Gothic design, built in what was then Milwaukee's outskirts, to evoke the sentimentality of a country English church, Warner explained. One of the famed architect's primary goals was to create a respite from the grit of the city, which was then at the height of industrialization.

The building's exterior and its sanctuary are stunning testaments to the craftsmanship of a century ago, built of materials that are now in such rare supply that they're prohibitively expensive. The sanctuary features opulent stained glass windows, a cypress ceiling and elaborate brass sconces.

But small, divided spaces are also a hallmark of architectural design from the era – an aesthetic that's sharply at odds with the open floor plans favored today. The space was further divided as the building grew. In 1915, a gym was constructed as a way of serving youth in the area and attracting them to attend church. The addition of the gym marked the beginning of the church's expansion into something of a neighborhood community center.

Classrooms were later built above

the gym, and in the 1940s an education wing, which currently houses a pre-school, was constructed on the campus' southeast corner.

The renovation now underway is the first of a three-phase project to reconfigure much of the church's interior space. Phase I focuses on the Hampshire Street entrance, which will be reconstructed as an open area that's wheelchair accessible, inviting and brings the building's activities together, said Kathryn Kamm, an architect and member of Plymouth Church who serves on the project's build committee. It will also offer passersby a literal window into the congregation's many activities, she said.

"Right now, for those walking by, (Plymouth) is just another dusty old East Side church," Kamm said. "This will make us stand out as a more active and vibrant church."

The redesign is based on feedback from congregants and partners of the church, who were asked what they liked and didn't like about the existing configuration.

Due to the building's architectural importance and its contribution to the historic streetscape, its exterior will remain as much intact as possible, Micha said. "We want to send a signal of activity and life," he said, "but not in an overstated,

overblown way – rather one that respects and celebrates the Eschweiler design."

The building will be rededicated on May 19, 2013, which is the 100th anniversary of the original building's completion. The Rev. J. Bennett Guess will be featured at the event. Like Warner, he is an out gay man.

While the plans for the renovation are impressive, equally impressive is the way the congregation and the surrounding community came together during tough economic times to raise the money needed, said Warner, Kamm and Micha. Much of the project's cost will be eaten up by ho-hum work such as moving utilities, asbestos abatement and working around the inevitable structural surprises lurking in the church's old walls – not exactly the sort of inspiring efforts that make people want to open their wallets.

Church officials began looking into the renovation in 2005, but the project went on hold after Lehman Brothers collapsed in 2008. In 2010, the church conducted a congregational meeting to reopen a dialogue about the project. Parishioners agreed with the need for the project but asked to delay the capital campaign for a year.

Then, in 2011, the entire sum for the project was either raised or

pledged within a matter of months. The strong response among donors was largely the result of the role that the church plays in the larger community.

The Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Johnson and Pabst LGBT Humanity Fund was among those supporters.

"In the communities of faith, I think Plymouth Church is a stellar example of walking the walk and talking the talk," said Joe Pabst, who founded the fund. "It exemplifies goodness. The church provided space for Equality Wisconsin and SAGE when both organizations were frankly in a pinch. I have great respect and admiration for people and an organization that would come through for people like this and go beyond their own community of parishioners."

After the renovation is complete, the church will have an even greater capacity to accommodate local groups as well as to host events and activities, Kamm said. And that's a prospect that the church will welcome with its arms more open than ever.

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'We're just a few weeks away from making history on both sides of the aisle'

STAKES from page one

Patrick Maloney, who is campaigning to unseat first-term Republican Nan Hayworth, would be the first gay man elected to Congress from New York.

Richard Tisei would be the third out gay Republican to serve in Congress, but the others came out – or were outed – after their elections.

Pocan, a heavy favorite, would take Baldwin's seat – and make Wisconsin's 2nd Congressional District the first in the nation to elect two openly gay reps in a row.

Polis and Cicilline, favored in their races, are seeking their third terms.

Nicole LeFavour, in probably the toughest race with a run against Republican incumbent Mike Simpson, would become the second openly lesbian member of the House.

"We're just a few weeks away from making history," said Chuck Wolfe, president of the Victory Fund, which endorsed all but LeFavour in the federal races. "For the first time ever, LGBT Americans could have an authentic voice in the U.S. Senate and a record-high number of openly LGBT House members on both sides of the aisle."

The Victory Fund, founded in 1991, has followed the



PHOTO: TAKANO FOR CONGRESS

Democrat Mark Takano is running for Congress in California.

lead of EMILY'S List, the donor network supporting pro-women candidates that helped propel Ann Richards to the Texas governor's office in 1990.

At the time of the founding, there were only 49 openly LGBT people holding elected office in the entire nation.

During the Victory Fund's first election season, in 1991, the group helped elect Sherry Harris to the Seattle City Council. By 1994, the rapidly growing fund helped elect 14 candidates and contributed

more than \$660,000 to campaigns.

The fund's revenue in 2011 was about \$5 million and, at the latest count, more than 500 out LGBT people hold elected office in the United States.

For the entire 2012 election cycle, the Victory Fund has endorsed a record 175 out candidates – eight for Congress, seven for legislative offices in 30 states and dozens more at the municipal, county, judicial and school board levels.

"Whether at the local,

LGBT officeholders are helping to add significant power to legislative fights.

state or national level, LGBT officeholders are helping to add significant power to legislative fights to win equality for all Americans. These candidates will make sure that progress continues, and that's why their victories this year are so important," Wolfe said.

Among those candidates: Fargo teacher Joshua Boschee, who is running for the North Dakota House; archi-

tect Mary Ellen Broderick, who is running for the New Mexico House; attorney Nena Cook, who is running for the Oregon Supreme Court; Judge Kay Floyd, who is running for the Oklahoma House; Dallas County Sheriff Lupe Valdez, who is running again; and Kevin Beckner, who is running for re-election to the Hillsborough County Commission in Florida.

'WEEKEND IN WISCONSIN' SUPPORTS BALDWIN

The Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund is inviting volunteers from around the country to work a "Weekend in Wisconsin" to support Tammy Baldwin's campaign for the U.S. Senate.

The initiative takes place on weekends until the Nov. 6 election.

Baldwin, a Democrat from the Madison area, made history as the first openly lesbian person elected to Congress. On Nov. 6, she could become the first openly gay or lesbian person elected to the U.S. Senate.

The Victory Fund, which exists to help elect LGBT candidates win elected office, said it will train volunteers and provide housing if needed.

The Victory Fund also is seeking volunteers to make phone calls to support the Baldwin campaign.

For more, go to victoryfund.org.

— L.N.



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PIONEERING COFFEE SINCE 1989

Freshman rep aims to change Milwaukee image

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

Assembly District 18 encompasses an economically struggling, relatively low-profile area on Milwaukee's North Side. It's not home to a wealthy population, important landmarks or major businesses and industry. Most of its residents are just getting by, and some are not even managing that.

Despite the district's humble status, when Tamara Grigsby decided to retire as its representative to deal with health problems, eight Democratic candidates entered the primary race to succeed her. But not even the large number of candidates inspired voters to show up at the polls. Turnout was a dismal 13 percent, perhaps reflecting the general sense of hopelessness felt by many inner city dwellers.

Still, one candidate generated a great deal of excitement. Evan Goyke, a 29-year-old assistant state public defender, received

37 percent of the vote by running a sophisticated and impassioned campaign that included not only knocking on hundreds of doors but also sending handwritten thank-you notes to everyone who answered.

"I worked harder," Goyke said.

His big win, coupled with his political pedigree, made him an instant rising star in Wisconsin's progressive movement. His parents are former state Sen. Gary Goyke and Nancy Rottier, who served as legislative liaison under former Gov. Jim Doyle. Both are active – and widely respected – in the state's progressive community.

It's not surprising that Goyke wound up in politics. He grew up with a bust of Robert Kennedy on the television set in the family's living room in Madison, he said. Family dinner conversations centered on progressive philosophy and politics.

At 18, Goyke attended the

Wisconsin Democratic Convention in Stevens Point. It was the year that Doyle, Tom Barrett and Kathleen Falk were vying for the party's gubernatorial nomination, and the experience convinced Goyke that he would some day run for office.

"That process of meeting (the candidates) and seeing the party's energy and its movement solidified my resolve to run," he said. "When I saw behind the curtain, I knew that was what I wanted to do."

But Goyke's path to the ballot was not a straight line. After graduating from St. John's University in Minnesota, he embarked on a four-month world tour with savings he'd accrued from part-time jobs. He began Marquette University Law School in 2006 and took a job as a public defender after graduation.

Living in the area and working in the public defender's office convinced him that people on the North Side

were in need. "I was exposed to what the real world is," Goyke said, "and it really changed my perspective."

Among his new experiences was being robbed at knife point on Wisconsin Avenue. While that might have discouraged most people from moving to the neighborhood, it only increased Goyke's resolve.

After graduation, he decided to make the area his home, believing he could influence change there by becoming part of the community. In effect, he incorporated the concepts of diversity and urban renewal into his personal life.

Last year, Goyke solidified his commitment to the area by purchasing a 5,500-square-foot Victorian home in Historic Concordia. The neighborhood is something of a mishmash that includes blighted streets of boarded-up homes as well as tidy blocks that are lovingly tended by area homeowners, neighborhood associations and churches.

For much of the past century, the trajectory of Historic Concordia has been straight down. The opulent Victorian homes where Milwaukee's beer barons once lived in luxury now stand in dusty desuetude, their gilded past barely visible.

"One of the things about this neighborhood is there's nowhere to go but up," Goyke said.

Goyke's home, which he shares with his girlfriend, a law student at Marquette, embodies the area's rich history and decline. Originally a single-family home, it was converted to a boarding house in the 1950s or '60s. Each of the bedrooms still has a doorbell and an individual gas hook-up.

A previous owner renovated the kitchen and built a four-car garage. But a lot of remodeling remains to restore the home's original grandeur and add modern functionality. Goyke estimates that he faces a decade-long project to get the building where he wants it to be. In the meantime, he has plunged into neighborhood life, volunteering with a



PHOTO: GOYKE FOR ASSEMBLY

Evan Goyke, right, speaks with a voter during his primary race.

local church to remove trash from the streets and trying to recruit new homeowners into the area.

His engagement in the life of the community brought him visibility that paid off at the polls. Goyke's Democratic rivals in AD 18 included three other whites, three African Americans, one Native American. Three of the candidates were women. But defying identity politics to some degree, Goyke, who is white, won a majority not only in the predominantly white wards of Washington Heights and Story Hill, but in 12 primarily African-American wards as well.

The diversity that he embraced in moving to the district more or less embraced him back.

As a freshman lawmaker in the minority party, Goyke acknowledges that his impact during the next legislative session will be muted, Goyke acknowledged. But he hopes that he and his newly elected freshmen progressive colleagues from Milwaukee – Mandela Barnes and Danny Reimer, both 25 – will bring new energy to the Democratic Party. All three, he said, are determined to improve the negative perceptions about Milwaukee at the Capitol.

"I really like the people I'm going to serve with in the Milwaukee caucus, and I think we're going to be so much more united than the city's representatives have been in the past," Goyke said.

High on Goyke's list of legislative priorities is changing the criminal justice system to reduce prison populations

and the harm that locking up large numbers of people for low-level crimes has on families and communities.

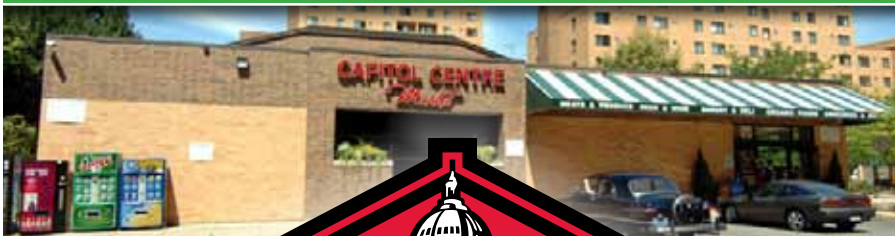
Grigsby was one of the Legislature's most committed public transportation advocates, and Goyke intends to take up that mantle. He'll also focus on public education, and he plans to introduce measures to support urban farming, including offering subsidies to urban farmers, he said. This would create new jobs in the city while making productive use of empty areas, he explained.

"I have a dozen pieces of legislation floating around in my head," he said. "Call me a wide-eyed optimist, but I think we can go pretty far. I don't think anyone should take office with the idea we aren't going to get anything done. Some of the ideas that came out on the campaign trail deserve to be heard."

One of Goyke's major goals will not be achieved at the Capitol but by reaching out to individuals in areas of the state where people have a distorted view of Milwaukee as a crime-ridden, rust-belt city. As someone who shares a cultural background with rural white Wisconsinites, he believes he can get through to them and change their views of his hometown.

"Part of my agenda is to rebrand Milwaukee," he said. "We're so easily the scapegoat and so easily put aside. I get to stand up as a fresh voice and say, 'You got it wrong. Just come to my house and meet my neighbors.'"

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Boo humbug!



A guide to Wisconsin's fright nights, horror houses, terror traps, zombie zaps

By Gregg Shapiro

Staff writer

Despite being gay since birth, I must admit that Halloween is not my favorite holiday. My husband Rick Karlin is happy to don a costume, drag or otherwise, at a moment's notice. He loves Halloween parades, trick or treating (but not tricking), Halloween parties and popcorn balls.

I usually sit out Halloween, cowering in the dark. But I know I'm in the minority when it comes to observing Halloween, the gay national holiday.

The following are a gnarled handful of suggestions for the month of October – and early November, too – for those Halloweenies out there.

Also visit hauntedwisconsin.com for more information.

For 20 consecutive years, **Fright Factory** (janeshville-hauntedhouse.com) has been called the premier haunted attraction in Janesville (following Paul Ryan's childhood home, of course). Located at 1405 Riverside, Fright Factory incorporates plenty of

scary devices, including flashing strobes, loud noises, fog machines, a variety of props, "cinematic gore and power tools," and, just for the heck of it, pitch darkness. Fright Factory wants to terrify you.

The "haunted adventure" known as **The Dark Side** (thedarksidehaunt.com), at Charlie Murphy's farm in Ixonia (aka Glacier Rock Farms) is a scream park, incorporating five haunts of horror, including Backwoods Revenge. The legend of Murphy's farm and the history of disappearances there could

be taken as a warning. Or it could just be an invitation to get the daylight scared out of you.

Stoughton's **The Haunted Barn** (the-haunted-barn.com), at the Triple T Ranch, was ranked the top fright in southwestern Wisconsin in 2010 and 2011. Like Murphy Farm, the Haunted Barn's history can be traced back to the 1800s, when unspeakable things occurred within its walls, or so the story goes. Regardless, the "happy family" cast of characters (zombies) currently inhabit-

ing the place – which features indoor haunt areas as well as outdoor trails, woods and a cemetery – promise a scream or two.

You might be shocked and horrified to discover that Jellystone Park in Fort Atkinson is the site of **Dr. Scary's Haunted House** (drscaryshauntedhouse.com), but it's true. Why be afraid of bears (Yogi Bear, Boo Boo and that big hairy gay guy over there), when you can experience this re-designed haunt, with more than 30 rooms, including 10 new and

10 re-purposed ones? From dungeons to mazes, the fun and fright never stops. Never!

Described as an "old school interactive theatrical haunt," **House of Bathory** (deadbydawn.com) in Manitowoc features a talented cast of actors and unusual themes. Take its new "Tribute to Stephen King" as proof. With King's vivid imagination as inspiration, you can be sure that the horrors will be both familiar and horrific. Can you say "Creepy Carrie"? Yikes!

Now in its 14th year, **Terror on Rural Street** (terroronruralstreet.com), a 17-room haunted house in Hartford – next to the Schauer Arts Center and Wisconsin Automotive Museum – combines live, costumed actors and animatronics for a hair-raising experience that threatens "to make you afraid to return home alone."

Claiming to be "Wisconsin's only truly haunted house," **The Mars Haunted House** (MarsHauntedHouse.com), located on the second story of a late-1800's Milwaukee building, delivers sets and actors poised to attack from every angle. If that's not intense enough to draw you in – or keep you away – the tight maze makes for perfect, virtually inescapable traps. Be afraid! Be very afraid!

Haunted Attraction Magazine voted **The Wisconsin Fear Grounds** (WisconsinFearGrounds.com), on the site of the Waukesha County Expo, the top haunted house in America in 2011. With three Victorian theme attractions, including Morgana the witch's Morgan Manor, Shadowlands and the basement-situated Morgana's Torment, no one is safe from

the horrors that abound. Consider yourself warned!

The Berlin Tannery (nightmarefactoryhaunt.com) in Berlin is the haunted home of the newly relocated **Nightmare Factory Haunt**. The massive 75,000-square-foot location has a history practically dating back to the birth of the nation and is said to be haunted not only by those who perished there in a 1920s fire, but also by victims of near-death experiences and hideous industrial accidents.

Who doesn't love a haunted cornfield? The **Meadowbrook Haunted Cornfield** (meadowbrookfun.com/hauntedcornfield.php) in West Bend begins with a bonfire and then escalates to almost an hour's worth of night terrors, consisting of lurking creatures, fog and shadows. What could be more pleasurable than to be stalked among the stalks?

There are zombies in Milwaukee! And I don't mean the people driving around with Romney-Ryan 2012 bumper stickers. Thankfully, training for how to deal with a zombie infestation is available at **Monster Mayhem Haunted Laser Tag** (listerfx.com). We're counting on you!

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Marquette University is considered one of Milwaukee's most haunted places

FRIGHT from page one

nels near the lion sculptures that front the bridges. Nothing in the archives of either location indicates who the ghostly kids might have been or why they haunt these areas.

Grant Park, in South Milwaukee, has its own spirits. The covered bridge that serves as gateway to the Seven Bridges Trail has been the scene of a number of suicides. Shimmering sparkles in the air, colorful lights in the adjacent woods, phantom voices and footsteps, screams from deep in the forest, and occasional sightings of something vaguely humanoid that resembles a praying mantis have come to characterize what the bridge inscription describes somewhat ominously as "the haunts of nature."

The Rave/Eagles Ballroom, 2401 W. Wisconsin Ave., wasn't always part of Milwaukee's music scene. It started life in 1926 as a social and athletic club with a pool in its basement. The pool was the scene of at least one confirmed drowning in 1927. The pool was drained long ago and today is hidden behind a locked door. Employees have reported the sound of girls' voices and a strong smell of chlorine coming from the area, as well as objects moving without provocation and other examples of a paranormal presence.

The Pfister Hotel, 424 E. Wisconsin Ave., is home to one of the city's most popular hauntings, with many guests reporting ghostly knocks on the wall and electrical appliances that seem to turn off for no reason. The ghost of founder Charles Pfister has been reported walking the halls and watching the lobby from the balcony, as if making sure his guests are being well taken care of.

Wauwatosa's Technology Innovation Center, 10470

Innovation Drive, has a history that reads like a horror movie script. The former home of the Muirdale Sanitarium for tuberculosis patients and later a nursing home for the mentally ill, the center sits atop an ancient Indian burial mound. It was a meeting place for local Satanists during the years it stood empty. Ghostly apparitions and voices that cry for help are not uncommon, especially on the third floor.

MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

For maximum paranormal presences, nothing tops Marquette University, founded in 1881 and considered one of Milwaukee's most haunted locations. **Johnston Hall**, Marquette's first building, was erected on a Mascouten tribe burial site, and the ghost of an angry Native American haunts the hall's lower levels. Several decades ago two Jesuit students committed suicide by leaping from one of the hall's fifth-floor balconies; today they are said to manifest as cold spots, footsteps, voices and two pale faces hovering outside fifth-floor windows.

Straz Tower, formerly the downtown YMCA, is home to "Whispering Willie," the spirit of a young boy who drowned in the Y's pool. His ghost appears to lone swimmers doing laps. He also plays such child-like tricks as unrolling toilet paper and turning lights on and off.

Coben Hall is home to a ghost of an artistic bent who enjoys stripping posters off dorm room walls. Its recent targets have been posters for the film "Twilight," indicating that this poltergeist has some level of taste.

Humphrey Hall, formerly Milwaukee Children's Hospital, has some of the campus' most active ghosts, all of them children who presumably died at the former facil-



PHOTO: KAY COLLINS/WIKIPEDIA

The ghosts of children have been sighted hanging around Milwaukee's Lion Bridges in Lake Park.

ity. An angry girl in a hospital gown has been spotted riding the elevators late at night. Ghostly laughter and crying of children can be heard throughout the building, and electronic devices turn themselves on and off. Desk receptionists have heard and seen children on security cameras playing near the rear entrance, where there was once a play area. But investigators responding to calls have never found any living children in the area.

OSHKOSH

When it was first built in 1883, the **Grand Opera House**, 100 High Ave., was an opulent setting that hosted vaudeville entertainers from Enrico Caruso to the Marx Brothers. Over time it fell into disrepair and became an X-rated movie theater. But then it was remodeled and reborn as the elegant live entertainment venue it is today. Throughout those years, the ghost of Percy Keene, who managed the theater from 1895 to his death

in 1967, is said to have watched over the property, often smiling down from the balcony and appearing in other unusual places. The spirit is rumored to have saved the life of at least one theater student working there, indicating that not all spirits are malicious.

The Paine Art Center and Gardens, 1410 Algoma Blvd., is housed in a former Tudor-style mansion built by lumber baron Nathan Paine for his wife Jessie Kimberley Paine. It was their second home, but construction ground to a halt when the Great Depression severely affected business for the Paine Lumber Co. The couple never moved in, instead deeding the property to the city in 1946 for use as a museum. Nathan died in 1947, Jessie in 1973. A male ghost – presumably Nathan or an earlier relative – is said to haunt the museum's second floor, while a female ghost thought to be Jessie is sometimes seen in the property's ornamental gardens.

BOO BAROMETER

Halloween mask sales have served as a barometer in past elections. Bill Clinton outsold Bob Dole 71 percent to 29 percent. George W. Bush outsold both Al Gore in 2000 and John Kerry in 2004. And Barack Obama outsold John McCain 60-40 percent in 2008.

As of Oct. 9, two major Halloween retailers were reporting that Obama masks were far more popular than Mitt Romney masks. Mask retailer BuyCostumes.com said Obama was up 30 percentage points over Romney. Another retailer, Spirit Halloween, said Obama was in the lead, with 69 percent of the sales.

In Wisconsin, Obama was way out in the lead. However, VP Joe Biden was trailing GOP running mate Paul Ryan. The sales figures were 70 percent Obama, 15 percent Romney, 9 percent Ryan and 4 percent Biden.

— L.N.

KENOSHA

The Kemper Center, 6501 Third Ave., today is a nonprofit historical and arts center listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It's also home to Kemper Hall, which at one time housed an Episcopal girls school. Several students and faculty died during the school's 105 years of operation, including Sister Margaret Clare, who ruled the school with an iron fist. Female ghosts, including several dressed in nuns' habits, have been seen floating around the grounds. Present day Kemper Center officials have learned to capitalize on their history and offer ghost tours through the month of October. Visit www.kempercenter.com.

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Brumder Mansion offers charm, theater and an occasional visitor from the other side

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Haunted houses have always held an appeal for us, but my wife and I never had the opportunity – or the courage – to spend the night in one. Instead, we thought we'd start slowly, perhaps with a haunted room in one of Milwaukee's grand homes.

The Brumder Mansion, 3046 W. Wisconsin Ave., may be one of the city's most romantic bed and breakfasts, but it also boasts several ghosts and at least one allegedly "spirited" suite. When we checked into the famous Gold Suite on a recent Saturday, we knew we might well be in for a night of adventure or inconvenience, depending on if and how the spirits chose to manifest.

The mansion was designed in 1902 and built in 1910 by George Brumder Sr., who made a fortune as a German language publisher, as a gift for his son George Brumder Jr. The Arts & Crafts-style home, with both Victorian and Gothic flourishes, is comprised of three stories and a basement dance hall and theater, all connected by a central grand staircase.

The floor plan defied local conventions of its day, which dictated that ballrooms were usually located on the third floor of stately homes. Purchased in 2008 by Tom and Julie Carr, the mansion has been redesigned to include six suites, including three luxury suites with hot tubs, all decorated with period flare.

The Carrs, who maintain dual residences in Milwaukee and Torrance, Calif., use the basement theater to host theatrical productions and create videos for their Internet video service.

Milwaukee paranormal experts say several playful spirits may haunt the Brumder Mansion, including that of a child who seems to like reprogramming the doorbell to play "Happy Birthday." The most persistent and perennial ghost, however, might be that of the Gold Suite's former resident, a Brumder family relative nicknamed "Aunt Pussy."

Legend has it that Aunt Pussy had an extreme dislike for dogs, something she expressed while she was alive and apparently continues to demonstrate during her afterlife. Phantom voices, objects that move, cold spots, feelings of not being alone and the occasional apparition are Aunt Pussy's favorite ghostly calling cards. But sometimes the spirit has taken a more malevolent turn.

Former owner Carol Hirschi purchased the mansion in 1997 from the Lutheran Church, which was using it as an office suite, and converted it into a B&B. She claimed to have had two unpleasant brushes with the ghost. In one case, Hirschi entered the Gold Suite after it had been unoccupied for days only to discover several drops of fresh blood on the old-fashioned bathtub. Another time

The Brumder Mansion's next theatrical production, a dramatic reading of Edgar Allan Poe stories and poems, runs for six performances Oct. 19-31. For more information on the mansion and its performances, visit www.milwaukeebedbreakfast.com.

she awoke in the suite to the presence of what she described as an angry woman and a strong feeling that she should immediately remove her dog.

Nevertheless, since the Gold Suite was the only one unoccupied, we decided to face our fears and take it.

We knew one of the mansion's frequent theatrical performances was scheduled for the evening of our check-in. In addition to owning the mansion, its neighboring 1920s-era bungalow and an Internet video business, the Carrs also created the Milwaukee Entertainment Group, which produces mostly audience-interactive whodunnits performed at the mansion throughout the year.

When we returned to the Brumder after a nice dinner, we waited for a few minutes in the entryway for a break in the action of "Sherlock Holmes and A Most Irregular Tea Party," which was occupying the mansion's main floor at the time. Then we stole away to our second-floor "haunted" suite.

The Gold Suite, like the rest of the mansion, has been nicely restored with period furnishings, an electric fireplace and, in concession to the 21st century, a flat-screen TV and DVD player. We occupied our late evening hours in front of the "fire," sipping complimentary wine and anticipating the visitation to come. Fortunately, we both were tired and drifted off somewhat effortlessly. However, a peaceful sleep eluded us.

Granted, we had no hard evidence that Aunt Pussy had come calling, but we had a fitful night, each in our own way. Maybe it was the wine or the unfamiliar queen-sized bed, but we each lay awake at different times throughout the night.

I got up several times. There were no cold spots, no ghostly voices, no woman's face looking down from the ornate electrical plate surrounding the ceiling fixture, as Carol Hirschi experienced in a dream. I looked into the mirrors, behind the shower curtain, out the widow, but saw and heard nothing in the unusual stillness. Aunt Pussy, apparently, had taken the night off.

The next morning we thoroughly enjoyed innkeeper and co-owner Tonja Thomas' stuffed French toast with turkey bacon and orange juice in a sun-splashed breakfast nook while we learned more about the house.

The Brumder Mansion hosts between 1,500-1,800 guests each year, Thomas said,



PHOTO: PARANORMALINCORPORATEDBLOGSPOT.COM

Milwaukee's Brumder Mansion.

and entertains about 1,400 through its various theatrical productions. The Carrs operate their business both from California and the house next door to the mansion, where they have filmed 120 Internet videos. They also host several websites,

including www.hauntedhouses.com.

We thoroughly enjoyed our stay, thanked Thomas for her hospitality and went back upstairs to gather our things to leave. There was still no sign of Aunt Pussy. You think the ghost could at least have packed for us.

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Florentine Opera's 'Carmen' is a musical seduction

Opera

MICHAEL MUCKIAN

Get ready to be seduced, Milwaukee. "Carmen" is back in town.

Georges Bizet's 1875 opera about the sultry gypsy and her lovers, the soldier Don Jose and the toreador Escamillo, opens the 2012-13 season of Milwaukee's Florentine Opera with two performances Oct. 26 and Oct. 28. Last performed at the Florentine in 2002, "Carmen" is one of the world's most popular operas for several reasons, according to William Florescu, the Florentine's artistic director.

"The music is earthy and rhythmically driven, and the characters are flawed, but sensual and sexy," Florescu says. "It is an easy opera for people to like who might be put off by the zaftig, more stationary heroes of, say, a Wagner opera."

The frequency with which the Florentine repeats its performances of the famous "opera-comique" has less to do with its popularity and more to do with the availability of top-notch talent to fill the demanding roles. Audrey Babcock returns to the Florentine as the alluring Carmen, a role that seems to have become central to the mezzo-soprano's extensive operatic repertoire.

Outside of her operatic career, Babcock tours with flamenco gui-

tarist Dan Nadel under the stage name Aviva, performing "Beyond Carmen and Hot Songs for Cold Nights," a set of songs performed in Ladino, an ancient Spanish dialect formerly spoken by Spain's Jews. The pair recently released their first album, "Songs for Carmen," a tribute to the role that's believed to be based on legends of a Jewish temptress who lured men to their demise.

Internationally known tenor Noah Stewart makes his Florentine debut as the beleaguered Don Jose, lured by Carmen away from his betrothed Micaela (soprano Rena Harms), only to lose her to the haughty Escamillo (baritone Keith Phares). Stewart, whose debut album "Noah" has taken the U.K. by storm, is philosophical about the role.

"I interpret Don Jose as a former bad boy who tried to reform, but Carmen unleashes the wild side in him," says Stewart, a classically trained Harlem native and graduate of The Julliard School. He also has sung backup for Coolio, Hootie and the Blowfish and Mariah Carey. "I think that (his wild) nature could have been suppressed if he would have married Micaela, but Carmen's lawless life seemed more attractive."

The relative immorality and lawlessness of the characters and the story's depiction of 19th-century proletarian life broke new ground for French opera when it was first



PHOTO: AUDREYBABCOCK.COM

Florentine Opera opens its season with "Carmen."

performed in March 1875. The opera opened to critical reviews and an indifferent public reaction. It began gaining traction through performances outside of France and did not reappear on the Paris stage until 1883.

Led by the famous "Toreador's Song," one of the best-known operatic arias, the music of "Carmen" has since been acclaimed for its melody, harmony and the atmosphere it creates for the tragic story it tells. It was the last opera for Bizet, who died of a heart attack on June 3, 1875, barely two months after the work's inaugural performance. The composer never lived to see or benefit from the opera's fame.

Since that time, "Carmen" has won its place as one of the central works of the operatic canon. Its appeal stems from its place as a "bridge" between the traditional

The story of 19th century common life broke new operatic ground.

opera-comique, which mixes songs with dialogue, and the realism and grittiness of later operas of the 19th century. "Carmen" also speaks to Bizet's taste for unusual characters and settings.

"Carmen" and other such works also play a central role in the ongoing revival of classical opera as a popular art form, according to Stewart. Of course, other pop-culture factors come into play as well.

"I would attribute (the) revival in opera to the various competition shows such as 'X Factor' and 'America's Got Talent' that present

THE FLORENTINE OPERA SEASON AT A GLANCE

Bizet's "Carmen" – Oct. 26, Oct. 28

"That's Amore: A Concert of Love Songs" – Feb. 8-10

Britten's "Albert Herring" – March 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 17

Mozart's "The Marriage of Figaro" – May 10, May 12

classical singers," he says. Stewart also credits live transmissions of special performances of operas to movie theaters throughout the United States and on public television with "helping make opera a people's art form again."

For information on the Florentine Opera's production of Bizet's "Carmen," visit www.florentineopera.org.

PARTY WITH CARMEN

The Florentine Opera Camerata, an affinity group for LGBT opera fans and their extended community, presents "An Opera Party for Carmen" at 7 p.m. on Oct. 21 at The Room, 625 S. Second St. Guests will get the inside scoop on the upcoming production, presented by Florentine general director William Florescu and "Carmen" star Audrey Babcock. The free event features a performance by the opera's studio artists, a cash bar and food from Miss Katie's Diner. RSVP to Scott Stewart at stewart@florentineopera.org or, for more information, call 414-291-5700, ext. 226.

Madison presents a grand ball of an opera

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil that befalls any opera character who succumbs to forbidden desires.

Unfortunately, as King Gustav III of Sweden learned, that prayer doesn't always make things right, even when the character is innocent.

The story of the trials, tribulation and untimely demise of the king of Sweden unfolds amid the glorious music of Giuseppe Verdi in Madison Opera's production of "A Masked Ball." The opera dramatizes the true-life assassination of King Gustav in a narrative in which the king's love for his best friend's wife leads to his murder.

Gustav, who ruled from 1771 to 1792, was a social progressive for his time. He legalized the practice of Catholicism and Judaism and enacted wide-ranging economic and social reforms, including the curtailment of

MADISON OPERA SEASON AT A GLANCE

Verdi's "A Masked Ball" – Oct. 26, Oct. 28

Handel's "Acis and Galatea" – Jan. 10-13

Mozart's "Don Giovanni" – April 26, April 28

torture and capital punishment.

The monarch was shot at a masked ball in 1792 and died of his wounds 13 days later. His dramatic story was the subject of several earlier plays and operas.

Verdi's work opens the Opera's "Season of Temptation" with two performances on Oct. 26 and Oct. 28 at Madison's Overture Center for the Arts. Even though "A Masked Ball" is considered one the grandest of all



PHOTO: DOUGLAS HAMER/LYRIC OPERA OF KANSAS CITY

A scene from the Lyric Opera of Kansas City's production of "A Masked Ball."

grand operas, this production marks the first the company has performed it, according to Kathryn Smith, Madison Opera's general director.

"Any Verdi opera requires amazing singers, a large

orchestra and chorus, and elaborate costumes and scenery, so an opera company can only produce one every few years," Smith says. "A Masked Ball" is actually a favorite of many people in the opera world, but its sheer scale often puts it on a company's wish list."

Tackling the production's artistic challenges is no easy feat, agrees Madison Opera artistic director John DeMain.

"The singing is opulent and extremely demanding, which makes the opera more difficult to produce, so it doesn't enjoy the same popularity as 'La Traviata' or 'Rigoletto,'" says DeMain, who also is artistic director and maestro for the Madison Symphony Orchestra. "But it is musically on a par with Verdi's later operas like 'Aida' and 'Don Carlo.'"

Filling the solo roles in the production are some of opera's top talent, including some rising stars who will be making their Madison Opera debut, DeMain says.

"I'm hoping that we will be unveiling a major star in the making with our leading lady Alexandra LoBianco as Amelia, a soprano who has just recently moved into this big dramatic repertoire," DeMain says. "Her voice is big, beautiful and able to go from thrilling fortissimos to ravishing pianissimi.

"And I think you will

thrill to the sound of Jeniece Golbourne's contralto chest sounds, which are ideal for the sorceress Ulrica," he adds.

Veteran tenor William Joyner, who appeared as Old Galileo in last year's production of "Galileo Galilei," portrays King Gustav. Powerful baritone Hyung Yun, who last appeared as the title character in the opera's "Eugene Onegin," returns to the stage as Anckarstöm, Gustav's best friend-cum-assassin.

"William Joyner has the requisite power and flexibility to sing this role with its extremes of vocal character, and there's no question that Hyung Yun's great baritone voice is on a rapid ascent as he takes on these heavier, more demanding roles," DeMain says.

Verdi's 1859 opera began its production history on a controversial note. Censors in Italy and France opposed the original version for depicting the murder of a monarch on stage.

"Verdi's ultimate solution was to make the subject a count rather than a king and move the setting to Boston during the colonial period," DeMain explains. "This weakened the effect of the opulent backdrop of the Swedish court, but finally passed muster with the censors. Today, productions often restore the setting to Swe-

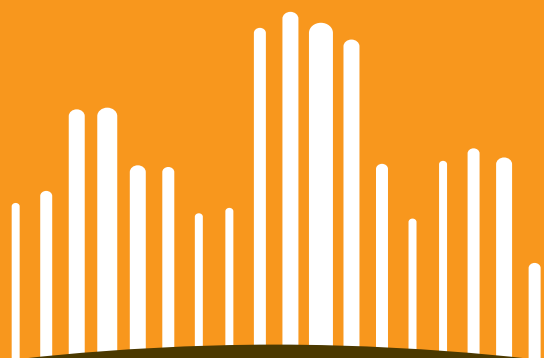
den and the real characters that prompted the libretto in the first place."

Madison Opera's production restores the opulence, featuring scenery designed by R. Keith Brumley and costumes by Suzanne Mess. Maestro DeMain will conduct members of the Madison Symphony Orchestra.

Audience members interested in greater insights into the work can participate in discussions before and after each of the two performances. A preview discussion scheduled for 1 p.m. on Oct. 21 at the UW-Madison Biochemistry Building, Room 1125, will offer insights and behind-the-scenes perspectives by Smith, DeMain and members of the cast.

"A Masked Ball" is the perfect production to launch a "Season of Temptation," Smith says, because King Gustav does not give into the temptations that might require him to sacrifice his crown. The characters in the season's remaining two operas are not quite so well-behaved.

"The characters in Handel's 'Acis and Galatea' and Mozart's 'Don Giovanni' do not resist temptation," says Smith. "Don Giovanni, in particular, indulges in every temptation that comes his way, to an exciting and slightly dangerous effect."



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Spa-venture in Kohler

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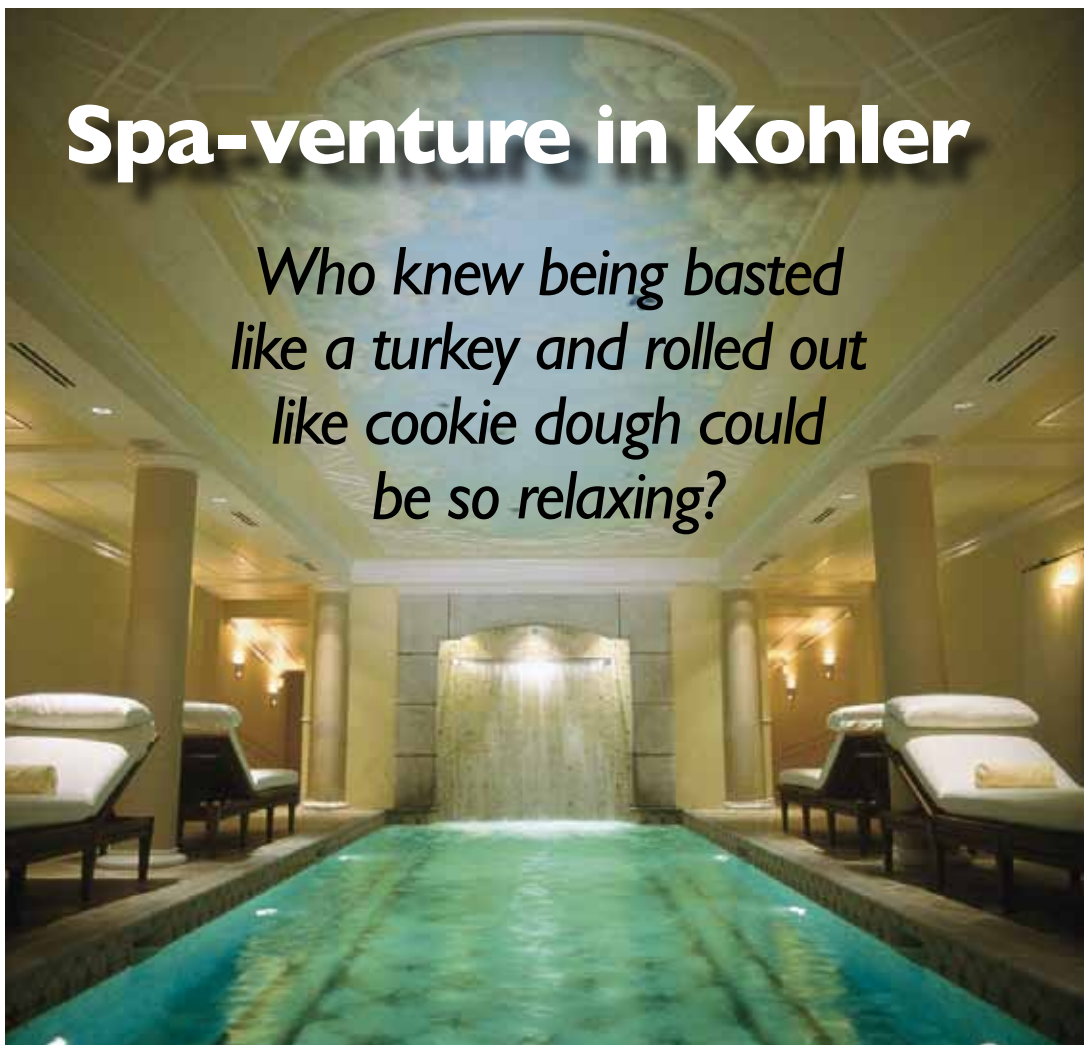


PHOTO: COURTESY

The pool area of the five-star Kohler Waters Spa.

By Anne Siegel

Contributing writer

As the warm summer days cooled into fall, it seemed like an ideal time to refresh my mind and body at a spa. Not just any spa, mind you, but the five-star Kohler Waters Spa.

Why would anyone travel beyond the greater Milwaukee area for spa services? Well, we are not just talking about massages, facials and pedicures. Kohler offers all of the standard spa services, but also provides the above-and-beyond treatments that create a true spa-venture.

Some of the more exotic treatments require a bit of courage. I chose two of the newest offerings: one involving the spa rituals of ancient Turkey and another featuring a futuristic, new-wave massage table. I promised myself a good old-fashioned pedicure if I could meet these challenges.

The spa is located in the heart of the American Club in Kohler. This leafy, quiet community is an hour's drive north on I-43 from Milwaukee. When you arrive, don't expect any blinking neon signs that announce "spa entrance here." This isn't the Wisconsin Dells. Two

discreetly located spa entrances precede the main entrance to the American Club.

If you are fortunate enough to book one of the 55 guest rooms in the Carriage House, located adjacent to the spa, entering the spa is particularly convenient – just a few steps from the lobby elevator. You can even wear your hotel-provided robe and slippers in the spa and hotel lobby all day, eliminating the need to bring your ratty terrycloth bathrobe and pink bunny slippers from home. Trust me – they will look terrible in this oasis of gracious living.

The spa is always stocked with unusual teas, excellent coffee, bite-sized cookie bars and fresh fruit. They are located upstairs, along with a cleverly stocked boutique of take-home spa products.

Almost all of the spa services are held downstairs. Here, one can find heavenly locker rooms (with hot tubs, cold plunges and saunas). There's also the spa's centerpiece feature: an elegantly lighted pool anchored on one end by an 8-foot waterfall.

Prior to receiving services, clients are led to one of several of

the spa's waiting lounges. Soothing music, dim lighting, beautiful flower arrangements, and the rare whispered voice signal that this is de-stressing nirvana.

HEALING WATERS

My spa-venture began with the Hamman Ritual (\$205). This 80-minute hydrotherapy treatment is supposedly based on ancient practices in Turkish bath houses. Having never been to Turkey, I'll have to take their word for it.

My cheerful spa attendant Beth began by cocooning me in something called a pestimal. This is a very colorful, light cotton wrap. It doesn't stay dry for long. At first, I sat on a massage-type table while Beth slowly poured warm (not hot) water over my shoulders. She used a set of copper tas bowls from Turkey.

The pouring ritual is supposed to suggest a baptism. I was baptized more than 50 years ago, and this didn't quite capture that experience. In fact, I felt more like a turkey being basted. And I mean the gobbling sort of turkey, not the country.

The pouring continues once you lie down on the massage table, which is covered with a thin, heated

waterbed. This pleasurable addition did a great job of keeping me warm as Beth switched from pouring warm water to exfoliating my skin. This she accomplished with a rough cotton mitten and what she called "black soap," which was neither black nor bar-shaped. Composed of eucalyptus essence and olive oil, the creamy, caramel-colored soap is scooped out of a jar. It, too, is warm to the touch and reinforces the "turkey basting" sensation. This time, I felt as though I was being covered in butter.

The exfoliation is gentle, and it proceeds at a leisurely pace. After more rinsing with the tas bowls, Beth switched to my favorite part of the treatment: a soothing scalp massage followed by the application of Moroccan shampoo and then an oil-based conditioner. (After a summer's worth of sun, wind and pool chemicals, my hair certainly needed an oil treatment.) Try doing that with your Thanksgiving turkey!

Lest you think the Hamann ritual is some "girly" treatment, Beth told me that almost as many men as women request it. For men or women, it seems like a great way to de-stress after a few rounds of golf. (The Kohler complex includes several world-famous golf courses.)

Back in the main spa lobby, sipping tea and nibbling on the tasty treats, it is easy to feel relaxed. Maybe that's why the Turkish water ritual has persisted for thousands of years.

FUTURISTIC TREATMENT

The next morning, I was greeted by a new crew of spa staff. I was now ready to propel myself into a more futuristic spa experience. The centerpiece of this treatment is a new-fangled massage table. According to Jean Kolb, director of Kohler's wellness business and product development, it's one of only four of its kind in the world.

Called the WaveMotion Body Table, the surface can be moved in nearly all directions. That sounded a bit scary.

Jean assured me that this wasn't going to be a spa-style amusement park ride. "We don't strap you onto the table," she promised. Thank goodness.

First I was escorted to a small spa room, filled with candles, dim lights and a water feature (this is the Kohler Waters Spa, after all). I was asked beforehand to wear loose-fitting clothes, which are not removed during treatment, making it a good choice for shy folks or beginners.

At the center of the room was an innocuous-looking massage table. It had no visible moving parts. Before

you experience the WaveMotion table, however, you are asked what type of music you would like to hear on the sound system. Please note that the selection does not include music from "2001: A Space Odyssey" or "Star Wars." You may feel as though you are launching into the future, but you will have to use your imagination when it comes to the musical aspect. I chose the standard relaxation mix.

My spa coach was Karen. (If you prefer, you can request a male coach when you make your reservations). The treatment starts with a compression massage instead of the traditional kneading motions typical of a Swedish massage. Before I hopped on the table, I nonchalantly asked Karen whether customers have ever fallen off during the treatment. She assured me that she had not dropped one. But just in case, perhaps, she rarely took her hands off me the whole time.

Relieved, I plopped down on the table and Karen began her compressions. It felt as if she was trying to mold parts of my body into the table surface. She told me the table is locked in place at first. When it is unlocked, the table barely seems to move. But in actuality, it moves more than you think it does. The feeling is one of weightlessness, almost akin to riding in a hot air balloon.

Personal tip: I recommend closing your eyes while on the WaveMotion Table. I found that the gently shifting table is better experienced when one is not looking up at a spinning ceiling. In fact, if you are planning to "tie one on" the night before, this is not the place you want to be with a hangover.

Even without alcohol in your system, keeping your eyes closed is recommended (by me). As the treatment revs up, the table begins to swing in the opposite direction of where the spa coach is pulling on your arm or leg. The stretching is similar to what one might experience in yoga class.

As it turns out, guys really like this spa treatment, too. According to Karen, the treatment expands your range of motion (which might improve your golf swing?). As I was pondering this notion, the table began rocking back and forth as Karen vigorously rolled my body by the ribs and hips. At this point, I felt like a piece of dough being rolled for cut-out cookies.

Despite all of the odd movements, I never felt dizzy or disoriented. I would definitely recommend both treatments for an "other-worldly" spa experience that you can't find anywhere else.

Kohler Waters Spa is good place for a spa-venture to begin – and end.

Beckett's minimalism a maximum challenge

Theater

MICHAEL MUCKIAN

Playwright and poet Samuel Beckett believed that the less there is to say, the better it is said. What the Nobel Prize-winning Irish author had to say and how he said it, especially in the plays of his later period, were remarkable and jarring to actors and audiences alike.

Toward the end of his career, Beckett felt that theater contained too much clutter and that most plays, including his own first work "Waiting for Godot" (1956), were too long. His later plays became increasingly condensed, minimalist, precise, formal and even symmetrical. Beckett insisted that actors and production companies follow precise specification as outlined in the plays.

Beckett's minimalist approach to theater is explored in depth in "I Can't Go On. I'll Go On: A Collection of Short Plays by Samuel Beckett." The production opens the UW-Madison Department of Theatre and Drama/University Theatre's 2012-13 season. It's a collection of rarely performed, intense one-act plays that opens Oct. 18 and runs for 11

'The plays are very compact, like dense food.'

performances through Nov. 3.

The six short works are to be performed in the Mitchell and Helmsley theaters and the theater department scene shop in Vilas Hall. Ushers will guide audience members to the different locations. The varied spaces are designed to cleanse the intellectual palate between plays and open the mind to Beckett's ideas, says acting professor Patricia Boyette, who is directing the production.

"Beckett's later plays are very compact, very precise and very dense, like eating very rich food," says Boyette, who has performed in and directed Beckett's plays around the world. "For the audience to experience one piece after the other all in a theater black-box space would be extremely difficult. The senses have to be reset and the pieces separated to be experienced individually."

The first part of the evening will include "Ohio Impromptu," "Play" and "Eh Joe." The first two pieces were written for live per-



PHOTO: BRENT NICASTRO

Chris Damen and Kailen Fleck in "Ohio Impromptu," part of UW-Madison University Theatre's "I Can't Go On. I'll Go On," playing Oct. 18-Nov 4.

formance, while "Eh Joe" was written for television and will include pre-recorded sequences.

The evening's second half begins with "Catastrophe," often viewed as an allegory of totalitarianism and considered one of Beckett's most political pieces. "Come and Go," one of the author's most approachable plays, is a circular study of three women's conversations about life, marriage and death. Finally, "Not I" projects the "inner scream" of a character known as the Mouth, which is observed by both an auditor on stage and the audience.

Possibly the best known and most controversial of Beckett's short works, "Not I" features a lead character that is literally an actor's mouth segregated from the rest of the body, mounted high on a blackened stage and speaking at an extremely rapid rate. It is an exhausting role for a performer and one that Boyette herself played when UW Theatre did The Beckett Project, a series of Beckett shorts in 2006, and again this past summer during a festival of Beckett plays on the island of Malta.

"This is the first time I will be directing the piece rather than performing it," says Boyette, who is part of the U.K.-based Llanarth Group, headed by former UW-Madison theater instructor and fellow Beckett aficionado Phillip Zarrilli. "It was a difficult decision to give this piece, perhaps the most difficult

piece ever written for an actor to perform, over to a student actor. But it is breathtaking for me to see it from the outside."

The play represents the mental breakdown of its lead character, with a silent auditor offering consolation from far below. The mouth moves faster than the mind and the non-stop torrent of words and sentences requires discipline, courage and a certain vulnerability from the actor.

"If the Edvard Munch painting 'The Scream' was given voice, it would not be unlike 'Not I,'" Boyette says.

In interpreting the work, Boyette was mentored by Billie Whitelaw, the English actor and friend of Beckett for whom the play was written. As part of the Beckett Project, Boyette's experiences with Zarrilli, who uses Asian martial arts techniques to discipline his students' minds and bodies, further gave her the understanding, stamina and mind/body connection to tackle Beckett.

"I never get tired of performing and directing these works," Boyette says. "They feed my mind, imagination and soul."

"The Beckett experience begins and ends in stillness and silence, but his plays are still less arcane, less formidable and more accessible than people think," Boyette says. "His plays are profoundly human and about the human need to create order out of disorder and sense out of no-sense. Is there anyone who can't relate to that?"

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Rembrandt van Rijn, *Portrait of the Artist*, ca. 1665 (detail). Kenwood House, English Heritage; Iveagh Bequest. Photo courtesy American Federation of Arts.

UW THEATRE SEASON AT A GLANCE

"I Can't Go On. I'll Go On: A Collection of Short Plays by Samuel Beckett" – Oct. 18-Nov. 3

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ESPN: 59 percent of pro athletes back equality

An anonymous survey of 62 professional athletes from different sports found that 59 percent support same-sex marriage.

ESPN Magazine polled players with the NBA, NHL, NFL and Major League Baseball on a variety of social issues.

ESPN found that NHL players are the most supportive of equality, with 92 percent of those polled saying they support same-sex marriage. Sixty-one percent of NFL players, 46 percent of NBA players and 45 percent of Major League Baseball players agreed.

The low number of respondents prevents the poll from having statistical validity. But the findings were consistent in showing differing level of support for progressive social issues in different sports. For example, baseball players consistently



expressed more conservative views. They were the only group in which a majority did not support the legalization of marijuana, for instance.

Meanwhile, the Miami (Ohio) University hockey team recently created a You Can Play video to support LGBT people in sports. The You Can Play project is modeled after the It Gets Better Project that supports strug-

gling LGBT youth with videos of people expressing words of encouragement. You Can Play was launched about six months ago, inspired by the death of openly gay Miami University hockey manager Brendan Burke in a tragic accident.

Sports figures have become increasingly involved in fighting homophobia. Vikings punter Chris Kluwe became a flash point in the LGBT civil rights struggle after he penned a blistering open letter to a Maryland state lawmaker who criticized another NFL player, Brendon Ayanbadejo of the Baltimore Ravens, for supporting gay marriage.

Marriage-related questions are on the Election Day ballots in both Minnesota and Maryland, as well as Maine and Washington.

- L.W.

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Reel Advice

GREGG SHAPIRO

'LOVE FREE OR DIE'

Gay documentary filmmaker Macky Alston, director of "Questioning Faith: Confessions of a Seminarian," returns to the religious arena for his latest film. The Sundance Award-winner "Love Free or Die" is an intimate and emotional portrait of Gene Robinson, the first openly gay Anglican bishop in the history of Christendom.

The movie captures a series of revolutionary occurrences within the splintering Episcopal Church. It opens with Robinson's exclusion from the 2008 Lambeth Conference, where Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams remains firm on his stance banning future consecrations of gay bishops and same-sex marriage.

Alston then acquaints us with Robinson through a series of personal interviews, including with his partner Mark, Barbara Harris (the first female Anglican bishop), Robinson's daughter Ella, and his parents Imogene and Charles. There is footage of Gene and Mark's civil union, as well as of Robinson giving the invocation during President Barack



PHOTO: COURTESY

From "Pitch Perfect."

Obama's inaugural events in January 2009. We watch Robinson preaching to his New Hampshire congregation, which is said to be comfortable with his sexual orientation because he is so at ease with himself. But we also see him being heckled (and visibly rattled) during a speech in England.

The drama reaches its peak at the 2009 General Conference in Anaheim, where a vote is taken on two resolutions: The first involves

the consecration of gay bishops, while the second addresses allowing church weddings in states where same-sex marriage is legal.

For Robinson, these are make or break issues. Speakers on both sides present their cases. When the tallies favoring both resolutions are announced, Robinson declares they "can only be attributed to God."

'PITCH PERFECT'

The comedy "Pitch Perfect" is ideally suited for anyone who was disappointed by "Glee: The 3D Concert Movie" and longs for more of a cappella. Based on the book by gay writer Mickey Rapkin, "Pitch Perfect" follows Beca (Anna Kendrick, who's an excellent singer) and Jesse (Skylar Astin), both freshmen at Barden University. Beca wants to be a record producer, but her Barden professor father (out actor John Benjamin Hickey) wants her to get a college education first. Jesse, on the other hand, is determined to follow his dreams and join one of the campus a cappella groups.

Beca and Jesse cross paths a couple of times before officially meeting at the campus radio station, where they are both interning. Shortly thereafter, their paths cross again at the a cappella auditions. Jesse gets into the all-male Treblemakers, while Beca makes the cut for the all-female Bellas. Then the fun begins.

As we follow the teams from the auditions and rehearsals through the regional, semifinal and final competitions, "Pitch Perfect" belts out almost every cliché in the teen movie songbook. From the silly and predictable song selections, to the trouncing of the mean girl (Anna Camp as Aubrey) and the triumphant rise of the overweight girl (Rebel Wilson as Fat Amy), "Pitch Perfect" is more than a little off-key. Racist, sexist, anti-Semitic and homophobic jokes are interwoven with gross-out humor on a par with "Bridesmaids."

Elizabeth Banks and John Michael Higgins as the callous and colorful commentators Gail and John steal the show.

'THE PERKS OF BEING A WALLFLOWER'

Despite some glaring anachronistic flaws, outstanding performances by scene-stealer Ezra Miller and a nuanced Emma Watson make Stephen Chbosky's film adaptation of his book "The Perks of Being a Wallflower" worth watching.

Wallflower and high school freshman Charlie (Logan Lerman) is recovering from

a dark period he endured during the 1990s. His late Aunt Helen (Melanie Lynskey), with whom he shared a dark and inappropriately intimate secret, haunts him years after her death. He's also haunted by memories of a friend who committed suicide. And now Charlie is about to enter the hallowed and hellish halls of a new school.

Preferring to blend into the scenery, Charlie is encouraged to engage with his peers by English teacher Mr. Anderson (Paul Rudd). He makes friends with queer senior Patrick (Miller) and, in turn, Patrick's stepsister Sam (Watson). The kid who preferred solitude, reading and writing suddenly finds himself in a series of social situations that he never could have predicted.



PHOTO: COURTESY

From "The Perks of Being a Wallflower."

With increased social acceptance comes responsibility. Some things he masters, such as keeping secrets (including walking in on Patrick kissing one of the football team's stars). But he struggles with other social graces, including how to break up with a girl – he has the bad judgment to do it during a game of Truth or Dare. Charlie also falls in love with the lovable Sam, who's only interested in older guys.

As Charlie blossoms, he finds himself unable to cope with his newfound social status. In his struggles, he learns about the power and value of friendships. Far from a perfect movie, "Wallflower" nonetheless offers enough perks to make it worthwhile.

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A cappella group Pentatonix tours U.S.



PHOTO: TIM CRUZ

Pentatonix performs on Nov. 8 in Madison at The Majestic. Mitch Grassi is second from left.

Interview

GREGG SHAPIRO

Mitch Grassi is one of two openly gay members of Pentatonix, an a cappella group that came to fame on the NBC series "The Sing Off." Pentatonix has just released "Volume 1," a six-song EP that includes the group's cover of Australian singer Gotye's "Somebody That I Used to Know." Pentatonix is on a multi-city U.S. tour.

Grassi talked with WiG about Pentatonix in late summer.

Gregg Shapiro: How did Pentatonix begin.

Mitch Grassi: Pentatonix started out as a trio with Kirstie (Maldonado), Scott (Hoying) and me, because we had been in choir for most of our high school careers. I guess that was a big influence. We all have different musical influences. I would say that mine is a little bit more electronic. Scott's is a little more R&B. It's kind of a melting pot of different genres.

A pentatone is defined as "a gapped scale with five notes; usually the fourth and seventh notes of the diatonic scale are omitted." Why did you chose that word as the group's name?

The pentatonic scale is a scale that's very popular in R&B, soul and pop music. We use a lot of it in general and when we are writing music. It's a five-note scale and we have five members, so we thought it was pretty appropriate.

Do members of the group have assigned singing roles?

I would say that Kevin (Olusola) and Avi (Kaplan) are the rhythm section and the rest of us are the vocalists. Sometimes we'll switch positions. I actually really do like doing rhythms, but it rarely happens, because I can't get those low ends that Avi can usually get.

Four of the six songs on the "Volume 1" EP are covers. What was involved in the group's song selection process?

We'll discuss our favorite songs or songs that we always really wanted to do as a group. It was a bit difficult at first, because we had so many possibilities and options. In the end, I think we chose the right ones. It was just a matter of, "Can we arrange these songs for the group, will it sound good, are we going to have a good lead vocalist?"

What was involved in the song-writing process of the two originals, "Show You How to Love" and "The Baddest Girl"?

That was quite a process, because we had never done that before. (When it came to writing the songs) I think it was melody first. We had a friend named Ben Bram help us out with the arranging process. It was difficult. It was trial and error.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of being one of two gay members of Pentatonix?

There are actually more advantages than disadvantages. I think it's a great thing. I love that our fans are so accepting. It's amazing. It makes me feel so close to them. Some people might say that being openly gay in the music business might deter you from having a career, but I don't think that's true. My career, as a queer person, has been pretty successful. I'm proud.

The group just returned from China. How was that experience?

It was amazing. The country itself was so beautiful. We actually got to perform on "The Sing Off: China" and that was a trip (laughs). We actually sang a Chinese song on the show. They requested that. I messed up a lot, personally (laughs).

What can people expect from a Pentatonix show?

If they've seen any of our earlier shows, they can expect more of a "show." We're putting together some different things,

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Re-issues of albums by Jackson, R.E.M. celebrate silver anniversaries

Music

GREGG SHAPIRO

The King of Pop faced a daunting task in following up his bazillion-selling "Thriller" album of 1982. While 1987's "Bad" fell short of what came before it, including Jackson's previous Quincy Jones collaboration "Off The Wall" (1979), it wasn't, well, half bad.

The newly reissued deluxe 25th anniversary edition of "Bad" includes three CDs and one DVD. The set consists of a remastered version of the original album, a disc of rare and unreleased tracks, such as French and Spanish versions of "I Just Can't Stop Loving You" and the bizarre and controversial "Song Groove (aka Abortion Papers)" among others. It also includes the live CD/DVD from Jackson's July 1988 Wembley concert, a pair of booklets, a sticker and a poster.

"Bad" opens with the title track, retaining the MJ-as-tough-guy spirit of "Beat It" from "Thriller." The jubilant "The Way You Make Me Feel," a well-deserved hit single, is a triumph, but "Speedy Demon" demonstrates the hiccup singing style that Jackson unfortunately mined until his death. The gushy "I Just Can't Stop Loving You" also ranks among

his best and the popular; preachy "Man in the Mirror" was Jackson at his most manipulative. The irony of the song was that Jackson desperately needed to take a look in the mirror.

The pissed-off and rocking "Leave Me Alone," the final track, is the strongest on the disc and one of the best songs he ever wrote. It's the declaration of independence that Jackson always needed to make for himself.

If Michael Jackson was the King of Pop, then R.E.M. was the King of College Radio, later known as alternative music. In a career spanning 30 years, the group from Athens, Ga., led by queer front man Michael Stipe, defined modern rock through its instrumentation and exotic lyrics. On early recordings, from the jangle pop roots of "Murmur" and "Reckoning" to the dark folk of "Fables of the Reconstruction" to the beginnings of R.E.M.'s mainstream pop breakthrough on "Life's Rich Pageant," the group paved the way for the multitude of imitators who followed.

The re-released, expanded, double-CD, 25th anniversary edition of "Document," R.E.M.'s fifth album, could easily be the soundtrack for 2012. Stipe sings presciently about signs of the current times in the aptly titled "Exhuming McCarthy," including being "Loyal to the Bank of America." Lyrics such as "vested interest united ties, landed gentry rationalize" might have been written yester-



PHOTO: FANPOP.COM

Michael Jackson in his "Bad" era.

day.

The list of cheerily delivered catastrophes in "It's the End of the World As We Know It (and I Feel Fine)," including the eerie line "don't get caught in foreign towers," almost suggests there was a crystal ball present when this album was being written. "Docu-

ment" also featured the modest hit "The One I Love" and a blistering electric edge in "Finest Worksong" and "Oddfellows Local 151."

The attractively packaged anniversary set includes a 20-track live disc recorded in Holland, a large poster, booklet and postcards.

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In Tandem Theatre presents the American premier of John Goodrum's psychological thriller **"The Nightmare Room,"** based on the story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, through Oct. 21 at Tenth Street Theatre, 628 N. 10th. Call 414-271-1371.

Taking its inspiration from the 2008 financial crisis, **"microcrisis"** runs through Oct. 21 at Next Act Theatre, 255 S. Water. Call 414-278-7780 or visit www.nextact.org.

Milwaukee Repertory Theater, 108 E. Wells, presents **"The Mountaintop"** through Nov. 4 in the Stiemke Studio. Call 414-224-9490.

OCT. 18, THURSDAY

Blue-eyed soul dude **Mayer Hawthorne** is at the Majestic, 115 King in Madison, at 7:30 p.m. Call 608-251-2582.

UW-Madison University Theatre presents a collection of Samuel Beckett's short plays in **"I Can't Go On. I'll Go On,"** through Nov. 3 in Hemsley Theatre, 821 University in Madison. Call 608-265-ARTS (2787).

OCT. 19, FRIDAY

Barrmore Theatre, 2090 Atwood in Madison, presents **"An Evening with Leslie Jordan,"** starring the out Emmy-winning actor from *"Will & Grace"* and *"Sordid Lives,"* at 8 p.m. Call 608-241-2345.

Katie Todd Band, led by out singer/songwriter Todd, plays Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

The Brewcity Bruisers, Milwaukee's women's roller derby league, hosts a premiere screening of the documentary **"Derby, Baby!"** as a fundraiser at 8 p.m. at Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth. Call 414-286-3663.

Bartell Theatre, 113 E. Mifflin in Madison, presents the Tony Award-winning **"The Normal Heart"** by Larry Kramer through Nov. 3. Call 608-204-0280.

Renaissance Theaterworks begins its 20th season with the comedy **"Enfrascada"** by Tanya Saracho through Nov. 11 in the Studio Theatre at the Broadway Theatre Center, 158 N. Broadway. Call 414-291-7800.

Heartless Bastards performs at 9:30 p.m. at High Noon Saloon, 701A E. Washington in Madison. Call 608-268-1122.

"Big The Musical," based on the motion picture *"Big,"* runs through Nov. 11 in the Todd Wehr Theater at Marcus Center for the Performing Arts, at the corner of Water and State. Call 414-273-2787.

"Blues in the Night" runs through Dec. 23 in the Stackner Cabaret at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, 108 E. Wells. Call 414-224-9490.

Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison, presents the man of a thousand sweaters **Bill Cosby** at 7 p.m. Call 608-258-4141.

Celtic Thunder



The lads of the Irish music phenomenon **Celtic Thunder** perform at 7 p.m. at The Riverside, 116 W. Wisconsin. Call 414-286-3663.

Walker's Point Center for the Arts, 839 S Fifth, marks its 20th year of celebrating the Mexican tradition of **Día de los Muertos** through Nov. 17. For more information, including the opening reception and workshops, visit wpc-a-milwaukee.org or call 414-672-2787.

For its 85th Anniversary Party, **Landmark Lanes**, a longtime



supporter of the LGBT community at 2220 N. Farwell (beneath the historic Oriental Theater), rolls back the price of bowling to 1972, when it was just \$1 per game, per person at 5 p.m.

OCT. 20, SATURDAY

LEO performs **"The Anti-Gravity Show"** at 8 p.m. at the Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison. Call 608-258-4141.

National recording artist **Peter Dinklage** performs a concert at 7:30 p.m. at Unitarian Universalist Church West, 13001 W. North in Brookfield.

OCT. 21, SUNDAY

A Rocket To The Moon lands at The Loft, 149 Waubesa in Madison, at 7:30 p.m.

Hot Buttered Rum plays the Majestic, 115 King in Madison, at 7:30 p.m. Call 608-251-2582.

The Pabst, 144 E. Wells, presents **The xx** at 7 p.m.

OCT. 23, TUESDAY

Boswell Book Company, 2559 N. Downer, presents **Jean Reynolds Page**, Madison-area author of *"Safe Within,"* at 7 p.m. Call 414-332-1181.

Boldt Arts Alive! series presents Savion Glover's **Sole Sanctuary** at 7:30 p.m. at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, 400 W. College Ave. in Appleton. Call 920-730-3760.

"The Diary of Anne Frank" runs through Dec. 2 in the Quadracci Powerhouse at Milwaukee Repertory Theater, 108 E. Wells. Call 414-224-9490.

Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison, presents **"Live at Birdland,"** featuring the Birdland Big Band at 7:30 p.m. Call 608-258-4141.

OCT. 24, WEDNESDAY

Boswell Book Company, 2559 N. Downer, welcomes **Thomas Frank**, author of *"What's The Matter With Kansas?"* at 7 p.m. Call 414-332-1181.

The Frequency, 121 W. Main in Madison, presents **Hey Rosetta!** at 7:30 p.m. Call 608-819-8777.

OCT. 25, THURSDAY

War Poets, whose music video for *"Close Enough"* celebrates same-gender unions, plays Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

OCT. 26, FRIDAY

You get four headline comedians for the price of one when you attend **The Bob & Tom Comedy Show**, starring Drew Hastings, Greg Hahn, Tim Bedore and Chick McGee, at 8 p.m. at the Barrmore Theatre, 2090 Atwood in Madison. Call 608-241-2345.

Ska-revivalists **The English Beat** are back and performing at Turner Hall Ballroom, 103 N. Fourth, at 7:30 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

Music legend **Art Garfunkel** performs at 7 p.m. at The Pabst, 144 E. Wells. Call 414-286-3663.

Redanté, 449 State in Madison, welcomes **Glen & Grant Lee Phillips** at 8 p.m.

Sharon Lynne Wilson Center for the Arts, 19805 W. Capitol Dr. in Brookfield, presents the iconic double bill of **Dr. John** and **The Blind Boys of Alabama** at 8 p.m. in the Harris Theater. Call 262-781-9520.

OCT. 27, SATURDAY

Women's Voices Milwaukee hosts **"Girls' Ghostly Gala,"** the annual Halloween dance for gay and gay-friendly women, from 7 p.m. to midnight, at Marian Center, 3211 S. Lake Drive. For more information, go to womensvoicesmilwaukee@gmail.com.

We Are the In Crowd performs at 7:30 p.m. at The Loft, 149 Waubesa in Madison.

The South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center presents the Milwaukee Ballet II, featuring an exclusive performance of George Balanchine's **"Who Cares?"** tonight and tomorrow night. Find more info at www.southmilwaukeepac.org.

OCT. 29, MONDAY

Joan Walsh, editor-at-large of Salon and an MSNBC political analyst, reads from her second book *"What's the Matter with White People: Why We Long for a Golden Age That Never Was"* at 7 p.m. at Boswell Book Company, 2559 N. Downer. Call 414-332-1181.

The Pabst, 144 E. Wells, presents the brilliant **Cat Power** at 7 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

OCT. 30, TUESDAY

Boswell Book Company, 2559 N. Downer, welcomes **Paul Geenen**, author of *"Schuster's and Gimbels: Milwaukee's Beloved Department Stores"* at 7 p.m. Call 414-332-1181.

Royal Winnipeg Ballet performs **Moulin Rouge – The Ballet** at 7:30 p.m. at the Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State in Madison. Call 608-258-4141.

NOV. 1, THURSDAY

Lesbian guitar virtuoso **Kaki King** plays Shank Hall, 1434 N. Farwell, at 8 p.m. Call 414-276-7288.

Passion Pit plays The Riverside, 116 W. Wisconsin, at 7 p.m. Call 414-286-3663.

The Performing Arts Department of Shorewood High School presents Ken Ludwig's farce **"Lend Me a Tenor"** tonight through Sunday in the Shorewood High School Auditorium, 1701 E. Capitol Drive in Shorewood. Call 414-963-6940.





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My Best Day

(Erin Greenwell, US, 2012)

Sunday, October 21 3pm UWM Union Theatre

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