

## SELF-LOVE

WiG's quarterly special section on self-improvement premieres in this issue.

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THE VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR WISCONSIN'S LGBT COMMUNITY

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## LOVE ON TRIAL

### High Court rulings due in June, but marriage battle is won



ILLUSTRATION: DANA VERKOUTEREN/AP

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Rulings on two U.S. Supreme Court cases for marriage equality aren't expected until June, but in other realms victory for same-sex marriage can already be declared.

As the justices on March 26 assembled to hear a defense and a challenge to California's constitutional amendment barring

gays and lesbians from marrying, thousands rallied in the plaza outside. That there was a demonstration is not extraordinary. What is extraordinary was the wave of support for same-sex marriage compared to the minuscule numbers marching against.

Addressing a cheering crowd, activist Brendon Ayanbadejo, a Baltimore Ravens linebacker who declared himself a "patriot,"

promised, "In the end, love is always going to win the game."

The wave rushed out from the court.

Millions of surfers on the Web exchanged personal profile photos for a red equal sign, or variations of the box – from ordinary Joe in Wisconsin to Willie Nelson in Texas, from ordinary Jane in Florida to Martha Stewart

## INSIDE

For coverage of the U.S. Supreme Court arguments on DOMA and Proposition 8, excerpts from the hearings and reactions to the historic events, see pages 10-12.

COURT page 11

## PRINCE POPPYCOCK COMING TO MILWAUKEE



The rising star from "America's Got Talent" headlines his first Midwest show at the Milwaukee Rite Temple. In advance of the royal visit, the prince spoke with WiG's Gregg Shapiro.

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## Gay Applebee's server bashed by co-worker's spouse in Rice Lake

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

A gay employee of Applebee's in Rice Lake was brutally bashed by the husband of a co-worker, then told by the restaurant's manager he could not return to his job due to publicity surrounding the incident, he said.

Timothy Phares subsequently did return to his job as a server after Greg Flynn, CEO of Apple American Group franchise, intervened on his behalf.

According to Phares and his sister Krista Kathrine, they were getting out of his car in the parking lot of a Perkins restaurant at about 6 a.m. on March 17 when Rien Hendricks and his wife Shannon Hendricks pulled up behind them in an SUV.

"(Hendricks) was getting out of his vehicle, and he said, 'Fucking faggot, I'm going to kill you,'" Phares said.

At that point Phares said Hendricks struck him in the head with great force

using a 2 x 4 piece of lumber. In a written statement, Krista Kathrine said she heard her brother's head smack the pavement, but Tim Phares lost consciousness and doesn't remember anything else before waking up in the hospital.

Phares suffered head and facial abrasions as well as multiple facial fractures that will ultimately require surgery to implant metal plates, he said.

BASHED page 4

# News with a twist

## WIGWAG

By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg



PHOTO: COURTESY

### COVER-UP

"Mad Men" star Jon Hamm's not-so-private parts are causing problems on the set. The actor's penchant for going commando is causing quite a distraction, particularly when he's wearing the tight pants that were popular in the 1960s. Producers reportedly have politely instructed their star to wear underwear while on camera. TMZ ran the headline, "Underwear companies make bid to harness Jon's junk" after Fruit of the Loom and Jockey both tried to get in on the action. Ironically, Hamm has lashed out at the press for invading his privacy.

### DELIVERING THE NEWS

NBC News anchor Jenna Wolfe took a seat on the "Today" show March 27 to talk about her new blog on NBC's website. She's writing about being pregnant. But there was a news hook — Wolfe hadn't previously disclosed her pregnancy and she hadn't publicly come out about her partner, foreign correspondent Stephanie Gosk. In her first blog post, Wolfe wrote, "Of all the jaw-dropping, head-turning and eye-popping things I've ever told my friends and family ('I swam with killer sharks,' 'I jet-packed 30 feet out of the water,' 'I scaled the tallest building in Canada'), nothing garnered more shock and awe than when I told people I was pregnant."

### ROYAL DRAG

According to a new book, Freddie Mercury sneaked Princess Diana, dressed in male drag, into one of Lon-



don's most notorious gay bars in the late 1980s. In

her memoir "The Power of Positive Drinking," comedian Cleo Rocos said her highness went unrecognized. "She did look like a beautiful young man," said Rocos, who was part of the prank. "She was always a very fit girl, so they might have thought, 'There's a nice young man with pert buttocks.'"

### GAGA VS. GOP

Lady Gaga turned down \$1 million to perform during last summer's Republican National Convention. The revelation is included in a lawsuit filed by the American Action Network, a GOP fundraising organization, against a vendor retained to stage entertainment outside the doors to the convention in Tampa. Documents filed in the lawsuit also reveal that Dolly Parton and rapper Pit-

bull turned down the offer to appear at the August convention. Republicans hoped to feature Pitbull at an event for the Hispanic Leadership Network.

### FACE IT

James Denham Watson, a Virginia man whose roommate drew a penis on his left cheek with permanent marker while Watson was sleeping, went a bit crazy. He beat the roommate so badly that he caused severe facial damage. Watson was arrested and charged with malicious wounding.

### A TOTAL PIG

A central Illinois man busted in 2010 for killing a cow with a crossbow was arrested again in March on charges that he shot two pigs with a crossbow and then slit the animals' throats. While in custody on the animal torture charges, authorities filed additional charges against Quentin Getty —

soliciting and disseminating pornographic images of a minor girl and aggravated criminal sexual abuse.

### WATER SPORTS?

The Philadelphia Phillies' top minor league affiliate, the Lehigh Valley IronPigs, is working with a British streaming media company to install a "urinal gaming system" in Coca-Cola Park. The bathrooms will have a video display above each urinal. When a fan approaches, the video console will sense his presence and switch into gaming mode. The guy aims left or right to control the play on the screen.

### WHAT HAPPENS IN DENVER

Colorado has finally repealed a law criminalizing adultery. The repeal included a provision prohibiting the act of providing a place, such as a hotel room, for unmarried people to have sex. Democrats blasted the law

as archaic, but Republican state Sen. Kevin Lundberg opposed the repeal bill, arguing moral standards are as important as ever.

### CHEESY CRIME

New Jersey police recently arrested an Illinois man accused of stealing 21 tons of Wisconsin cheese — Muenster. The cargo, found in a refrigerator truck, was stolen from K&K Cheese in Cashton, Wis., and valued at \$200,000. The thief allegedly forged paperwork to pull off the heist.

### NOT KOSHER

J&D's, a company with the tagline "everything should taste like bacon," has come out with a line of latex condoms printed in realistic-looking bacon patterns. They're coated in "bacon-lube," a water-based, meat-flavored lubricant. Let the pork jokes begin.

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## Told by manager not to return to work due to bad publicity over his bashing

### BASHED from one

Earlier that evening, Phares and his sister attended a party at the Hendricks' home, but said they left because the couple treated them rudely.

According to a criminal complaint filed by the Barron County District Attorney's office, a patron seated in Perkins at the time of the alleged attack was a witness to what occurred both immediately before and after the incident.

Hendricks, 36, who lives at 527 Phipps Ave. in Rice Lake, was taken into custody and charged with substantial battery intended to inflict bodily harm, a Class I felony. He faces a \$10,000 and as many as three-and-a-half years behind bars.

Hendricks, who has prior convictions for theft, false representation and distributing marijuana, is free on bail. In the past, Hendricks has also faced charges for bail jumping and violating unemployment law.

In addition to retaining her job at Applebee's, Shannon Hendricks has not been charged for her role in the

attack.

Despite the anti-gay slur shouted prior to the attack, there is not adequate evidence to prosecute the alleged assault as a hate crime, according to Barron County District Attorney Angela Beranek. She said Wisconsin law requires evidence that a crime was committed wholly or in part due to the perceived sexual orientation of the victim in order to attach a hate-crime enhancement to the charges.

Beranek said no such evidence exists in this case.

In the wake of publicity over the story, Applebee's issued a statement defending the Rice Lake restaurant's decision to keep Shannon Hendricks on the job.

"This very unfortunate personal situation involving two of our franchisee's employees occurred during their free time and entirely away from the restaurant," wrote company spokesperson Dan Smith. "The husband of one employee has been charged by police with felony assault. The police have

informed us that this individual's wife, who works at the restaurant, has not been charged and is not a subject in the investigation. The employee who was attacked is still employed with the franchisee. Although he had voluntarily resigned prior to the incident, the franchisee encouraged him to remain employed. ... Our franchisee continues to monitor the investigation."

### SLURS AND THREATS

Although Phares returned to work at Applebee's, he doesn't expect to remain on the job long. He said he's disappointed that the restaurant refuses to dismiss Hendricks, who drove her husband to the crime scene and watched the assault. And he's angry that the restaurant allowed a post to remain on its Facebook page calling him a "faggot," despite his complaints.

The anti-gay slur was removed after WiG brought it to the attention of corporate marketing manager Katy Sincko, who at first defended

the post, saying, "We aren't in the practice of hiding things on there (Facebook)." About 20 minutes later, she called to thank WiG for bringing the slur to her attention and to say it had been deleted.

Phares said the reason behind the assault is a mystery to him. A local source familiar with the situation contacted WiG to say there's more to the story than Phares is revealing. The source claimed that personality conflicts played a role.

Phares said he's aware that he has local critics. He dismissed their take on the situation as "ridiculous."

The attack appears to be related to an incident that occurred in the restaurant just days prior. After being treated abusively by a diner he was serving, Phares said he asked restaurant manager Tara Steinberg to have someone else take over the table, a party of eight, in accordance with company policy.

As the diner was leaving the restaurant, other patrons who'd been seated nearby said the diner had made a number of embarrassing anti-gay and homophobic slurs while Phares was serving him, according to Phares.

"The patron called the restaurant the next day and said he would not come back inside the restaurant until I was fired," Phares said. "(Steinberg) told me they were going to write me up for the situation, and if I got one more write-up I would

be fired."

At that point, Phares said, he put in his two-week notice.

But before the attack, Phares had a change of heart and told Steinberg he wanted to take back his notice. She agreed at the time, he said, but following the attack she told him that his bashing had attracted so much negative publicity that the restaurant didn't want him back. Steinberg said she could not comment on an employment matter.

It was only after Flynn intervened that Phares got his job back, he said.

Phares said he doesn't feel safe on the job, claiming the husband of another co-worker threatened to kill him if he returned to Applebee's.

Sincko told WiG that Applebee's has a non-discrimination policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity. She said the company also provides domestic partner benefits to workers in states where same-sex marriage and civil unions are legal, but noted



PHOTO: COURTESY

**Rice Lake resident Tim Phares following an attack in which he was called "faggot" and forcefully struck in the face with a 2 x 4.**

that franchisees might have different policies.

Phares' case is not the first high-profile embarrassment for Applebee's. In February, a server at an Applebee's in St. Louis was fired after posting an image of the receipt left behind by a pastor on the online site Reddit. On the receipt, the pastor wrote a complaint about the automatic 18-percent tip added to the bill (for a party of eight), saying, "I Give God 10 percent Why do you Get 18?"

Applebee's firing of the waitress who posted the receipt prompted a massive Internet backlash against the company.

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# Illinois' Mark Kirk is 2nd GOP Senator to back equality

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

U.S. Sen. Mark Kirk, a Republican from Illinois, wrote on his blog April 2 that he supports marriage equality. Kirk is only the second Republican in the Senate to back marriage equality. The other is Rob Portman of Ohio.

Meanwhile, the list of Democrats in the Senate for marriage equality continues to grow. At press time April 3, there were only seven who have not taken a position in support of legalizing same-sex marriage.

Kirk's blog title for April 2 read, "Statement from Senator Kirk on Same-Sex Marriage."

The blog contained two paragraphs: "When I climbed the Capitol steps in January, I promised myself that I would return to the Senate with an open mind and greater respect for others.

"Same-sex couples should have the right to civil marriage. Our time on this Earth is limited, I know that better

than most. Life comes down to who you love and who loves you back – government has no place in the middle."

Kirk has long had the support of Log Cabin Republicans, a national LGBT GOP group. He also has campaigned for re-election with the support of other LGBT groups in his home state.

Now, with his announcement, he becomes the 50th sitting U.S. senator to endorse legalizing marriage equality.

The news comes a week after the U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments on two landmark marriage cases and as Kirk's party grapples with how to overcome a reputation for intolerance and win over younger voters.

The news also comes as Illinois lawmakers considering legalizing same-sex marriage. The state Senate passed an equality bill earlier this year and the House is expected to take up the measure after spring break.

Responding to Kirk's announcement, Bernard

Cherkasov of Equality Illinois said, "As Illinois' highest-ranking Republican officeholder, Sen. Mark Kirk demonstrated today that he understands why the freedom to marry is so important for all loving couples. When he said, 'Life comes down to who you love and who loves you back – government has no place in the middle,' Sen. Kirk cut to the heart of the argument."

LGBT civil rights leaders say elected officials, business executives and community leaders are increasingly coming out in support for marriage equality to stand on the right side of history.

"It is a sign of our progress that so many of their colleagues are showing the same political will," said Chad Griffin of the Human Rights Campaign. "Democrat or Republican, there can simply be no excuse for standing on the wrong side of history when it comes to this basic question of justice."

Rulings from the Supreme Court are expected in late



PHOTO: COURTESY

Mark Kirk of Illinois is the 50th sitting senator to back marriage equality.

June and lawmakers in as many as four states might legalize same-sex marriage by the end of the year.

Top Illinois lawmakers who support marriage equality: U.S. Sens. Mark Kirk and Democrat Dick Durbin;

the two state party chairs Republican Pat Brady and Democrat Mike Madigan, the Illinois House speaker; Gov. Pat Quinn and Lt. Gov. Sheila Simon, both Democrats; Illinois Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka, a Republi-

can; Illinois Attorney General Lisa Madigan, a Democrat; Senate President John Cullerton, a Democrat; and Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a Democrat.



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# Fox Valley dives into diversity initiatives

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

On a chilly December day, Fox Valley leaders from every sector of the community took The Plunge.

They dove into an initiative to promote tolerance, celebrate diversity, understand LGBT issues and create safer schools.

"Every student deserves

to come to school and feel safe and feel their voice is heard and respected," said Ben Vogel, an assistant superintendent for the Appleton Area School District who took The Plunge.

The Plunge is an annual activity in the Fox Valley area sponsored by the Community Health Action Team led by ThedaCare. In Decem-

ber 2011, the team brought together 60 community leaders to delve into issues related to sexual orientation and gender identity. They explored language and terminology and discussed religion, politics and education.

"It's really good to bring together people to have these conversations," Vogel said. "Sometimes we get scared to talk about certain issues, and if you don't talk about them, bad things can happen, and misunderstandings can happen. The first step is to get people to have conversations — honest and open dialogues."

Vogel attended the daylong event as a representative of the school district. Other educators, business leaders, health-care experts, elected officials and police attended.

From The Plunge came an initiative called INCLUDE, sponsored by CHAT, the Community Foundation of the Fox Valley Region and the Les & Dar Stumpf Family Fund. Partners in the ini-

**'Every student deserves to come to school and feel safe.'**

tiative include the Harmony Cafe, the Fox Cities and Oshkosh LGBT Anti-Violence Project, Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays and more.

The goal has been to "make the Fox Valley more inclusive, safe and welcoming for everyone," said Chad Hershner, an INCLUDE steering committee member and development director at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin.

INCLUDE is a four-month, communitywide campaign that was launched at a breakfast in January attended by more than 350 people. An emphasis of the campaign has been reaching students and staff in schools with cautions against bullying and affirmations for acceptance.

## NABOZNY RETURNS

To reach those in the schools, the INCLUDE team turned to Jamie Nabozny, a safe-schools advocate who, in the mid-1990s, challenged anti-gay bullying in Ashland, Wis., and won a settlement in a landmark federal case.

For four years, Nabozny was subject to relentless anti-gay abuse in his middle school and his high school. Students urinated on him, pretended to rape him during a class and, in one incident, kicked him so many times in the stomach he was hospitalized and needed surgery.

Nabozny attempted suicide, dropped out of school and ran away in an effort to flee the harassment. Complaints from him and his parents were ignored or dismissed by school administrators.

Eventually, Nabozny went to court, with the support of attorneys from Lambda Legal. In July 1996, he won a federal appeals court ruling that said public schools must protect students from anti-gay abuse.

Months later, a jury in Ashland found school administrators liable for failing to protect Nabozny. Before the jury could decide damages, the school district settled with a nearly \$1 million award.

Nabozny, who lives in Minneapolis, said he learned of INCLUDE through a PFLAG representative.

He's used to traveling to speak to schools about bullying, but the Fox Valley community campaign is the biggest he's been involved in, with 23 speaking engagements.

"I was blown away by what happened," he said. "Out of this will come change, huge change."

Nabozny went to Appleton for the INCLUDE breakfast in January, gave community talks at the University of Wisconsin-Fox Valley and Lawrence University and led school assemblies with students and staff. His program generally included a screening of the documentary "Bullied," followed by a discussion about the lasting impact of bullying and what students can do to change their schools.

Nabozny proved persuasive.

Students, in a series of emails to Nabozny and also in Facebook posts, admitted saying "that's so gay," "fag" and "queer" without understanding the harm. They confessed to bullying others and promised to apologize. They also praised the assemblies as the best part of 12 years in school.

Vogel and others with INCLUDE also were impressed.

So impressed, Vogel said, that Nabozny might be returning to Appleton in the 2013-14 school year to talk with staff and perhaps middle school students.

"The message to students," said Vogel, "is that they have the power to control the culture of a school. They have the power to create an environment that will be inclusive of all. ... You can't sit there and be a bystander."

## BARKER CARRIES ON SON'S WORK

But more than 15 years after Nabozny's legal vic-



PHOTO: COURTESY

**Activist and educator Jamie Nabozny.**

tories, a Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network survey of students found that a hostile climate remained in Wisconsin's public schools. Eighty percent of LGBT students in Wisconsin said they experienced verbal harassment, 38 percent experienced physical harassment, 92 percent said they felt excluded or ostracized by their peers, and 80 percent said they were the subject of rumors and lies.

Those numbers don't surprise Darla Barker of Shiocton, whose 17-year-old gay son Cody committed suicide in September 2010. Cody, who had been working to organize a gay-straight alliance at Schiocton High School and attended an LGBT youth group at the Harmony Cafe in Appleton, hung himself in a barn on his family's farm. He'd been a high school senior for nine days.

"He had a tough time," his mother said. "He had a lot of pushback in school. And he was such a positive young man. He just wanted to make the world better."

Darla Barker followed her son's lead and became a safe schools activist. She's involved in PFLAG and with the gay-straight alliance her son worked to create.


And Barker is involved in INCLUDE, offering a mother's reflection on the consequences of anti-gay harassment and bullying in a documentary made for screening in schools.

"INCLUDE, I think it's great," Barker said. "It's important to reach kids, especially the ones out there struggling."




PHOTO: SCREENSHOT/YOUTUBE

**Darla Barker in a video about her teenage son's life, his campaign for respect, and his death.**




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# Students planning Day of Silence

Students in schools across the country will go silent on April 19 – not because they don't know the answer to a teacher's question but because they are joining in a massive protest against intolerance and bullying.

The annual Day of Silence is coordinated by GLSEN and largely organized by students at middle schools, high schools and colleges. Students take a vow of silence to illustrate the effect of bullying and harassment of LGBT students.

With the day approaching, GLSEN offered a guide to students seeking to participate:

- Invite other students to a "silent lunch."
- Write a letter to the editor of the school newspaper – or other newspapers.
- Ask a teacher for a few minutes during a class to talk about the Day of Silence.
- Host an after-school party to celebrate.
- Wear a Day of Silence button, sticker or T-shirt, which can be handmade or found at [dayofsilence.org](http://dayofsilence.org).

– Lisa Neff



PHOTO: WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/NATIONALDAYOFSILENCE

The Day of Silence, coordinated by GLSEN, is observed in schools across the country on April 19.

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## STUDY: WISCONSIN SCHOOLS HOSTILE TO LGBT STUDENTS

Wisconsin schools are hostile places for many gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender students, according to "School Climate in Wisconsin," a new report from the national Gay, Lesbian & Straight Education Network.

GLSEN's findings are based on interviews from students who participated in a 2011 survey. They show that LGBT students in the state face high levels of harassment based on their sexual orientation or gender expression and regularly hear anti-gay slurs from students and staff.

The research also shows that while most students could identify at least one supportive educator, few had access to any LGBT-inclusive resources or curriculum at school.

"While we have seen some progress nationally in the 14 years since we started our National School Climate Survey, much work remains to ensure that all Wisconsin schools are safe and affirming environments for LGBT students," said GLSEN executive director Eliza Byard. "We look forward to working with our Wisconsin partners to ensure that every LGBT student has equal access to a quality education."

Similar reports were released for other states. The Wisconsin study shows:

- Nine in 10 LGBT students regularly heard homophobic remarks such as "fag" or "dyke."
- 38 percent of LGBT students are physically harassed – pushed or shoved or touched.
- 16 percent of LGBT students are physically assaulted – punched, kicked or injured with a weapon.
- Only one in 10 attended a school with a comprehensive anti-bullying/harassment policy.

– Lisa Neff



PHOTO: GLSEN/FLICKR

Eliza Byard, GLSEN's executive director, addresses a conference.

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IMAGE: PRNEWSFOTO/NEW YORK CITY AIDS MEMORIAL

**IN THE VILLAGE**

A planned New York City AIDS Memorial – final designs were released in late March – will feature an 18-foot steel canopy as the dramatic gateway to the new St. Vincent’s Hospital Park in the West Village neighborhood. The memorial also will feature a central granite fountain, granite benches and a granite paved surface carved with educational and commemorative text. A team of historians, artists, community members and activists led by Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright Tony Kushner will curate the text.



PHOTO: COURTESY WWW.COLORADO.GOV

**Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, D, signs a civil unions bill into law on March 21.**

**COLORADO PASSES CIVIL UNIONS LAW THAT TAKES EFFECT ON MAY 1**

Civil unions for gay couples got the governor’s signature in Colorado on March 21, punctuating a dramatic turnaround in a state where voters banned same-sex marriage in 2006 and restricted protections for gays two decades ago.

Cheers erupted as Democratic Gov. John Hickenlooper signed the bill during a ceremony at the History Colorado Center near the state Capitol. Hundreds looked on, with many chanting “Equal! Equal!”

Some wiped away tears and others hugged during the signing ceremony.

“There is no excuse that people shouldn’t have all the same rights,” Hickenlooper told the crowd, which included dozens of gay couples and others watching from floors above.

The law takes effect May 1.

**IN OTHER NEWS...**

**Former Mississippi Gov. Ronnie Musgrove** says he now regrets signing a state law in 2000 that bans same-sex couples from adopting children. Musgrove, a Democrat, served one term as governor, from January 2000 to January 2004.

**Partners Miriam Rand and Ona Porter and partners Rose Griego and Kim Kiel** recently sued New Mexico for marriage licenses. The couples, represented by the ACLU, maintain they should be able to marry because there is no provision against same-sex marriage in state law or the state constitution.

**Grant High School**, the largest public high school in Portland, Ore., has reclassified six bathrooms as unisex to create another option for transgender students and faculty who feel uncomfortable with traditional bathrooms. The move is relatively uncommon for K-12 schools.

**The American Civil Liberties Union** and the leading gay rights group in Kansas are sharing concerns that state legislators are moving toward ending the legal protections for people living with AIDS and HIV. The measure would repeal a 25-year-old law saying people living with AIDS or HIV cannot be quarantined.

– L.N.

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# DOMA goes on trial

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

When the Defense of Marriage Act passed in 1996, there were no legally married same-sex couple in the United States – or the world. Today, there are more than 112,700 married same-sex couples in the United States awaiting the U.S. Supreme Court's decision on whether the federal government can treat them differently than other married couples.

There also are widowers and widows awaiting the High Court's answer, among them Edith "Edie" Windsor, 83, who brought the battle over DOMA to the Supreme Court on March 27.

DOMA contains two basic provisions – one allows states to refuse to recognize same-sex marriages from other states and another, known as Section 3, requires the federal government to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman and to deny more than 1,100 marriage benefits to gay couples.

The law has been ruled unconstitutional 10 times in seven cases, including in Windsor, which was filed by the American Civil Liberties Union in November 2010 in New York state.

Windsor and Thea Spyer had been together for more than four decades when they married in Canada in 2007. Two years later, Spyer died of complications from multiple sclerosis and left her estate to her wife. Because of DOMA, the U.S. government refused to recognize the marriage and Windsor was required to pay \$363,000 in federal estate taxes. Had Spyer been a man, the tax would have been zero.

Windsor's attorneys argue that DOMA violates the U.S. Constitution by recognizing marriages of different-sex couples but not honoring the legal marriages of same-sex couples.

Windsor won at the U.S. District Court level last June, when Judge Barbara Jones wrote, "DOMA operates to reexamine the states' decisions concerning same-sex marriage. It sanctions some of those decisions and rejects others. But such a sweeping federal review in this arena does not square

with our federalist system of government, which places matters at the 'core' of the domestic relations law exclusively within the province of the states."

An appeals court upheld Jones' decision, prompting a last appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court, which agreed in December to take the case, setting oral arguments for March 27, followed by a decision in late June.

In the arguments on March 27, a majority of justices seemed opposed to Section 3.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said, "If we are totally for the states' decision that there is a marriage between two people, for the federal government then to come in to say no joint return, no marital deduction, no Social Security benefits; your spouse is very sick but you can't get leave; people – if that set of attributes, one might well ask, 'What kind of marriage is this?'"

Later she said that the government had two tiers of marriage – full marriage and skim-milk marriage.

Justice Anthony Kennedy, considered the likely swing vote on the case, suggested that DOMA's federal provision interfered with state rights.

However, as in the Prop 8 challenge, before the justices decide the merits of the case, they must decide whether House Republicans, who are defending DOMA because the Justice Department will not, have standing or the court has jurisdiction.

Chief Justice John Roberts called the situation – the Justice Department siding with the challenger of a federal law that's being defended by congressional leadership – "totally unprecedented."

Justice Antonin Scalia added, "I'm wondering if we're living in this new world where the attorney general can simply decide, yeah, it's unconstitutional, but it's not so unconstitutional that I'm not willing to enforce it, if we're in this new world, I – I don't want these cases like this to come before this court all the time."

If the justices find a lack of standing or jurisdiction, Windsor likely wins her

challenge because the lower court ruling remains, but there would be no definitive decision on Section 3.

DOMA, meanwhile, continues to face other legal challenges. And the law, widely popular in 1996 according to polls, also faces widespread public protest and increasing political opposition.

When the Senate passed DOMA on Sept. 10, 1996, there was only the prospect that same-sex marriages might become legal in Hawaii. There wasn't even collective enthusiasm in the gay community to push for marriage rights.

The Senate vote on DOMA was 85-14. The "nays" all came from Democrats, including Russ Feingold of Wisconsin and Carol Moseley-Braun and Paul Simon of Illinois. Since then, a number of Democrats who voted "yea" have changed their minds, as has Bill Clinton, the president who signed DOMA.

The House vote on July 12, 1996, was a lopsided 342-67. The bill's sponsor, former U.S. Rep. Bob Barr, R-Ga., apologized several years ago for his role. And the House Speaker at the time, Newt Gingrich, now says gay marriage is inevitable.

As Chad Griffin, the president of the Human Rights Campaign, observed recently, "We've reached the tipping point on marriage equality."

## ON THE DOCKET

The case: United States v. Edith Schlain Windsor

The background: In 1996, Congress passed the Defense of Marriage Act, which contains a provision – Section 3 – that defines marriage as the union of a man and a woman and requires the U.S. government to refuse to recognize legal same-sex marriages. The law denies married gays and lesbians more than 1,100 federal benefits.

The parties: Widow Edith "Edie" Windsor, represented by a team that includes the American Civil Liberties Union, sued after the death of her wife, Thea Spyer. Windsor was required to pay more than \$363,000 in taxes on her inheritance from Spyer. Had Spyer been a man, the taxes would have been zero.

Because the U.S. Justice Department declined to defend DOMA in court, Section 3 is being defended by attorneys hired by U.S. House Republicans – the group is called the House of Representatives' Bipartisan Legal Advisory Group or BLAG.

The questions: Does the U.S. House leadership have standing before the court? Also, does Section 3 violate the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment?

The verdict: Due in late June.

– LN.

Right, one of the many pro-equality signs that ralliers displayed before the Supreme Court and later posted pictures of on Facebook.

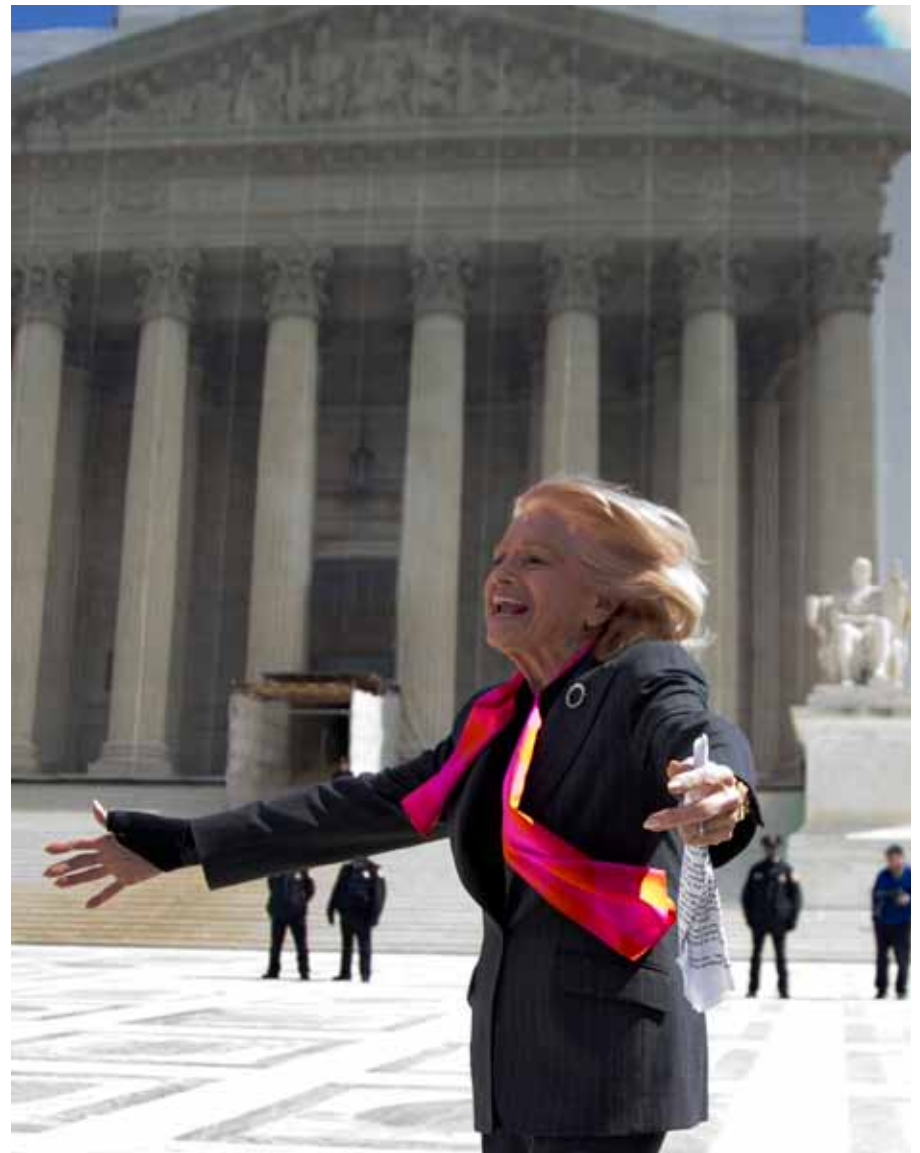


PHOTO: CAROLYN KASTER/AP

**Plaintiff Edith Windsor of New York reacts as she looks toward supporters in front of the Supreme Court in Washington on March 27, after the court heard arguments on the Defense of Marriage Act. Windsor, who married her late wife in Canada, was forced to pay \$363,000 in estate taxes due to DOMA. Married U.S. couples are exempt from the tax.**



# Experts see narrow High Court ruling on Prop 8

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The U.S. Supreme Court seemed reluctant March 26 to say the Constitution guarantees a right to same-sex marriage. However, as the historic hearing unfolded, it seemed likely a narrow ruling – or a dismissal of the case – would lead to more marriage licenses for gays and lesbians in California.

The High Court on March 26 heard the challenge to California's Proposition 8, the constitutional amendment approved by voters in 2008 ending same-sex marriage in the state.

The basic question presented to the court was whether the Constitution includes a right for same-sex couples to marry.

But for the justices to answer that question, they must first agree that they should be deciding the Prop 8 case at all. Because California's top officials declined to defend Prop 8, proponents of the ballot initiative intervened as advocates for the amendment, creating a question of standing.

When the hearing began, the first questions were for Prop 8 attorney Charles Cooper on whether private citizens can defend a state measure, even when the state declined to participate.

"I don't think we've ever allowed anything like that," said Chief Justice John Roberts.

Both Cooper and later

Theodore Olson, the American Foundation for Equal Rights attorney representing the same-sex couples challenging Prop 8, were peppered with questions from the justices about standing.

Then the justices turned their focus to Prop 8 and marriage.

Justices Sonia Sotomayor, Elena Kagan, Stephen G. Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg had strong reactions against Cooper's argument that the state's sole interest in marriage is to promote procreation. Kagan, for one, asked the lawyer whether states could ban people over age 55 from marrying because, generally, they won't be giving birth to children.

Cooper replied, "No, Your Honor, it would not be constitutional."

Olson, argued for a broad ruling that there is a constitutional right to same-sex marriage on due process and equal protection grounds. Prop 8, he told the justices, "walls off the institution of marriage, which is not society's right. It's an individual right that this court again and again and again has said the right to get married, the right to have the relationship of marriage is a personal right. It's a part of the right of privacy, association, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

But Justice Anthony Kennedy, who's considered the swing vote, indicated any decision in the case for same-sex marriage would be nar-

row. He showed concern for children in families denied equality by the state, but said extending marriage rights to same-sex couples in all 50 states would take the court into "unchartered waters."

When the session ended, legal experts seemed to agree that if the justices decide the case on its merits, they will not overturn the 30 constitutional amendments and 10 state laws against gay marriage. More likely is that a majority will affirm a lower court ruling, which would clear the way for California clerks to resume issuing marriage licenses to gay couples but not directly impact other states.

David Boies, representing Prop 8 challengers Kris Perry and Sandy Stier, and Paul Katami and Jeff Zarrillo, said after the hearing, that the justices seemed "thoughtful."

"It's been a long journey here over the past three and a half years, and we are all greatly encouraged by the imminent decision. The remarkable thing that happened in there is that there was no attempt to defend the ban of gay and lesbian marriage – all that was discussed in there is whether this should be decided at the state level. But our federal constitution grants fundamental rights to all Americans."

Perry, standing on the steps outside the court, said, "Today is a monumental day, not just for Sandy and

me, but for the millions of other Americans across the country who have waited for years for the Supreme Court to consider whether they too should enjoy the right to marry. Witnessing today's proceedings gives me hope that our four sons, and kids across America, will soon live in a country where love and equality prevail."

Thousands of people had gathered in the court plaza – far more calling for same-sex marriage rights than demonstrating against equality.

At the United for Marriage rally at the court, U.S. Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton told the crowd, "There are no second-class citizens in America. And there are no second-class marriages in America."

Rea Carey of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force called the hearing a "watershed moment for America."

"Today," she said, "we stand on the steps of the Supreme Court and on the threshold of history, as the highest court in the land considers

one of the most defining civil rights issues of our time. Our gathering at the Supreme Court, as well as all of the powerful events occurring in every state across the country, reflects the vast diversity of support for marriage equality. The array of people and organizations standing up for equality is historic: nearly

300 leading businesses, 30 retired military leaders, 131 top Republicans, 214 sitting members of Congress, and dozens of religious, labor, legal and family health organizations."

A ruling in the Prop 8 case is expected in late June.

## ON THE DOCKET

The case: Dennis Hollingsworth v. Kristin M. Perry

The background: On Nov. 4, 2008, California voters approved Proposition 8, which amended the state constitution to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman. The state then ceased to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples.

The parties: Two couples – Kris Perry and Sandy Stier and Paul Katami and Jeff Zarrillo – sued to overturn Prop 8, with support from the American Foundation for Equal Rights and representation by attorneys Theodore Olson and David Boies.

After California's top officials refused to defend Prop 8, the initiative's proponents intervened. Their attorney before the Supreme Court was Charles Cooper.

The questions: Do the proponents of Prop 8 have standing before the Supreme Court? Does Proposition 8 violate due process and equal protection?

The verdict: Due in late June.

– LN.

## A wave of support for equality

### COURT from one

in New York.

The tide brought in new declarations of support for same-sex marriage from politicians in city halls, county administration buildings, state capitols and the U.S. Capitol.

The wave churned rip tides for the right. The day after the court heard arguments against the Defense of Marriage Act, which bars the federal government from recognizing legal same-sex marriages, conservative talk show host Rush Limbaugh acknowledged, without cheer, "This issue is lost. I don't care what the Supreme Court does. This is inevitable."

Justice Antonin Scalia, during the DOMA arguments, reacted with sarcasm when it was suggested that many have changed their minds since Bill Clinton signed the

law in 1996. Scalia said there's hardly been a sea change when same-sex marriage is against the law in 40 states and legal in only nine states and the District of Columbia.

But there has been a sea change.

When DOMA was passed, there were no legally married same-sex couples in the United States and 27 percent of voters supported same-sex marriage.

Today there are more than 112,700 married same-sex couples and polls show 58 percent support marriage equality – and the number is rising rapidly.

Scalia, clearly, is in the minority in the court of public opinion. And, the way the arguments went on March 26 and March 27, it's likely he's in the minority on the Supreme Court.

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# PROP 8

## ON THE RECORD: PROP 8 ARGUMENTS

Excerpts from the March 26 U.S. Supreme Court arguments on California's constitutional ban on same-sex marriage.

"There are some 40,000 children in California, according to the red brief, that live with same-sex parents, and they want their parents to have full recognition and full status. The voice of those children is important in this case, don't you think?"

– JUSTICE ANTHONY KENNEDY to Charles Cooper, the lawyer for the defenders of Proposition 8.

"Outside of the marriage context, can you think of any other rational basis, reason, for a state using sexual orientation as a factor in denying homosexuals benefits or imposing burdens on them? ... Denying them a job, not granting them benefits of some sort, any other decision?"

– JUSTICE SONIA SOTOMAYOR asking Cooper about treating gay people differently than other people.



PHOTO: COURTESY  
**Justice Sonia Sotomayor.**

"I cannot. I do not have any - anything to offer you in that regard."

– LAWYER CHARLES COOPER responding to Sotomayor.

"If you are over the age of 55, you don't help us serve the government's interest in regulating procreation through marriage. So why is that different?"

– JUSTICE ELENA KAGAN questioning Cooper's assertion that marriage is only about procreation.

# DOMA

## ON THE RECORD: DOMA ARGUMENTS

Excerpts from arguments before the Supreme Court on March 27 about a federal law that prevents legally married gay and lesbian couples from receiving a range of federal benefits afforded to straight married Americans.



PHOTO: COURTESY  
**Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg.**

"If (President Obama) has made a determination that executing the law by enforcing the terms is unconstitutional, I don't see why he doesn't have the courage of his convictions and execute not only the statute, but do it consistent with his view of the Constitution, rather than saying, 'Oh, we'll wait 'til the Supreme Court tells us we have no choice.'"

– CHIEF JUSTICE JOHN ROBERTS.

"You're saying No, state said two kinds of marriage; the full marriage, and then this sort of skim milk marriage."

– JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG to Paul Clement, the lawyer representing the House Republican leadership defending DOMA.

"Well, is what happened in 1996 – and I'm going to quote from the House Report here – is that 'Congress decided to reflect an honor of collective moral judgment and to express moral disapproval of homosexuality.' Is that what happened in 1996?"

– JUSTICE ELENA KAGAN asking Clement about Congress' intent with DOMA.

"Nine. And – and so there has been this sea change between now and 1996."

– JUSTICE ANTONIN SCALIA referring to the number of states where same-sex couples can marry and expressing sarcasm over attorney Roberta Kaplan's claim that many minds have changed since DOMA was passed.



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# A tale of two Dans: Evangelical soldiers to gay activists

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

Close friends while attending the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, Dan Choi and Dan Manning were heavily involved in the campus' evangelical Christian ministry. They even made a missionary trip together to the Dominican Republic in 2001.

Although neither man knew it at the time, they were both closeted gays.

Earlier this month, Choi (West Point class of 2003), an internationally known LGBT civil rights activist, and Equality Wisconsin board co-president Manning (class of 2004) had a brief reunion in Milwaukee after Choi accepted his friend's invitation to be the guest speaker at a groundbreaking joint fundraiser for Equality Wisconsin and Fair Wisconsin. The event, held on a Monday evening at a private home on the city's East Side, raised \$17,000 to be divided between the two groups.

Choi had also planned to stump for Manning in Fond du Lac, where the latter was waging what turned out to be a successful campaign to become the city's first out gay city council member. A manufacturing engineer at Giddings and Lewis, Inc., Manning also is the founder of Salute the Troops, an organization that benefits Wisconsin veterans.

Choi was unable to help his pal on the campaign trail,

however. He had to cut his trip short when he learned that after two years of legal battles stemming from his arrest during a 2010 White House protest, his case was finally proceeding to a conclusion.

## PARALLEL LIVES

Although the two friends' lives followed parallel paths in many ways, their experiences have been very different.

Manning, who grew up in Vidalia, Ga., said he secretly dated another man outside the campus community during his freshman and sophomore years at West Point.

"I was trying to rationalize it, and I said to myself that I must be bisexual – surely I wasn't gay," he said, laughing. He said there were a handful of other gay cadets he knew on campus – all of them closeted. The unofficial leader of the secret network was given the honorific title of "queen bee," Manning added.

Choi said he was shocked when he learned about all this activity years later. The son of a Southern Baptist minister from Orange County, Calif., Choi described himself as "completely closeted" during his West Point years. He said he followed a philosophy best described as "don't ask, don't tell, don't listen." His fear of exposure was so acute that he wouldn't even utter the word "gay" or listen to talk about the issue.

"I just thought it was a phase or something that a demonic exercise could cure me of," Choi said.

Manning later joined the Service Academy Gay and Lesbian Alumni Association Network, which is an umbrella organization for the groups KnightsOut (U.S. Military Academy), USNAOut (Naval Academy) and Blue-Alliance (Air Force Academy). Manning reviewed requests to join KnightsOut in order to ensure the applicants were really gay and not outside infiltrators. The group has about 40 West Point alumni and cadets.

Manning was surprised when he received an application from Choi in January 2009, but he quickly recognized what an effective spokesman his old friend would make for the group.

"It took us quite a while to convince Dan to be the face of SAGALA, but he ultimately did it out of that rare compassion he has for people," Manning said. "Dan's a great soldier. He saw the need, and he took action."

Choi said he never wanted to be an activist, but "even before we went public, people were emailing me saying they were suicidal. ... It was only when people cried out for help that I realized we have to do everything we can with the short amount of time we have."

When Choi finally came out, it was in a big way – on



PHOTO: EMILY BUNZEL

Guest speaker Dan Choi addresses a crowd of more than 120 people at the joint fundraiser held for Equality Wisconsin and Fair Wisconsin.

MSNBC's "The Rachel Maddow Show." He went on to speak at numerous LGBT events, including New York City's LGBT Pride March, and participate in protests. In addition to his arrest in Washington, he was taken into custody in Moscow.

Choi was present when President Barack Obama signed the bill repealing DADT on Dec. 22, 2010.

Despite – or perhaps due to – his bravery, Choi has encountered more rejection than his friend.

Manning's old West Point

roommates have been very supportive since he came out, he said. On the other hand, Choi's former West Point friends abandoned him.

"My roommates were so religious that we ... would all pray for the entire company to become religious," he said.

Manning, unlike Choi, also has received support from his family. Choi's father "officially doesn't love me," he said, referring to his dad's employment by the Southern Baptist Convention, which prohibits its members from approving, affirming or endorsing "homosexual behavior."

"The real pain is to know that no matter what you do, your parents aren't going to be proud of you," Choi said.

But Choi intends to remain a committed activist as long as he's needed, he said, and he expects that to be for many years to come.

"The more you sweat in peace, the less you bleed in war," Choi said. "We have to ask ourselves how hard are we willing to fight now so that future generations don't have to bleed. We've just done our basic training."

## Choi found guilty, fined \$100

After two years of fighting charges stemming from a 2010 arrest for chaining himself to a fence outside the White House to protest President Barack Obama's inaction on "don't ask, don't tell," Lt. Dan Choi's legal battles reached a conclusion on March 28. A federal judge convicted the activist of failing to obey lawful order, a misdemeanor, and fined Choi \$100.

Choi could have faced up to six months in jail, but he was nevertheless angered by the verdict. Before leaving the courtroom, he vowed not to pay the fine and shouted, "Send me to jail," according to the Washington Blade.

The Associated Press described Choi's behavior during the trial as erratic. Pacing up and down the courtroom as he represented himself, Choi was alternately emotional and angry, according to the news service.

Following his hearing, Choi was admit-

ted to the psychiatric ward at the Veteran's Administration Hospital in Brockton, Mass. He told supporters via e-mail that he had experienced a "breakdown and anxiety attack."

On the website Pam's House Blend, Choi wrote that he'd been betrayed by "elected leaders and gay organizations as well as many who have exploited my name."

Milwaukee lesbian military activist Miriam Ben-Shalom accompanied Choi to court to support him.

"The lesson we learned today is we need to start taking care of our activists who are willing to stand up and fight back against injustice," Ben-Shalom was quoted as saying by the Blade after the trial. "Today we have as pure an example as I can ever come up with about the toll it takes on a human being to stand up and fight back."

– Louis Weisberg



PHOTO: COURTESY

## Gay man elected to Fond du Lac City Council

In what is believed to be a first for the city of Fond du Lac, an out gay man was elected April 2 to serve on the City Council. Equality Wisconsin board co-president Dan Manning, above, is an Army veteran, manufacturing engineer and founder of the group Salute the Troops.

# { Editorial }

## Passion now on our side

We routinely condemn leaders who oppose marriage equality as throwbacks whom future generations will judge harshly. That's because we have a progressive view of the world. We see the march of humanity as one of overall advancement, despite some occasional backsliding. We chart history as a wavering but upsloping line leading inexorably toward peace, compassion and acceptance.

For decades following Stonewall, the LGBT community survived mostly on crumbs from the table of power. Our political champions were well intentioned but overly cautious pragmatists. They patted us sympathetically on the back with one hand while holding out the other for a donation.

They were no match for our ruthless enemies, salivating with hate. Over the past 20 years, our political allies – to paraphrase the great Irish poet William Butler Yeats – lacked all conviction, while our enemies were “full of passionate intensity.”

Then suddenly our movement reached a critical mass, and our sloping line of progress veered sharply upward. Faced with both the inevitability of equality and the dark judgment of history, one after another of our sympathizers emerged from the shameful secrecy of their own closets. We welcome them with open arms and we hope they savor the relief that comes with speaking their heart's truth.

In recent weeks, we at WiG have watched this parade of acceptance with awe and gratitude.

We were stunned when Illinois Republican Party Chairman Pat Brady urged his legislators to back marriage equality and then survived an effort by the Christian right to oust him. We applauded when U.S. Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, chose his love for his gay son over his fear of political repercussions and came out for same-sex marriage.

Portman said he wanted his son to experience the same kind of loving marriage that he enjoys with his wife.

Portman's bravery, coming before the U.S. Supreme Court took up two landmark cases on marriage equality, set into motion a phenomenon that CNN describes as the “Portman effect.” In the days that followed, all but two Democratic U.S. senators up for re-election next year announced their support, including Sen. Jon Tester, from conservative Montana, and Sen. Kay Hagan, from the Bible Belt state of North Carolina.

According to a number of recent polls, support for marriage equality has soared to an all-time high. A CNN/ORC International survey found the number of American supporters has risen from 40 percent in 2007 to 53 percent today. The reason is people like Portman's son Will. The same poll showed that 57 percent of Americans now say they have a family member or close friend who is gay or lesbian, up 12 points from 2007.

Harvey Milk's call to “come out, come out, wherever you are” is the catalyst behind our success.

Regardless of how the U.S. Supreme Court rules this summer, there is no going back now. Passion has arrived on our side of the issue, and it's our opponents whose resolve is evaporating. Even die-hard homophobes now acknowledge, with great regret, that they're on the losing side of history.

Let's hope that history remembers their names as symbols of brutish ignorance, as impediments to human progress and the evolution of the soul.

## WiG's WEB PICKS

Some of our favorite recent pictorials from cyberspace

So same sex couples aren't good parents?



When is the last time a same sex couple disowned their child for being straight?

Have A Gay Day



Dear Justice Thomas,



Please don't forget that your marriage was once illegal in many states.



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## ON THE RECORD



“Over 1,057,000 people have been killed by guns in the USA since John Lennon was shot and killed on 8 Dec. 1980.”

– Tweet from Yoko Ono, weighing in on the gun control debate.

“We’ve sold almost nothing. If Argentina had won the World Cup, the plaza would be full.”

– DANIEL MARTINEZ telling The New York Times that buttons he was selling on the streets of Buenos Aires featuring the new pontiff’s picture are not a hit with the public.

“If you feel, respectfully, that you can get a higher return than the 38 percent you got last year, it’s a free country. You can sell your shares of Starbucks and buy shares in another company. Thank you very much.”

– Starbucks CEO HOWARD SCHULTZ responding to a shareholder who complained that the Seattle-based company’s support for same-sex marriage was bad for business.

“I love my sofa and I sit on it every night. And it loves me back. If I could marry my sofa I might think about it. I would. And maybe in a few years it could be possible? You never know.”

– RUSH LIMBAUGH comparing marriage equality with man-furniture love on his radio hatecast.

“Even CPAC had to cut back on its speakers this year, by about 300 pounds.”

– ANN COULTER taking a swipe at Republican New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, who was not invited to speak at the Conservative Political Action Conference because he collaborated with Barack Obama to bring relief to his state for victims of Superstorm Sandy.

“The compelling argument is on the side of homosexuals. That’s where the compelling argument is. ‘We’re Americans. We just want to be treated like everybody else.’ That’s a compelling argument, and to deny that, you have got to have a very strong argument on the other side. The argument on the other side hasn’t been able to do anything but thump the Bible.”

– Right-wing Fox News pundit BILL O’REILLY sharing his surprising views on same-sex marriage with his viewing audience.

“Bob was a family man. Had he been allowed to form a relationship with another man, he would have been the best husband ever and might still be alive. But Bob could not be at peace with this because the people surrounding him shoved their own judgment down his throat and, sadly, he bought into it. He felt the shame that every hypocritical ‘God is love’ fundamentalist wanted him to feel.”

– Actress SUSAN OLSEN, best known as Cindy Brady from “The Brady Bunch,” writing about gay actor Robert Reed, who played her TV dad. Reed died of AIDS-related complications in 1992.

“Absolutely. I never thought of marriage as something only for men and women. But I’d never marry a guy I didn’t like.”

– WILLIE NELSON answering a Texas Monthly reporter who asked if he backed marriage equality.



## Opinion

JAMAKAYA

What an exhilarating time to be gay. Our lives were the central focus of national attention for days on end!

However the U.S. Supreme Court rules on the two marriage equality cases heard in late March, the sheer volume of publicity they prompted has advanced our cause.

The fundamentalist “God Hates Fags” fringe was there, of course, looking as hateful and crazy as they always do, defeating whatever purpose it is they represent. Less vengeful anti-equality types mostly seemed dejected, complaining that same-sex unions demean their marriages. I almost wanted to throw an arm around them and buck them up a bit. It seems kind of sad to have so little confidence in yourself.

Humor always helps.

Several people were quoted in the press saying, “Gay people deserve to be just as miserable as heterosexuals!”

One woman held a sign reading: “Three words that

## Enjoying the limelight

will save the economy: Gay Bridal Registry.”

Everyone loves an unlikely hero. The story of 83-year-old Edith Windsor, whose legal challenge may overturn the federal Defense of Marriage Act, struck a chord with everyone in part because it cast the IRS as the villain. After 40 years with her partner, Windsor married Thea Spyer in 2007. When Spyer died, the IRS demanded \$363,000 in estate taxes from Windsor, a sum she would not have owed had she been married to a man.

Right-wing firebrand Antonin Scalia managed to refrain from his defamatory comments about gay people. Just last year, he equated homosexuality with murder. It was Chief Justice John Roberts who stooped to sinister insinuations this time. Borrowing from the anti-Semitic playbook, he demanded of Windsor’s attorney: “You don’t doubt that the lobby supporting the enactment of same sex-marriage laws in different states is politically

powerful, do you?”

Quick-witted attorney Roberta Kaplan shot back this reality check: “The fact of the matter is, Mr. Chief Justice, that no other group in recent history has been subjected to popular referenda to take away rights that have already been given, or (to) exclude those rights, the way gay people have.”

I loved the roles Kaplan and the women justices played. Ruth Ginsburg’s brilliant sound bite about heterosexual marriage as “full” and same-sex marriage as “skim milk marriage” will go down in history. Elena Kagan reminded the court of the animus against homosexuality written into the 1996 House report on DOMA. Sonia Sotomayor carefully dismantled the anti-gay arguments, from the government’s alleged need for “uniformity” in its laws to the supposed societal value of exclusively heterosexual procreation.

Please rush to any library or bookstore and get Sotomayor’s recently released

autobiography, “My Beloved World.” Sotomayor has had a difficult life and finds her greatest joy in her extended and chosen families. She has wisdom, empathy and smarts in profusion. We should pray she stays on the court for a very long time.

As gay people revivify the institution of marriage in the next few years, President Barack Obama may have the chance to nominate another U.S. Supreme Court justice. I think it’s past time we have an uppity black woman join her Jewish and Latina sisters. How about Mary Frances Berry, a longtime member of the U.S. Civil Rights Commission who drove old white guys crazy? Or better yet, Angela Davis. She’s a legal scholar, a lesbian AND a communist!

Hey, anything can happen. This is America!

## Opinion

UNITED FOR MARRIAGE

## Making amends and building a coalition

On March 26-27, the United for Marriage coalition – which consists of 180 partner organizations – held historic rallies outside the Supreme Court for marriage equality.

Thousands attended to celebrate love and commitment, and to demonstrate that the nation is ready for marriage equality.

Over the course of two days, we were joined by over 50 speakers from the LGBT community and from allies in the labor, women’s, civil rights, faith, and immigration movements. As a coalition we have achieved historic accomplishments and have become stronger together.

Since the conclusion of the rallies, the coalition has learned about the mistreatment of a few individuals who were attending and speaking at the rallies. In one case, a queer undocumented

activist was asked to edit his speech to hide part of who he is. In another case, several activists were asked to lower the trans pride flag in order to keep out of the scope of TV cameras.

We apologize for having caused harm to the individuals involved. Apologies are being made individually and collectively and we are working to make direct amends.

We know that apologies alone are not enough. We are committing to the following steps:

Individuals involved with the process of talking with rally speakers about the content of their speeches are reaching out to apologize for harm caused.

We will build on our conversations to also seek ways that we can come together for joint action on issues of shared concerns such as immigration reform and

other issues that advance equality and justice.

Individuals involved with the request to lower the trans pride flag are reaching out to apologize for harm caused.

Opportunities for broader education on both trans and queer undocumented issues within the greater LGBT community will be taken.

Moving forward as a coalition we will work to achieve a society where everyone can be their full selves in an accepting and diverse community. We know that the incredible power of our community stems from our experiences and stories, and that only when all are respected and included will we achieve our goals.

From the rallies in DC to the events that happened in all 50 states across the country, this past week has been extraordinary and we

**The coalition has learned about the mistreatment of a few individuals who were attending and speaking at the rallies.**

look forward to continued work together to ensure that all LGBT people are equal under the law. We are committed to working as a coalition in the future to make an even larger impact. We are stronger together.

## REGIONAL BRIEFS

WALKER  
PENS  
MEMOIR

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, a possible contender for the GOP presidential nomination in 2016, is writing a memoir detailing his two years in office.

The Sentinel imprint of Penguin Group says "Unintimidated: A Governor's Story and a Nation's Challenge," is tentatively scheduled for release late this year.

The Republican has become a darling of the conservative right. Last year he stripped most public workers of nearly all their collective bargaining powers – a move that sparked mass protests at the state Capitol in Madison.

Sentinel said that Walker is writing the book with Marc Thiessen, the former chief speechwriter for President George W. Bush and author of "Courting Disaster: How the CIA Kept America Safe and How Barack Obama Is Inviting the Next Attack."



PHOTO: GAGE SKIDMORE/Flickr

**Scott Walker addresses the Conservative Political Action Conference earlier this year in Maryland.**

## IN OTHER NEWS...

**The Bad River Band** of Lake Superior Chippewa has set up a link on its website to raise money for a legal fight against a proposed open-pit mine just south of the tribe's Ashland County reservation. Republican lawmakers passed a law earlier this year loosening the state's mining regulations to help the company behind the proposed mine increase its profitability. Tribal members fear pollution from the mine will contaminate their water and wild rice sloughs.

**The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin** is organizing against Scott Walker's push to expand voucher schools, saying the proposal would be disastrous for the public education system. The Legislature's joint finance committee is holding hearings this month, including in the Milwaukee area on April 4, in Green Bay on April 8, in Lake Delton on April 10 and in St. Croix County on April 18.

**Illinois state lawmakers** departed Springfield for spring break without a House vote on a bill to legalize same-sex marriage. The measure has passed the state Senate and is endorsed by the governor. House Speaker Mike Madigan has said sponsors are 12 votes short of the 60 needed for passage.

**Williston, Ind., city commissioners** said no to 10 local pastors who want their flock to be able to carry concealed weapons into their houses of worship.

## COMMUNITY BRIEFS



PHOTO: COURTESY

**Lesbian duo Emily Saliers and Amy Ray, better known as the Indigo Girls, are headlining the second night of PrideFest Milwaukee.**

INDIGO GIRLS TO HEADLINE  
AT PRIDEFEST MILWAUKEE

PrideFest Milwaukee recently announced the Indigo Girls will headline at the three-day LGBT celebration, performing on the Miller Lite Mainstage at 10:30 p.m. on June 8 – the second night of Pride at the Summerfest grounds.

"We are excited to have the Indigo Girls at PrideFest Milwaukee," said PrideFest president Scott Gunkel. "Their outspoken devotion to social issues, including marriage equality, anti-discrimination laws, and legal protections for LGBT families, is as commendable as their musical talent."

PrideFest previously announced the performers for the first night of Pride on June 7. They include: Andy Bell of Erasure, God-

Des & She, Sophie B. Hawkins, ABBA Salute, Big Bad Gina, Bad Romance, the Wisconsin Royalty Drag Show, the Windy City Beauties, Furrlesque, Chicago DJ legends Teri Bristol and Psycho Bitch.

For details on tickets, which go on sale on April 15, go to [pridefest.com](http://pridefest.com).

## IN OTHER NEWS...

**The Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools** holds an open house at its new digs, 122 E. Olin Ave., Suite 290, Madison, 5-7 p.m. on April 25. The group also is making plans for its 17th annual Celebration of Leadership Youth Scholarship and Awards Dinner on May 11 at the Monona Terrace in Madison. For more, visit [gsafewi.org](http://gsafewi.org).

**Out at Wrigley**, the annual LGBT celebration at a Cubs game, is organizing for 2014. Save the Aug. 3 date, when the Chicago team takes on the Dodgers. The event benefits Chicago's Center on Halsted and the National Gay and Lesbian Sports Hall of Fame. For more, visit [outatwrigley.com](http://outatwrigley.com).

**The Kenosha Art Association** seeks artists for The Good Old Summer-time Art Fair set for June 2. For more, visit [kenoshaartassociation.org](http://kenoshaartassociation.org).

**The Historic Third Ward** Spring Gallery Night and Day is April 19-20, with more than 50 venues participating.

– L.N.



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# Which shoes to choose?

## Study evaluates effect of thick-heeled running shoes

**By Alan Bavley**

*AP writer*

The style of your running shoes isn't just making a fashion statement. It may be controlling the way you run and setting you up for injuries down the road.

That's what researchers at the University of Kansas Hospital found when they put a dozen high school athletes through their paces on a treadmill.

When the teens ran barefoot or in flat-soled racing shoes, they generally landed on the front halves of their feet, the researchers say. But when the young athletes put on standard-issue running shoes with thick, cushioned heels, they instantly switched to a radically different gait, striking the treadmills with their heels.

Although there is no direct evidence that landing on your heels when you run leads to long-term injury, some experts say that running this way may over time increase wear and tear to knees and hips.

"It may be more natural to land on your forefoot. It's uncomfortable to land on your heel," said Scott Mullen, the sports medicine specialist who co-authored the study. "But there's something in the makeup of the (cushioned) shoe that promotes that kind of heel strike."

Mullen presented his findings in Chicago at the annual meeting of the American Academy of Orthopaedic Surgeons. The study will be

published in the *Journal of Pediatric Orthopaedics*.

Mullen, a marathoner and triathlete, put the teens on a treadmill to add some perspective to the growing reaction among runners against thick-heeled shoes. In fact, the relative merits of different shoe soles have become a regular topic of debate in recent years.

Barefoot running or running in "minimalistic" shoes with as little as a third of an inch between the sole of the foot and the ground has become popular as a more "natural" way to run. The idea was promoted by the 2009 best-selling book "Born to Run," about the Tarahumara Indians of Mexico, who run for hundreds of miles without injury wearing thin-soled sandals.

The injury-prevention message has also been fueled by some research findings, including a Harvard

study from 2010 that looked at runners in Kenya. The researchers found that even on hard surfaces, barefoot runners who landed on their forefeet gave their bodies less of a jolt than did runners who wore shoes and landed on their heels.

Shoe companies, which had been adding padding to their products since they debuted in the 1970s, changed course. They have come out with shoes that minimize the difference in the thickness of the heel and sole of the shoe.

Mullen wanted to see how the different kinds of shoes affected young athletes who hadn't settled on a running style.

His subjects were six boys and six girls ranging in age from 13 to 18 who were recruited from local track teams. They took turns on a treadmill that was surrounded by 12 infrared

cameras recording motion in three dimensions from markers attached to their feet, ankles and knees.

Each did short runs at different speeds going barefoot, wearing the conventional cushioned-heel running shoes most of them used for training or wearing racing flats with little or no heel elevation.

In the cushioned shoes, runners landed on their heels 70 percent of the time. But in track flats, they hit heel-first less than 35 percent of the time, and barefoot 30 percent of the time.

"Simply by changing their footwear, the runners' foot strike would change," Mullen said. "When they ran in the cushioned heel of an average running shoe — even when running a five-minute mile — the athletes landed on their heel first."

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PHOTO: STOCK

### Blueberries add power to your diet – and flavor.

In a world where fatty, fried and frosted foods are often the cheapest, quickest and most readily available options, it can be easy to forget the true purpose of eating – to healthfully fuel our bodies.

“The higher quality fuel you put in your body, the better you will function. The right diet can potentially prevent you from developing certain diseases and conditions,” says Gerry Cysewski, co-author of “Spirulina: Nature’s SuperFood” and chief science officer of Nutrex Hawaii, a nutritional supplement manufacturer.

Here are some ideas for fitting three superfoods into your diet:

#### BLUEBERRIES

Skip the sodium overload of chomping on chips and lower your risk for heart disease, diabetes and even the common cold with some blueberries. Blueberries are full of flavor as well as antioxidants, phytoflavonoids, Vitamin C and potassium.

their own, blueberries are also delicious as a yogurt, oatmeal or cereal topper.

#### SPIRULINA

For a wealth of protein, vitamins, minerals and antioxidants, take a cue from the ancient Mayans and Aztecs and incorporate spirulina in your daily diet.

Hawaiian spirulina, a microalgae-based superfood, contains more than 100 nutrients, and a three-gram serving contains higher levels of key antioxidants, enzymes, vitamins and minerals than five servings of fruits and vegetables.

“A single serving of spirulina is like a rainbow of good nutrition, containing the orange of beta-carotene for immune system support, the yellow of zeaxanthin for eye and brain health, the green of chlorophyll for anti-toxin health benefits, and the blue of phycocyanin for inflammatory balance,” says Cysewski.

Consider taking pill supplements, or if you prefer, mix spirulina powder in dips like guacamole or hummus. Or for a tasty breakfast, lunch or snack, add it to a smoothie.

#### SPINACH

Popeye was onto something when he downed those cans of spinach. The dark leafy greens contain minerals, vitamins, pigments and phytonutrients that benefit eyesight, blood pressure, muscles, bones, skin and a healthy nervous system.

Opt for the fresh variety, swapping out iceberg lettuce in salads, or sauté lightly with olive oil and garlic for a great side. Spinach is also tasty in omelets and makes a healthy alternative to ground meat in lasagna.

With a little creativity, giving your body the right fuel it needs to stay healthy can be convenient and delicious.



## Sit on this advice

StatePoint

New research published in the Archives of Internal Medicine and other journals shows that sitting for long stretches can be detrimental to your health, contributing to obesity, cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and chronic kidney disease.

“The best defense – is to move more,” says Dr. Keith Overland, president of the American Chiropractic Association.

But when you’re not in motion – when you’re sitting or standing – doing it correctly can make a big difference in your health.

#### SIT CORRECTLY

“When you do sit, make sure to do it correctly so you don’t ruin your posture or strain your muscles, leading to pain that could inhibit you from getting the activity you need,” suggests Overland.

To prevent problems, keep your feet on the floor or a footrest and don’t cross your legs. Your knees should

be at or below the level of your hips. Adjust the backrest of your chair to support your low- and mid-back or use a back support, and avoid sitting in the same position for long periods of time.

Sitting with a wallet in your back pocket is particularly damaging, according to experts. The pressure from the wallet on your spine can aggravate your sciatic nerve, causing numbness and lower back pain. For that reason, chiropractors recommend carrying wallets in your front pocket.

Include frequent micro-breaks into your sitting time, stretching your neck, arms, wrists, back, and legs. Simple stretches include neck rotations, fist clenches, arm dangles and shoulder shrugs.

Most of all, don’t sit for too long. Stand up and stretch your legs with a short walk about every 20 to 30 minutes. Avoid working through lunch.

#### MAINTAIN GOOD POSTURE

Poor posture not only consumes more energy but also can lead to excessive strain on your postural muscles and may even cause them to weaken when held in certain positions for long periods of time. The postural muscles are prone to injury and back pain, but maintaining good posture, sitting properly and moving regularly can help you stay pain-free.

You can learn more healthy tips at [www.chirohealthy.com](http://www.chirohealthy.com).

While you may not be able to quit your desk job, you can prevail over inactivity and move yourself closer to better health.



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## Getting up when you're down

### Four simple ways to fight depression

It's no wonder nearly one in 10 Americans suffers from depression.

"Top risk factors include being unable to work or unemployed; having no health insurance; suffering from obesity," psychologist Gregory L. Jantz notes in a news release, citing a U.S. Centers for Disease Control study. "Unfortunately, those topics have dominated headlines for the past five years. What's worse, by 2020, the World Health Organization estimates depression will be the second most debilitating disease worldwide."

The author of "Overcoming Anxiety, Worry and Fear" (www.aplaceofhope.com), says these negative emotions along with sustained, excessive stress can lead to depression, which now overshadows other problems for which patients seek help at his clinic.

"Depression can be rooted in a number of problems, and those need to be addressed – simply taking a pill is not usually effective treatment. Anger, fear and guilt can all be underlying causes, even when the person isn't aware she's experiencing those feelings."

A holistic treatment approach, which may or may not include medication, helps people overcome a bout of the debilitating illness, and learn techniques to manage it themselves, he says.

People at risk of depression can work at maintaining their emotional equilibrium by counterbalancing negative feelings with optimism, hope, and joy. This is most effective if they do this holistically, addressing the four main categories of human need.

"By purposefully feeding the intellectual, relational, physical, and spiritual aspects of your life positive emotions, you can achieve balance," Jantz says.

He offers these suggestions:

**Intellectual.** Be aware of what you're feeding to your mind. Try reading a positive, uplifting book, and setting aside time in your day to fill yourself up intellectually with constructive, encouraging messages. Be aware of what you are reading and listening to, and seek to counter the negative input we all get with positive influences.

**Relational.** Think of a person you really enjoy talking to, someone who makes you feel good about yourself or someone who's just fun to be around. Plan today to spend time with that person this week, even if it's just for a moment or two. Make the effort to verbalize your appreciation for his or her positive presence in your day.

**Physical.** Physical activity is a wonderful way of promoting emotional

health. Engage in some mild exercise this week. Take a walk around the neighborhood. Stroll through a city park. The goals are to get your body moving and to allow you to focus on something other than yourself and your surroundings. Greet your neighbors, stop at the park and watch someone playing with his dog, or cheer at a Little League game. Intentionally open up your focus to include the broader world around you.

**Spiritual.** Take some time to nourish your spirit. If you are a member of a religious organization, make sure to attend services this week. If you are not, listen to some religious or meditative music. Spend time in quiet reflection, meditation, or prayer. Intentionally engage in an activity that replenishes and reconnects your spirit.

If you are not depressed but feel anxious and stressed, have trouble sleeping or find you're not content much of the time, Jantz says it's time to start taking care of yourself.

"Depression is painful and as debilitating as any other disease," he says. "Take steps to de-stress your life and to work on emotional balance before it gets worse."

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## Milwaukee gets royal audience with rising star

By Gregg Shapiro

Contributing writer

Prince Poppycock, aka John Quale, made one of the more enduring impressions on audiences and judges when he appeared as a contestant on “America’s Got Talent” in 2010. Attired in elaborate costuming as a baroque dandy – right down to the powdered wig and lacy sleeves – the prince was proclaimed “the male Lady Gaga” by judge Sharon Osbourne.

In addition to his rare talent and flair for showmanship, the out prince has royal credentials. His musical and theatrical background includes performing with the Children’s Choir of the Washington National Opera, stints at the renowned Interlochen Center for the Arts and gigs as an underground entertainer.

Although he’s visited Milwaukee before as part of the traveling “America’s Got Talent” show, Prince Poppycock has chosen Milwaukee for his first solo headline performance in the Midwest. We spoke earlier this month.

**Gregg Shapiro: As someone who’s been through the TV talent show mill, what do you honestly think about shows such as “America’s Got Talent,” “The Voice” and “The Sing Off”?**

Prince Poppycock: My, my, someone certainly wants answers to the juicy questions (laughs)! I didn’t watch “America’s Got Talent” then, and I certainly don’t watch now. I accept reality competitions as venues for talent; they are the new star factory systems like movie studios of yesteryear. You can attempt to be an independent artist, you can attempt traditional pathways, or you can

attempt the reality-show route. At the time of my audition, I was an underground artist living in Los Angeles, working two jobs and pushing my career forward independently the best that I could. I honestly would have never sought out the audition. I consider these shows to be tacky and rather cruel to their contestants. They often seek to exploit and humiliate those that go in front of them, in the name of good ratings. But one day a producer from “AGT” called me out of the blue – a friend of a friend had given my name to a casting director. They flew me to NYC and put me up at a hotel. I skipped the cattle call auditions and went straight to the judges’ round. I figured, “What the hell, it’s a free trip to NYC.” I also knew that if they were to make fun of me, I would proceed to make fun of myself better, and then read them all to filth and make them laugh at their sham of a show. I honestly had nothing to lose. It was “AGT” or bust!

**Is Sharon Osbourne as warm and nurturing in person as she seems on TV?**

Without her stalwart support, I would have never made the final. She sent me a Chanel scarf that I wore for my finale performance with Donna Summer, and she sent me a lovely note upon her departure from “AGT.” I think they made a pretty big mistake in letting her slip away.

**You mentioned the late Donna Summer. In 2010 you performed with her on “America’s Got Talent.” What was that experience like for you?**

I had reservations about meeting Donna, because in the past she was embroiled in a bit of controversy concerning the LGBT community. There was a little mucking about over my use of the masculine pronouns in her song, but at the end she said, “I guess anything goes these days,” and it wasn’t brought up again. After rehearsal she took me back to her trailer and told me some of her secrets

to vocal health, and then she held my hands and prayed for me. Later she actually called me while I was on the road with the “AGT” tour, and we meant to grab lunch after I was home. We never did, unfortunately. Heaven has another angel, and this one sings to a disco beat!

**You are known for your elaborate costumes, sets and props. What’s your level of involvement in the design and production of these items?**

Everything that I do is ultimately an extension of my creative world. Producing my numbers, however, always takes a team, and I’m proud to have some amazing artists and friends that I get to work alongside. Sharon McGunigle has been my tailor since 2007 and has brought so many costumes to life. My bandleader, producer, songwriter, and collaborator Kristian Hoffman is a cut-up a cut above. Annie Ann-Marie Holman is my head dancer, stylist, publicist and drag mother. Amanda Marquardt has been my choreographer since before my appearance on “AGT,” and it’s she who is making my Milwaukee appearance possible. We met at a secret members-only theater in Los Angeles called Brookledge, and we’ve been working together since.

**You have marvelously diverse taste in music and count the Smiths as one of your favorite groups. What would it mean to you if Morrissey, when he is once again well enough to tour, asked you to be his opening act?**

Morrissey, I love you! Everything I’ve ever done has been for you! (Clears his throat and regains composure.) I just saw him in Los Angeles, and he’s incredible. I just hope he gets well soon and calls me.

**How do you know when something is right for Prince Poppycock to sing versus John Quale?**

My work under my name John



Photo: hollywoodonline.tv.blogspot.com

Quale

– as seen in my debut album “Worldview” (available on iTunes) – reflects my electronic roots, and my influence by such self-produced singer-songwriters as Peter Gabriel and Kate Bush. It often reflects darker themes: usually nihilistic, often depressed, and always lovelorn. For Poppycock, a song needs to have a bit more self-confidence and strut!

**You have some Midwestern connections, such as your former Chicago-based band Endora and summers at Interlochen Center for the Arts.**

I love the Midwest! Both of my parents were from the North Side of Chicago. I still have friends from those

years and will always cherish those memories. But I will say I don’t miss the winters one bit!

**What can your Milwaukee audience expect?**

I couldn’t be more excited about my upcoming show! Producer and choreographer Amanda Marquardt is putting together a fantastic show that includes some of my classic numbers, along with some fun new numbers. Good clean fun for everyone – so clean, in fact, that I’m going to take a bath right on stage. Oh, dear (laughs)!

### ON STAGE

“America’s Got Talent” star Prince Poppycock appears at 8 p.m. on April 20 at the Milwaukee Rite Center, 790 N. Van Buren St. Contact [www.tix.com](http://www.tix.com) or call 800-595-4849.

# Poppycock's devoted 'godmothers'

By Elle Fausel

Contributing writer

He calls his fans "Poppies" and they come from all over the world to pay homage, ranging in age from 18 to 80. Carrying flash cameras and cell phones, they lovingly record his majesty's every move, connect with other like-minded minions on Facebook, dish about the latest performance and schedule meet-ups to gush about their prince.

When Prince Poppycock announced his April 20 visit to Milwaukee on Facebook, it didn't take long for people to start confirming their attendance and leaving comments.

"Yay! Thanks for coming back to my area again, we need a Chicago reunion!" wrote one adoring fan.

"Yes! So excited! Can't wait!" said another.

"Looking forward to your show!" said Terry Baxter, of Gainesville, Fla.

Baxter is a 66-year-old retired first-grade teacher. She will travel more than 800 miles to see the Prince – for the 12th time.

Baxter is among a handful of devoted followers who are Prince Poppycock's "Fairy Godmothers."

"When I became a fan, I didn't expect to make wonderful new friends but that's what happened," Baxter said.

## A GATHERING OF GODMOTHERS

About three years ago, Prince Poppycock was scheduled to perform at a nightclub in Tampa, Fla.

"On a leap of faith, I reserved a table with bottle service, but had no one to go with," Baxter said. "So I asked on PPO (Prince Poppycock's Official Facebook page) if anyone wanted to join me. Five people responded! That is how I met Sharon, Britany and several other Poppies."

Soon the group welcomed additional enthusiasts.

"Gradually over time I got acquainted with other women through the fan page and at shows, and they became the nucleus of our Fairy Godmother group," Baxter said.

"We just became good friends with a common interest in following John Quale's career."



PHOTO: COURTESY TERRY BAXTER  
**Terry Baxter and Prince Poppycock at the Manor in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., last year.**

And follow him, she has.

Baxter has been in the audience six times at shows in her home state. She has traveled to see the Prince perform in Los Angeles twice, Palm Desert, Calif., Grand Bahama and Chicago.

"Prince Poppycock is my favorite entertainer of all time!" Baxter said.

"He is gorgeous and has a magnificent voice, but he doesn't just sing – he's a showman who entertains. I love his creativity and originality. Costumes, make-up, and the choreography – every detail is perfect. He's versatile and sings everything from opera arias to popular music to original songs. Prince Poppycock has great stage presence and, with his wig and high heels, is truly larger than life!"

Sandy McGrew agrees. A 59-year-old Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., resident, she became hopelessly hooked on all things Poppycock the moment she saw the Prince on his "America's Got Talent" debut in 2010.

"He walked on stage (with) the face of a porcelain doll in satin green and ruffles that would be resplendent in any court of King Louis, with hair coiffed to the heavens," she said.

"The audience chortled as he walked on stage. When he sang my heart stopped ... this voice, this VOICE! I turned the TV way

up, not believing my ears, his articulations and gestures to emphasize the meaning of the song were delightful. I found myself laughing and filled with joy."

Prince Poppycock brought down the house, according to McGrew, and she had to know more. A quick online search was successful.

"He had a MySpace page and a Facebook account, so I immediately asked him to 'friend' me on both. This was the first time I had ever done that with anyone other than real-life friends and family. I was number 37 of his Facebook friends. By the next morning there were well over 1,000."

Facebook proved to be a wonderful place to connect with the Prince. He was sweet, funny and available.

"He was so supportive of us, with kind words and encouragement, fun contests and sweet Poppycockian nonsensical babble," McGrew said.

The grateful godmothers truly adore their "son."

"Let me tell you a secret," McGrew said. "When I am down and feeling depressed, I watch Prince Poppycock online. I find myself filled with happiness and giggles every time, every time!"

## ON THE WEB

Visit [www.princepoppycock.com/royalcourt.cfm](http://www.princepoppycock.com/royalcourt.cfm) to become a member of Prince Poppycock's Royal Court.



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# Dish it Out!

## ANCIENT HARVEST

### Controversy surrounds Quinoa's success

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

The ancient Incas relied on its nutritional and restorative powers. The Spanish conquistadors forbade its cultivation by native peoples they sought to enslave. Now the entire world is turning its attention to what may be the original "super food."

Welcome to 2013, the United Nations Year of Quinoa, an international celebration designed to recognize the social and nutritional importance of the native Andean crop. The South American plant and its seeds have increasingly become part of healthy diets worldwide, but the boon in interest has proven to be a double-edged sword for the Andes' independent quinoa farmers. Those who grow it are getting rich, but their neighbors who have to buy the traditional dietary staple can no longer afford it. That's causing some problems.

What was once essentially a subsistence crop is now attracting top dollar for growers in the Andean highlands of Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Meeting global demand while keeping an adequate supply for people who have come to depend on it is a challenge for those who are trying to meet the world's demand for this high-energy, high-protein food.



#### WHAT IS QUINOA?

Despite popular belief, quinoa (pronounced "keen-wa") is not a true cereal grain like wheat or barley because it is not derived from any members of the grass family. Rather, quinoa is a chenopod derived from a variety of goosefoot, a family of herbaceous plants known to provide nutrition to indigenous people in various parts of the world. It was domesticated as long as 4,000 years ago and is genetically related to beets, spinach and tumbleweed.

Although its leaves, like those of the amaranth plant, are edible, the highest level of nutrients comes from its seeds. Naturally high in protein, quinoa seeds contain essential amino acids like lysine and are a good source of calcium, magnesium, phosphorus, iron and dietary fiber. The bitter outer shell, which is mildly toxic, is removed from the seeds before they are cooked and consumed.

The Incas, who grew to depend on it as a primary food source, referred to qui-

noa as "chisaya mama," or the "mother of all grains." Spanish conquistadors scorned quinoa as "native food" and, because of its inclusion in Incan religious ceremonies, turned the palates of their captives toward wheat.

#### CASHING IN ON A GLOBAL MARKET

Since 2006, when markets began expanding in the United States, Europe and Asia, the price of quinoa has almost tripled. Depending on the variety, it sells for \$3,000 to \$5,000 per metric ton. (Wheat, by comparison, sells for \$275 to \$350 per metric ton.) That's good news for the independent farmers who grow and export the crop, the majority of whom are from Bolivia. But a sort of gold-rush mentality among growers has raised increasing issues over property rights, affordability and other aspects of quinoa farming.

But there is no denying the health benefits of the food and its growing appeal.

Below are a few recipes to better acquaint you with the only vegetable that's a complete protein.

#### QUINOA AND ROASTED PEPPER CHILI

2 red bell peppers	1 teaspoon ground cumin
2 Poblano peppers	½ teaspoon Spanish smoked paprika
4 teaspoons olive oil	½ cup water
3 cups chopped zucchini	One-third cup uncooked quinoa, rinsed
1½ cups chopped onion	¼ teaspoon kosher salt
4 garlic cloves, minced	1 (14.5-ounce) can fire-roasted diced tomatoes with chipotles, undrained
1 tablespoon chili powder	1 (15-ounce) can no-salt-added pinto beans, rinsed and drained

#### Preparation

1. Preheat broiler.
2. Cut bell peppers and chile peppers in half lengthwise; discard seeds and membranes. Place halves, skin sides up, on a foil-lined baking sheet and flatten by hand. Broil 10 minutes or until blackened. Place in a paper bag; fold to close tightly. Let stand 10 minutes. Peel and coarsely chop.
3. Heat a large Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add oil to pan; swirl to coat. Add zucchini, onion and garlic; sauté 4 minutes. Stir in chili powder, cumin and paprika; sauté for 30 seconds. Add roasted peppers and chiles, ½ cup water and remaining ingredients; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low; cover and simmer for 20 minutes or until quinoa is tender. Serve.

#### BEEF, BLOOD ORANGE, KUMQUAT & QUINOA SALAD

##### Dressing:

¼ cup finely chopped green onions
2 teaspoons grated blood orange rind
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
2 tablespoons blood orange juice
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
2 teaspoons finely chopped cilantro
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground coriander
¼ teaspoon ground cumin
¼ teaspoon paprika
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

##### Preparation

1. To prepare dressing, combine first 10 ingredients in a medium bowl, stirring with a whisk. Gradually add oil, stirring constantly with a whisk. Set aside.
2. To prepare salad, place quinoa in a fine sieve, and place sieve in a large bowl. Cover quinoa with water. Using your hands, rub grains together for 30 seconds; rinse and drain. Repeat procedure twice. Drain well.
3. Combine 1¾ cups water, quinoa and ¼ teaspoon salt in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil. Cover, reduce heat, and simmer for 10 minutes or until liquid is absorbed. Remove from heat; fluff with a fork. Combine quinoa, remaining ¼ teaspoon salt, blood orange sections, avocado, and kumquats in a large bowl, tossing gently to combine. Add dressing. Toss gently to coat salad. Spoon 1 cup of salad onto each of 4 plates; top each serving with about ½ cup beets. (Recipes courtesy of *Cooking Light*.)

##### Salad:

1 cup uncooked quinoa
1¾ cups water
½ teaspoon salt, divided
1 cup blood orange sections, chopped (about 4 medium)
1 cup diced peeled avocado
6 whole kumquats, seeded and sliced
2 medium beets, cooked and cut into wedges



PHOTO: COURTESY

**QUINOA** from 21

**QUINOA-STUFFED SQUASH**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 4 (1-pound) golden nugget squash                              | 2 cups cooked quinoa  |
| Cooking spray   | 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley                           |
| 2 (4-ounce) links hot turkey Italian sausage, casings removed | 1/2 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme                              |
| 1/2 cup finely chopped carrot                                 | 1/4 teaspoon kosher salt                                      |
| 1/2 cup finely chopped onion                                  | 1/4 teaspoon black pepper                                     |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced                                       | 3/4 cup shredded 2% reduced-fat Monterey Jack cheese, divided |
| 1/2 cup water   |   |

*Preparation*

1. Cut the top quarter off each squash; reserve tops. Discard seeds. Arrange squashes, cut sides down, in 2 (11 x 7-inch) baking dishes. Fill each dish with 1 inch of water; microwave dish at HIGH 15 minutes. Remove dish; repeat with remaining dish. Cool.
2. Preheat oven to 350°.
3. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Coat pan with cooking spray. Add sausage; sauté 5 minutes or until browned, stirring to crumble. Remove sausage with a slotted spoon. Add carrot, onion, and garlic to drippings in pan; sauté 2 minutes, stirring frequently. Stir in 1/2 cup water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium; cover and cook 8 minutes or until carrot is tender.
4. Combine sausage, carrot mixture, quinoa, parsley, thyme, salt, and pepper; stir in 1/2 cup cheese. Stuff about 1 cup quinoa mixture in each squash and top each serving with 1 tablespoon of cheese. Arrange stuffed squashes in a broiler-safe baking dish and place tops in dish. Bake at 350° for 20 minutes or until thoroughly heated. Remove from oven.
5. Preheat broiler to high.
6. Broil squashes 4 minutes or until cheese is golden.

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# Wines for spring

## Enjoy a splash of Spain and Portugal

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Thoughts of Old World wines do not always bring Spain and Portugal to mind as top producers. But they should. After France and Italy, the Iberian Peninsula is the third largest producer of wines in the world, with 3 million acres under wine grape cultivation in Spain alone.

You might think that's an awful lot of sherry and port, for which the two countries were historically known. But acreage devoted to the famous fortified wines is just a small part of the region's total wine output. More and more, Spain especially is combining traditional cultivars with New World winemaking techniques, resulting in some fresh, bright approaches that are quickly finding their niche in the ever-expanding wine world.

Archeological evidence shows that wine grapes have been under cultivation in Spain since about 4000 B.C. The first wine trading port was established at Cádiz in 1100 B.C. Spain's conquest by Roman legions in 218 B.C. helped spread the nation's wine throughout the Roman Empire, which eventually covered most of Western Europe.

Despite centuries of expansion, however, the Spanish wine industry has lagged behind its French and Italian counterparts in its development. But the situation is changing.

There's growing familiarity with and appreciation for Spain's indigenous grape varieties, including Albariño, Garnacha, Tempranillo and Xarel-lo. At the same time, innovative growing techniques have kept Spanish wine prices relatively low while raising their quality to higher levels. That's excellent news for wine drinkers in search of exciting new flavor profiles.

What's more, Spanish winemakers see their jobs as "elaborer" rather than "fabricar" – to elaborate or nurture factors the grape already offers rather than use the raw material to simply fabricate wine. That's an oenological aesthetic



PHOTO: COURTESY BRINDCO  
**The Rueda region of Spain, located in the heart of Castilla y León, is world famous for its red wines.**

on old vines in Spain's Rueda region northwest of Madrid. The palate explodes with pineapple and floral notes, followed by a creamy mouthfeel, vibrant acidity and a lingering finish. This is a surprisingly fresh-flavored excursion for a wine grown from vines around 100 years old.

The Martin Codax 2011 Rias Baixas Albariño (\$16) is made from one Spain's best-known varieties. Medium-bodied and delicately flavored, the wine teases the palate with tastes of apple, pear and lemon. The wine also has a distinct acidity and bright minerality that make this one exceptional for both sipping and supping.

### RED WINES

As nice as the whites are, the reds are even better – starting with the 2009 Callabriga Dáo Red (\$17) from Portugal's Dáo region. Produced from a blend of Tinta Roriz, Touriga Nacional and Alfrocheiro Preto grapes, the wine pours a deep red with an aroma of spicy, even balsamic notes with a flavor profile to match. Firm tannins and a good acidity make this

full-bodied wine an excellent accompaniment to heavier dishes.

More old-vine fruit comes into play with the 2009 Las Rocas Garnacha Viñas Viejas (\$17), also from northwest Spain. Harvested from aging vines clinging to the hillsides of the arid Aragon region, the wine presents with a deep ruby color and spicy bouquet. Las Rochas' flavors are characterized by dark cherry and stone fruit notes, with vanilla essences from the French oak in which part of the harvest was aged. Round supple tannins and a fruit-forward finish round out this fine red varietal.

Another standout, both in terms of flavor and economy, is the 2005 El Coto de Rioja de Imaz Rioja Reserva (\$21). Produced from Tempranillo, Spain's signature red wine grape,

the El Coto de Rioja offers red berry aromas with smoky vanilla notes extracted from its American oak casks. Blessed with a supple, velvety mouthfeel, the wine's red cherry flavors are backed by subtle tannins and just the right amount of acidity. The result is an outstanding wine for both casual as well as formal occasions.

anyone can appreciate.

Here is a six-pack splash of Spanish and Portuguese wines designed to help you start celebrating the coming of spring.

### WHITE WINES

In the lightest and brightest category, Portugal's Gazela White (\$7) easily takes the lead. Blended in the country's Vinho Verde region from four different grapes, the wine arrives with a light straw color and a slight effervescence. Its natural acidity is balanced by a touch of sweetness and highlighted with bright tropical notes, resulting in a wine that's unusually refreshing and an excellent value for the price.

For something a little more complex, try the 2011 Lo Nuevo Lunares (\$11), produced from Verdejo grapes grown

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# Present Music chooses world premiere for its first-ever opera

Music

MICHAEL MUCKIAN



PHOTO: MATT GRAY

**Mikhail Svetlov and Matthew Morgan at the American Opera Project's run-through of "Judgment of Midas," which makes its world premiere in Milwaukee on April 12-13.**

The creation of art is often inspired by myths or historical events. "Judgment of Midas," loosely based on characters from Ovid's epic poem "Metamorphoses," falls squarely into that genre. Composed by Kamran Ince with a libretto by Miriam Seidel, the work is scheduled for performance April 12-13

by the Milwaukee-based contemporary music ensemble Present Music.

Ince, a Turkish-American composer, drew his inspiration from the discovery of ancient mosaics depicting the battle between the gods Apollo and Pan. The mosaics were unearthed during an archeological excavation near the Turkish city of Sardis.

The story line surrounds the contest between Pan, a street musician who performed for humans, and Apollo, who composed music for the gods under the watchful eye of King Midas.

The late Crawford Greenewalt, the archeologist who oversaw the Sardis excavation, originally commissioned "Judgment of Midas" 10 years ago to commemorate the dig's 50th

anniversary. Present Music's staging will mark the work's first complete concert performance, and it will also mark the first time in the company's 30-year history that it has presented an opera.

The presentation is a collaborative effort involving Milwaukee Opera Theatre and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Peck School of the Arts. But even with the help of such notable collaborators, an opera is a big undertaking for Present Music, which is known for much more intimate works. Kevin Stalheim, the group's artistic director, says the extra time and expense that went into the production were well worth the effort.

"There is absolutely nothing like the challenge and excitement of being involved in the creation of a new work and being the first to perform it in the entire world," Stalheim says. "The birth of a child is miraculous and beyond words, but for me, the birth of the first opera by Kamran Ince is also miraculous and beyond words."

A Peck School graduate, Stalheim was named the 2013 UWM Foundation Alumni Fellow. The opera is part of the Peck School's 50th anniversary Year of the Arts celebration.

"Midas" will be performed in semi-staged fashion. Opera's Jill Anna Ponasik. The singers will not be costumed, and the Helene Zelazo Center will not be turned into an elaborate set. Instead, the performance will be brought

to life through creative lighting, slide projections and dramatic interplay among the cast members.

Ince combines a variety of world music styles into his work. The energy and rawness of Turkish and Balkan music, the spirituality of Byzantine and Ottoman music, and the tradition of European art music create the basis of Ince's sound. But there is an element of American popular music in the work, the composer says.

"We have all asked the questions about popular music versus serious concert music, and secular music versus religious music," says Ince, who holds a doctorate from the Eastman School of Music and serves as professor of composition at the

University of Memphis and co-director at Istanbul Technical University. "In my music I combine these already, but in this opera I get to be on both sides with more serious questioning."

The opera is not the first collaboration between Ince and Present Music. Previous collaborations have been recorded for the Naxos label, including Ince's "Flight Box," "In White" and "Hammers and Whistlers," which also involved the Milwaukee Children's Choir, Milwaukee Choral Artists and the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra.

"To work with Present Music is always the highlight of my musical life," Ince says. "I know this is the largest, most expensive production

they have ever done, and I am so thankful for all their efforts."

"Midas" will cost roughly four times what a standard Present Music performance costs. Support from the John M. Kohler Foundation, John Shannon, Jan Serr and Arthur and Nancy Laskin made the performance possible, but it was Stalheim's commitment that brought the opera to the stage.

"I decided to plunge into this project because it was a big, risky adventure," he says. "Performing an opera will always be rare for Present Music, but in the case of Kamran's first opera, we had to go for it."

## ON STAGE

Present Music's production of Kamran Ince's "Judgment of Midas" receives its world premiere at 7:30 p.m. April 12-13, at the Helene Zelazo Center for the Performing Arts, 2419 E. Kenwood Blvd., Milwaukee. For more, visit [presentmusic.org](http://presentmusic.org).

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## Theater

MICHAEL MUCKIAN

# 'Henson Alternative' gives puppets adult voices in improv performance

But improvisational performers know when to get out of their own way and let their characters respond to situations suggested by an audience.

Throw into the mix a group of strange-looking puppets controlled by improvisational performers, and you get an additional layer of comic possibilities. At least that's the promise of out actor Patrick Bristow, co-producer and MC for "Henson Alternative: Stuffed and Unstrung," which returns to Milwaukee's Pabst Theatre April 13 for a night of adult puppet improv comedy.

A product of the Jim Henson Co., which produced those lovable Muppets for "Sesame Street," "The Muppet Show" and other film and television series, "Stuffed and Unstrung" takes a decidedly racier approach to puppeteering in both theme and

language.

Drawing ideas from the audience, the actors create sketch comedy for their felt-and-faux-fur friends, known as the Miskreant puppets (there are no familiar Muppets in the show). They perform live on stage while a camera projects the act on a screen as it would be seen on TV. The results are funny, timely and risqué – and audiences love it, Bristow says.

"We don't try to go blue, but we reserve that right," says Bristow. "It's really up to the audience."

Bristow is a character actor perhaps best known for his recurring role as Peter, the best friend of Ellen DeGeneres' character on the sitcom "Ellen." He's been with partner Andrew Nicastro since 1994.

"Stuffed and Unstrung" evolved from a show called "Puppet Up," which Bristow

created with puppeteer Brian Henson, son of the late Jim Henson and now chairman of his father's company. During the Muppets' early days, the funniest bits were often improvised before and after shooting a take for one of the TV shows, Henson says.

In 2005, he brought Bristow, who teaches improv comedy, to the firm's Los Angeles studio to help the puppeteers recapture that spontaneous comedic edge.

"I suggested that we try it out in front of a live audience, so one was assembled at the studio," says Bristow, an alumnus of The Groundlings, a Los Angeles-based improv group. "We were a big hit."

Someone from the Aspen Rooftop Comedy Festival was in the audience and invited the troupe to perform in Colorado. In Aspen, a representative of the Edinburgh Festival Fringe saw them, and

**Although the show is largely improvisational, it opens and closes with classic bits created for the original Muppets.**

soon they were on their way to Scotland.

In Edinburgh, someone from the Melbourne International Comedy Festival caught the act and brought them to Australia. By 2010, they had taken the puppets

## ON STAGE

"Henson Alternative: Stuffed and Unstrung" takes the Pabst Theater stage on April 13. For more information and to purchase tickets, visit [www.pabsttheatre.org](http://www.pabsttheatre.org).

to Broadway, where the show, now named "Stuffed and Unstrung," earned a Drama Desk award nomination in the "Unique Theatrical Experience" category.

Although the show is largely improvisational and based on audience suggestion, the structure is always the same, says Bristow. Each performance begins with an opening and closing number and contains classic bits created by Jim Henson and Frank Oz for the original Muppets.

Beyond that, almost anything goes, but Bristow works hard to steer the troupe away from what some

audience members might find unacceptable.

"If someone shouts out something dark or mean-spirited, as MC I will solicit other suggestions and then put them to an audience vote," he says.

Unacceptable topics include "affliction humor," anything racist and anything that audience members might be there to forget, such as cancer. That leaves the door open to any of a number of adult themes.

"Someone always suggests bikini waxing," Bristow says. "But we may have different casts that have gotten the

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A performance of "Stuffed and Unstrung," featuring Brian Henson, right, the son of Muppet creator Jim Henson. The show last appeared at the Pabst in November 2011.

#### STUFFED from 26

suggestion, and they endeavor to make each scene completely unique. As improvisers we're addicted to the new and exciting in what we cover."

Improvising with puppets, which each have only one basic facial expression, is more difficult than "fleshy improv," as the troupe calls it. It requires more structure by the actors and more dependence on the voice, since the puppets' physical movements also are limited. Not all performers are up to the task, Bristow says.

LGBT themes come up — often as part of another

topic. It's not unusual for the actors to choose puppets of the opposite gender from among the 80 characters available.

"Our puppeteers are very good at playing gay characters from a place of fun without ridicule," says Bristow, sometimes known as "the camp MC." "I'm their host and am not going to let them do anything offensive."

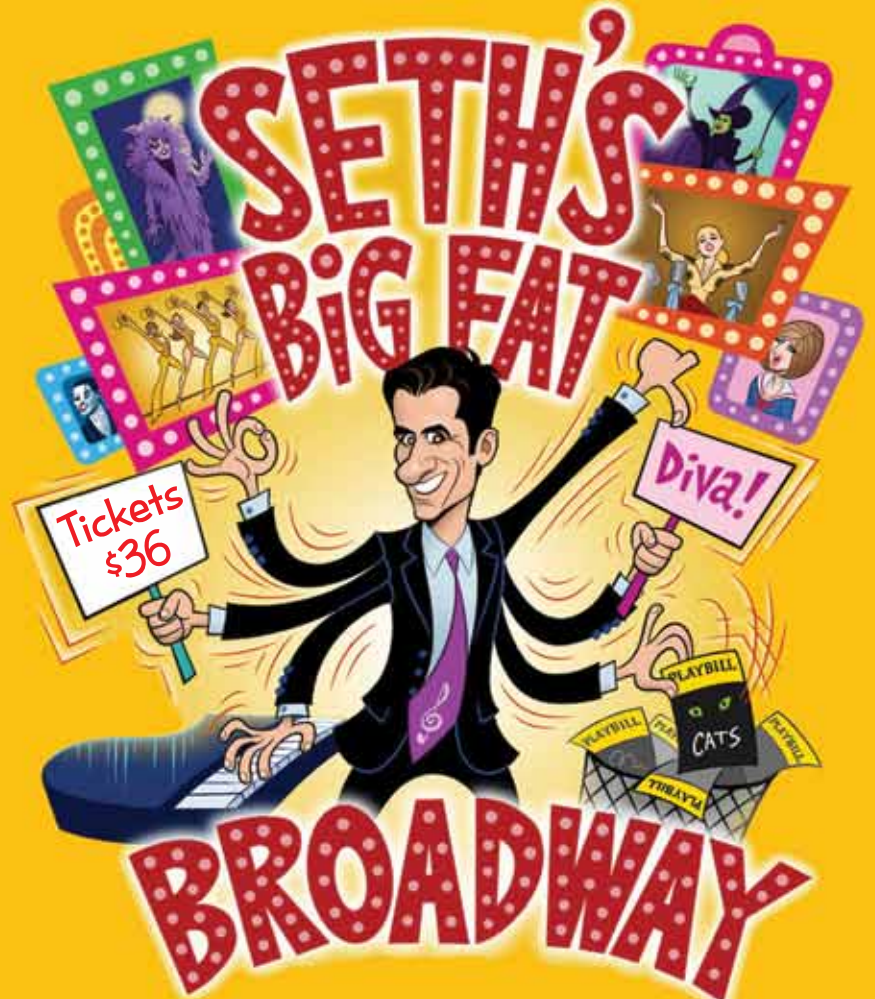
That's not to say Bristow is always in control. Once a sketch is underway there is not much he can or will do to stop it. But that's part of the "Stuffed and Unstrung" experience and what makes the show special.

"This is very much a lean-forward rather than a lean-back experience, more of a party than a show — with a little element of circus thrown in," Bristow explains. "The audience as a collective becomes a major character in the performance because they are in essence directing it."

When you spend your life around puppets, a little human intervention, collective or otherwise, is necessary, he says.

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# Gosling's roles defy male stereotypes

The Associated Press

What's Ryan Gosling's secret to his on-screen poise, his ability to disarm and provoke merely by his laconic presence?

"Just try not to blink," he says with a self-deprecating smile.

But Gosling's uncanny, communicative stillness — along with his sensitive vulnerability, his serious dedication to his work and, well, the guy ain't bad looking — has made him one of the biggest movie stars on the planet, a widely beloved, new-generation idol. It might be the only role he's uncomfortable playing.

Rather than exude preternatural cool, in a recent interview Gosling spoke more with the uncertain, self-critical grasping of a still-developing actor trying to find his foothold in an illusory profession. Soon to direct his first film, he's looking forward to taking a step back just when moviegoers can't get enough.

"I've been doing it too much," he says of acting. "I've lost perspective on what I'm doing. I think it's good for me to take a break and reassess why I'm doing it and how I'm doing it. And I think this

is probably a good way to learn about that. I need a break from myself as much as I imagine the audience does."

But first, this spring will bring two new films from Gosling, starting with "The Place Beyond the Pines," his second collaboration with director Derek Cianfrance, whose gritty portrait of decaying love in "Blue Valentine" was one of the first showcases of Gosling's talent for immersing himself in a character. "

In "The Place Beyond the Pines," which opened in limited release March 29, Gosling plays a tattooed motorbike rider in a traveling circus who, visiting an old fling (played by Gosling's real-life girlfriend, Eva Mendes), finds out he's the father of her toddler — a discovery that prompts an awakening in him, along with a desperate urge to support the child. With a more experienced friend (Ben Mendelsohn), he takes to robbing banks in Schenectady, N.Y. His story comprises the first section of a triptych connected by a violent incident that reverberates across generations.

In conversation, Gosling is

thoughtful, even eloquent about his acting but less intense and lighter than his words make him out to be.

Having started performing at 8 (coming from an Ontario, Canada, home of divorced, working-class Mormons), the 32-year-old Gosling has been in entertainment for more than two decades. He was famously part of the "Mickey Mouse Club," along with child cast members Justin Timberlake, Britney Spears and Christina Aguilera. Often performing in secondary roles conditioned Gosling, he says, to consider himself an ensemble player and character actor.

"There's a lot of pressure to be the lead of a film," he says. "I have done it. It's not my favorite way to work."

Gosling's break came in 2001's "The Believer," in which he played a neo-Nazi teenager. A new level of fame came with "The Notebook," the 2004 romance co-starring Rachel McAdams that made Gosling a bona fide heartthrob.

Since then, he's largely eschewed the conventional movie star path many in Hollywood would love for him to pursue. Instead, he's

worked in naturalistic indies like "Half Nelson" (Oscar-nominated for his performance as a wayward but decent inner-city teacher) and the offbeat comedy "Lars and the Real Girl" (as a delusional introvert with a life-size doll for a girlfriend).

He was typically active in 2011, with three varied roles: an idealistic press secretary in George Clooney's "Ides of March"; a suave ladies' man in "Crazy, Stupid, Love" (a rare glimpse of a polished, buoyant Gosling); and a quiet, proficient getaway driver in "Drive."

"Ryan was able to convey everything vocal-less," says "Drive" director Nicolas Winding Refn, who also directs Gosling in "Only God Forgives," due out in May. "He was beyond talking. His movement, his posture, his eyes, his thoughts would tell a story."

Gosling often obsessively plunges into a character. For "Lars and the Real Girl," he lived with the doll. In "Blue Valentine," he stayed in a Scranton, Pa., house with his movie wife, Michelle Williams, for a month. For "Pines," he learned to skillfully ride his motorbike, which he kept and still rides.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Ryan Gosling in "The Place Beyond the Pines."

He grants that he tries to stay "hyper-focused" to shield him from the "seductive environment" of film sets. But he declines any Method acting mantle: "I don't know what I'm doing," he says. "I haven't quite figured out what the balance is between being able to be lost in it — or try to, anyway — and then step outside of it."



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# ‘Beyond the Pines’ is monotonously morose

By Christy Lemire  
AP writer

The first image you see in “The Place Beyond the Pines” is of Ryan Gosling’s shirtless torso, ripped and tatted atop a skin-tight pair of leather pants.

Don’t get too excited. The long tracking shot that comes next is actually a better indication of where director and co-writer Derek Cianfrance is headed.

His camera follows Gosling’s character from behind, Dardennes-style, through a garishly lighted traveling circus. Gosling’s bleach-blond “Handsome Luke” lights a cigarette and strides calmly but purposefully through his depressing surroundings into a loud and crowded tent, where he confidently climbs onto a motorcycle before entering a ball-shaped cage with two other riders to perform a death-defying stunt.

Over the next two-plus hours and across three connected stories, it will become clear that everything is very dramatic and everyone is doomed. You can try to redeem yourself but it’s no use; the past always catches

up with us. Not a terribly novel concept but one that Cianfrance and co-writers Ben Coccio and Darius Marder hammer home with the utmost seriousness.

Gosling previously worked with the director on the 2010 drama “Blue Valentine,” in which he played the husband in a young married couple (opposite an Oscar-nominated Michelle Williams) that was slowly, irreparably crumbling. That story also was fraught with heartache, but we actually felt something because the characters were complex and real and their relationship was vividly detailed.

“The Place Beyond the Pines” aims admirably for an epic sense of Greek tragedy, and it does have some powerful individual moments. But the characters are all so underdeveloped that the whole effort feels like studied posturing. Rather than helping to create a recognizable sense of place, the artful grunginess with which Schenectady, N.Y., is depicted feels self-conscious and smothering. That’s down to the face tattoo Luke sports: a dagger

with a drop of blood under his left eye, which is meant to look like a teardrop. (Once again, he is doing the quietly brooding Brando thing.)

In this first section of Cianfrance’s triptych, Luke runs into Romina (Eva Mendes), a waitress he had a fling with when he was in town a year ago. (Schenectady, FYI, means “the place beyond the pines” in Iroquois.) Turns out her infant son is the child Luke was totally unaware he had. At the encouragement of a loner mechanic (an effectively creepy Ben Mendelsohn), Luke starts robbing banks to support the boy, even though he and the underwritten Romina would seem to have a stable life now with her new boyfriend (Mahershala Ali).

This brings us to Bradley Cooper, who anchors the second section. Cooper and Gosling’s paths cross only briefly in one scene, but it is, of course, pivotal. Cooper plays rookie police officer Avery Cross, who finds himself caught up with a group of more seasoned cops (led by Ray Liotta) who want to take him under their wing and make him part of their corrupt little gang. Cooper finds the understatement in his character’s conflict – his usual charisma is strangely muted here – but the theme of struggling to escape one’s past is overstated once more, especially as Avery tries to establish himself outside the shadow of his own powerful father.

Finally, Cianfrance skips ahead 15 years for part three. Luke’s son, Jason (now played by a wiry and intense Dane DeHaan), and Avery’s son, AJ (a swaggering, trash-talking Emory Cohen), happen to cross paths themselves on AJ’s first day at a new high school. Of all the tables in all the lunchrooms in all the world, he has to sit down at Jason’s. A palpable sense of danger permeates every moment they spend together, but the coincidence is too clever, the parallel is too precious.

Naturally, they are destined to have their legacies destroy them, too. Ultimately, none of this registers the way it should because it’s so monotonously morose.

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