

Minn. jumps aboard marriage bandwagon *Follows Delaware by one week*

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Betty Thomas and Laura Springman of Madison are studying Google Maps as they try to decide. Will they say "I do" in Iowa or Minnesota?

Until this spring, the couple of six years was considering holding their wedding at an inn in Dubuque. But Minnesota is now the 12th state in the nation and the second in the Midwest – after Iowa – to legalize same-sex marriage. The women have fond memories of a romantic getaway to Minnesota's Root River Valley.

The North Star State became a marriage equality state less than a year after voters defeated a proposed constitutional amendment to define marriage as the union of a man and a woman.

Gov. Mark Dayton signed the equality bill May 14. Gay couples can marry on Aug. 1.

"We cannot legislate love," the governor said. "Committed, same-sex Minnesota couples deserve to make their own decisions

for their own families. It's a simple, yet profound ideal."

The state Senate voted 37-30 for the bill on May 13, after more than four hours of debate. The Minnesota House held its vote – 75-59 – on May 9.

Lawmakers, as they said repeatedly in floor speeches, voted for love, equality and freedom when they hit the green lights.

Debate in the House included tense discussions on a proposed amendment from state Rep. Tim Kelly to establish civil unions for all in Minnesota.

Out lesbian state Rep. Karen Clark, sponsor of the bill, objected, stating she wanted to expand access to marriage, not abolish it in Minnesota.

"Every state that has tried civil unions has found that they don't work," she added.

About an hour into the debate, Kelly's amendment failed 111-22, which led to the clerk's third reading of the bill and then more debate.

MINNESOTA page 12

The road your tax dollars take to politicians' pockets

News Analysis

LOUIS WEISBERG

In the Republicans' 2011-13 biennial budget, funding was slashed in every major category, including education and health care, with one notable exception: transportation.

The GOP slashed school aid by more than \$800 million, while transportation spending rose by \$400 million. The increases were earmarked overwhelmingly for road builders.

If you think the money was used to fix potholes and repave bumpy local streets that keep throwing your wheels out of alignment, think again. The lion's share of transportation

dollars were virtual giveaways for road builders who write huge checks to the party in power – whether it's Democrats or Republicans, said Steve Hiniker, executive director of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin.

Sixty-three percent of state transportation funding in the 2011-13 budget went to highway building and only 13 percent supported local road improvements, despite the fact that local roads account for 90 percent of the roads in Wisconsin. Eighty-four percent of all transportation bonding goes to highways, according to Hiniker.

"In 2001, highway miles driven in the state were very close to what they were in 2011, but the expenditures on expanding highways has gone up by about 60 percent," Hiniker

HIGHWAYS page 10

STILL WATERS

John Waters takes his iconic filth to Chicago stage.

Interview, p. 27



THE VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR WISCONSIN'S LGBT COMMUNITY

PrideFest Milwaukee is June 7-9

Festival preview, p. 20



Photo: Adam Horwitz

Interview with PrideFest headliner Emily Saliers of Indigo Girls, p. 22

News with a twist

WIGWAG

By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg



PHOTO: BUZZFEED

A tactical mannequin displayed at the NRA convention in Houston.

TARGET PRACTICE

At its convention in Houston, the National Rifle Association asked a vendor to take down a mannequin target that looked like President Barack Obama, BuzzFeed reported. The vendor, Zombie Industries, produces "life-sized tactical mannequin" targets that "bleed" when shot. Sample mannequins displayed for sale included a clown, a "terrorist" and a Nazi.

DEW DON'T

PepsiCo pulled an online

ad for Mountain Dew after viewers complained that it portrayed racial stereotypes and made light of violence against women. The 60-second spot by rapper Tyler, The Creator showed a frightened and battered woman on crutches looking at a police lineup of black men and a goat named Felicia.

DUDE GONE GUILTY

The guy behind "Girls Gone Wild" is bound for prison. Joe Francis faces five years in prison for beating a woman, false imprisonment and attempting to dissuade a witness from reporting the incident to authorities. Francis offered three women a ride and then took them to his home, where he beat one woman and threatened to harm the others if they told anyone.

OUT OF HABIT

The nuns' habits didn't seem to be habitual garb for three young women, so



Colombian police asked them to step aside when they arrived

on the Caribbean island of San Andres on a flight from Bogota. The local captain of the police department said the women seemed nervous and the fabric didn't look right. He found more than 4 pounds of cocaine strapped to the legs of the women, who all burst into tears and explained their financial hardships that had led to their actions.

NOT SO SMART

Harvard professor Niall Ferguson apologized earlier this month after he said that the late economist John Maynard Keynes was not so invested in future generations because he was gay and had no children. Ferguson later acknowledged that his remarks were stupid and insensitive. Correcting the record, the professor said, "It is obvious that people who

do not have children also care about future generations."

A ROYAL DRESSING DOWN

In full costume as Queen Elizabeth II, Dame Helen Mirren stormed out of a theater and told a group of drummers outside to pipe down. After struggling through an emotional scene at the end of the first act of "The Audience," a play about the weekly meetings between the queen and Britain's prime ministers, Mirren said she'd had enough of the racket. The musical director of the Bataala London drummers, hired to advertise a gay festival, said they had not intended to disturb anyone. "Her language was very blue, which looking back on it is probably quite funny really," he told Sky News.

BEST IN LITTLE SHOW

The American Gerbil Society's annual pageant recently

brought dozens of rodents scurrying to Bedford, Mass., for a chance to win "top gerbil." The rodents were judged on agility and, um, body type – apparently under the rigid gender norms applied to people. A judge said the ideal male gerbil is big, with a thick neck and strong looking – like a football player. The ideal female gerbil is slim but strong, like a gymnast or figure skater.

NAVEL IDEA

A Phoenix art project, "Expectations," is a collaborative effort involving more than a dozen pregnant women, the artists who transform their baby bumps and the photographers who capture the work in progress. The show opens on June 7 and sales of photographs will raise money to benefit care for low-income women and children.

CONDOMS FOR COLLINS

NBA free agent Jason

Collins received much praise and thanks after he came out as gay. NuVo Condoms said thank you in a unique way – sending a year's supply of condoms to his agency. NuVo didn't say how many condoms constitute a "year's supply."

HATE GEOGRAPHY

Students at Humboldt State created a map of the United States that identifies the origins of homophobic hate terms used on Twitter. The Geography of Hate also identifies the locations that tweet the most racist messages. According to their findings, the area just to the north of Green Bay is the most homophobic area in Wisconsin. The highest offenders using the word "fag" included New Mexico, Texas, Kansas, Missouri, Kentucky, Ohio and Illinois. The word "dyke" was most used in an offensive context in Oregon, Minnesota, Iowa and Kentucky.

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Erica Mac and Jennifer Kow in Chicago, photo by Jan Wilton.



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Eau Claire Catholic schools retract job offer to gay man

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

In March, Timothy G. Nelson was overjoyed to sign an agreement naming him president of the Regis Catholic Schools system in his hometown of Eau Claire.

The job entailed a \$27,000 annual salary cut, but Nelson, who resides in Farmington, N.M., was grateful for the opportunity to return to the school system that educated him. Even more important to him was the prospect of spending time with his mother, who is terminally ill.

"It's difficult going back and forth from New Mexico to take care of her needs," Nelson explained.

But just three weeks after Nelson accepted the position, the Diocese of La Crosse withdrew it. Officials said that Nelson had not been candid about his former affiliation with the Franciscan Brothers — an allegation that he strongly denies. He claims that he not only spoke at length about his time with the Franciscans during interviews, but he also used several Franciscan chaplains as character references.

Nelson contends that the job offer was revoked because the diocese conducted something of a witch-hunt and discovered what its officials believed was evidence that he's gay. While Nelson acknowledges that he is gay, he resents the snooping that officials conducted behind his back, as well as

what he calls the "ignorance" that led them to deny him a job for which he is qualified.

Nelson has filed a complaint with the Equal Rights Division of the Department of Workforce Development in Madison. State law prohibits its discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment decisions.

The coming legal battle is a sad ending to a story that began with great promise, Nelson said.

Nelson's hiring came after several months of interviews that began with a field of some 30 candidates. The April 4 announcement of his selection was made with fanfare, including a congratulatory story that appeared in the Leader-Telegram, west central Wisconsin's largest daily newspaper.

"We are very excited that Tim Nelson has accepted the position of RCS president," Fr. Brian Konopa, pastoral dean of the school system, told the paper. "In addition to his close ties to our Catholic schools, Tim's experience in teaching and administration — both in Catholic schools and public schools — makes him an excellent choice to lead the Regis Catholic Schools system."

As a child, Nelson, who is now 48, worked a paper route and bused tables at a restaurant to help his parents pay his tuition at Regis. He went on to join the Franciscan Brothers in Iowa. He remained with the order as

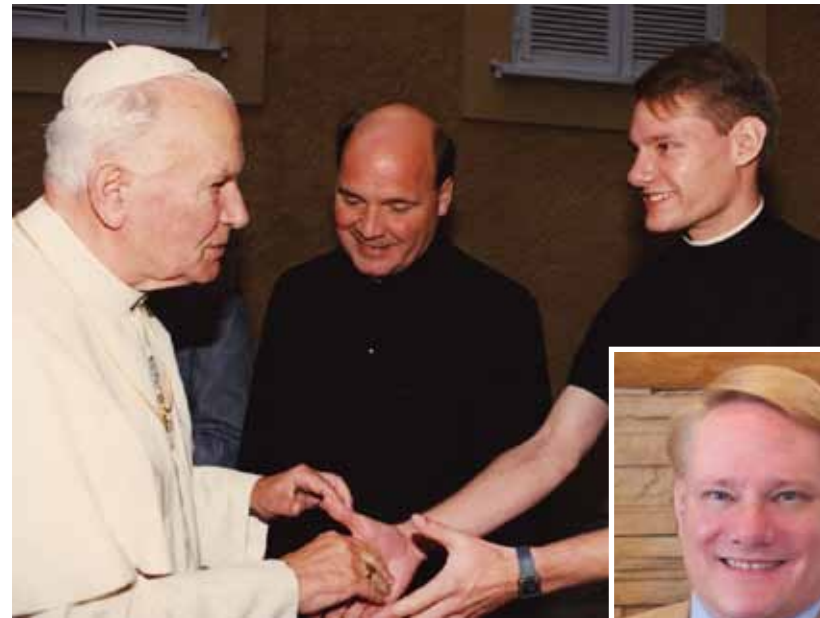
an educator in Milwaukee for a decade and then in Fargo, N.D., where he served as director of religion at a youth ministry.

Later, Nelson served as the assistant to the superintendent of Catholic schools for the Diocese of Gallup in New Mexico. For eight years, he's been the supervising principal of community schools for the U.S. Department of the Interior/Bureau of Indian Education, according to a news release RCS issued at the time he was hired.

But on April 17, Konopa contacted Nelson to discuss "serious issues that have come to the forefront," Nelson said. Konopa asked him why a man who was not part of Nelson's family had been listed parenthetically next to Nelson's name in his father's obituary more than two years earlier. The dean, according to Nelson, said the listing suggested the two men were lovers.

Nelson said he denied that the man listed in the obituary was his partner. Instead, he explained that the man was a lifelong family friend who had lost his own father early in life and considered Nelson's father as something of a surrogate dad. Nelson's mother had suggested the friend's inclusion in the obituary, he said.

Then Konopa asked Nelson about a link he'd found to a gay rodeo group on his Facebook page, Nel-



PHOTOS: COURTESY

Timothy Nelson, above, as a young Franciscan shaking hands with Pope John Paul II in Rome and today, right.



son said. Nelson told WiG he's a rodeo follower and a sometime participant. But, he added, he was unaware of the link on his Facebook page. Apparently, he said, he'd clicked on a link that a friend had posted without being aware that it was gay-related or that it would appear on his page.

Nelson acknowledged to WiG that he's gay, but said as an educator, he was careful to keep personal information private, out of public forums such as Facebook.

"The reason that I kind of take a low key with the gay stuff is that I'm a principal, and people are so ignorant they associate gay with pedophile," Nelson told WiG. "I'm not as vocal as others because of my position."

Nelson said Konopa told him that if people thought he was gay, "the system might lose enrollment or donor

dollars."

In his next conversation with Konopa, the dean told him that the offer to serve as president was being withdrawn because of his lack of candor about his life in a religious order — an explanation that he said left him scratching his head because it's so far afield from the truth.

Konopa also asked him to approve a false statement that the diocese planned to issue to the press saying it was Nelson who had changed his mind about taking the job.

Nelson forwarded WiG an email from Konopa in which the dean said he would quote him as saying, "As much as I love Eau Claire and Regis, I've decided to stay in Gallup, NM (sic) for personal reasons. I appreciate the opportunity Regis provided to me and pray for the best for the Catholic school system."

Nelson also provided WiG with his email response: "As a point of clarification, the reason I am NOT going to be serving as the President of Regis Catholic Schools is a result of a decision made in the Diocese of La Crosse," he wrote. "This decision is NOT being made by me."

"As I stated in my last email, I was extremely honored to be chosen to serve as the president of Regis Catholic Schools," Nelson continued. "I really wanted to give all that I had to strengthen Catholic education in my hometown."

On May 2, the diocese announced that Mark Gobler, a 1973 graduate of Regis High School, was hired for the job originally offered to Nelson. The Leader-Telegram reported that "district officials declined to explain the reason for the change."

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Milwaukee parade seeks help in saving 2nd Street Pride flags

By Louis Weisberg
Staff writer

The Milwaukee Pride Parade is seeking to raise nearly \$4,000 to hoist rainbow flags along this year's parade route.

"A major corporate sponsor backed out this year, and entries have been slow to (sign up), and they've been mostly nonprofits," said event coordinator Brent Holmes. As a result, the parade is turning to the public for support.

"We're going to fight to the bitter end to find sponsors who will do this," he added.

Milwaukee Pride Parade's budget is stretched thin. Last year it lost revenue after extending free nonprofit entry fees to participating churches. Fees were already waived for LGBT community groups.

Unanticipated legal costs from the 2012 parade also made a dent in the group's resources, Holmes said.

Although the parade committee owns about 100 flags, the cost to have the city attach them to utility poles along the route runs about \$4,000. The parade is raising money for the project at fundrazr.com.

If the cost sounds steep, it's because "this isn't like a flag holder that people have at their houses," Holmes said.

The flags, which are each about a foot wide and 2.5-feet high, require four metal bands each to be secured. Each band costs about \$4.

In addition to that cost, the parade must cover a licensing fee to the city and pay municipal workers to attach the flags using a cherry picker.

The 2013 parade steps off at 2 p.m. on June 9 from the corner of Second Street and Greenfield Avenue, and marches north to Second Street and West Oregon Avenue. The route is a shorter than last year's due to the loss of a staging area in the parking lot owned by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.

The grand marshal is Sue Black, the former director of Milwaukee County Parks and the current president/CEO of Milwaukee Wave, the city's major indoor soccer league team.


For more information or to assist with the fundraising effort, email Brent Holmes at coordinator@prideparademke.org.



PHOTO: ADAM HORWITZ


The rainbow flags are attached to lampposts during the 2012 Milwaukee Pride Parade. This year's parade route stretches from Second Street and Greenfield Avenue to Second Street and Oregon Avenue in Walker's Point.

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Pocan's husband receives House Spouse ID

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Openly gay U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan's husband has received an ID issued only to the spouses of federal lawmakers. It is the first time the House has recognized a same-sex couple with the House Spouse ID credential.

"We're very happy that my husband Phil (Frank) was able to get a House Spouse ID," said Pocan, a Democrat from Madison.

A congressional spouse ID was issued to the same-sex partner of another gay representative in 2009, but he was later told the card was issued in error and that he should

have received the Designee ID given to unmarried partners of members of Congress.

The Designee ID is the type of card Philip Frank originally received. Frank married Pocan in Canada in November 2006, but the federal government, under the Defense of Marriage Act, does not recognize same-sex marriages.

"We had been told that is what we would get from Day 1," Pocan said of the "designee" classification on May 9.

But working with the House leadership, especially House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, the spousal ID was secured.

"It's significant," Pocan said. "It's the first time."

The congressman said the ID is largely symbolic. It does not mean that Frank has access to the spousal benefits that other congressional husbands and wives receive.

Pocan said he's also keenly aware of the many federal employees with same-sex spouses who are denied equal workplace benefits in health care, family leave and other areas. He is working with other lawmakers on legislation to extend benefits to those federal employees with same-sex spouses.

Pocan, who grew up in Kenosha, resides in Madison and represented that area first in the state Assembly and then in Congress. He was elected to the House in November 2012, taking the seat formerly held by now-Sen. Tammy Baldwin.



PHOTO: AP/ANDY MANIS

Mark Pocan, left, kisses husband Phil Frank on Election Day 2012 in front of a cheering crowd. Pocan won Tammy Baldwin's U.S. House seat last November, becoming the only gay person ever to succeed another in Congress.

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VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR THE LGBT COMMUNITY

Milwaukee's most famous dead come to life on Memorial Day at Forest Home

By Elle Fausel

Contributing writer

Is there something you'd like to ask Horace Chase, Milwaukee's 14th mayor? Would you like a one-on-one with a Civil War veteran? Perhaps you have a cooking question for Fred Usinger? Bring your inquiries to Forest Home Cemetery, 2405 W. Forest Home Ave., on Memorial Day, May 27. Several family-friendly activities will take place on the grounds. Admission is free and there is ample parking.

Forest Home Cemetery, founded in 1846, is the "eternal home" for many of Milwaukee's most prominent figures. The cemetery is an official Milwaukee Landmark and is listed in the National Registry of Historic Places. It features 200 acres and much undeveloped land. Its indoor mausoleum, The Halls of History, also serves as an education center, with permanent and changing displays "honoring the memories and accomplishments of more than 100 people who built Milwaukee and chose Forest Home as their final resting place."

MEET PLAYERS FROM THE PAST

Between 11:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. on Memorial Day, 10 of historic Milwaukee's most inspiring characters will "come to life."

Dressed in period costumes, Fred Usinger, Mathilde Anneke, Henry Harnischfeger, Horace Chase, John Layton, Jacob Best and others (portrayed by volunteer historians and actors), will talk about their life and times in sections 6, 8, 9 and 15.

Margaret Berres, 58, will portray Civil War veteran Frank N. Fox. Berres is a teacher and local researcher. This is her third year portraying a historic figure, and she said it is a perfect fit.

"I feel like it helps the research come full circle," Berres said. "If I can share help others become aware (of) these Civil War veterans, so we don't forget them."

Don Emmer, 74, has been involved with the reenactments since they began in 1996.

"This is the 13th year doing this, and the 13th character I've portrayed," Emmer said. "My character this year is Jacob Best Sr. I am very interested in Pabst history. Jacob Best was the founder of the brewery that later became the Pabst Brewing Company."

This event is not to be missed, according to Emmer.

"Forest Home Cemetery is one of the most beautiful places in Milwaukee, full of history, and with a story lying beneath every stone," he said.

"We see many families, young and old, returning year after year, telling us how much they enjoy it. People should attend just to see this beautiful place, to pay respects to the people buried there — they are the people that built Milwaukee, and their stories are all interesting."

Forest Home Cemetery is open sunrise to sunset, 365 days per year.



PHOTO: FACEBOOK

Forest Home Cemetery is the "eternal home" for many of Milwaukee's most prominent figures.

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A special service will take place at 11 a.m. in the Landmark Chapel to commemorate those who have gone before us, followed by a benefit lunch between noon and 1 p.m. just south of the pond in Section 37. Donate \$1 and receive a grilled Usinger brat or hotdog, chips and soda. All proceeds benefit the Davis Branch of the Boys and Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee. A 75-minute tour starts at 3 p.m. at the Halls of History. Walking shoes are recommended.

ppwi.org/donate

GOP food-stamp bill called a divisive distraction

At one point, bill banned poor from buying Wisconsin cheese

By Matt Simonette

Contributing writer

Legislation that would sharply curtail the choices for Wisconsin residents using the state's FoodShare program, also known as food stamps, passed the Wisconsin Assembly 68-26 on May 7. The bill's sponsors said it would encourage recipients to eat more healthily but, according to out state Rep. JoCosta Zamarripa, D-Milwaukee, it would further stigmatize low-income Wisconsiners.

The bill very nearly had a significant negative impact on Wisconsin dairy producers. Before Zamarripa and a colleague proposed a last-minute amendment, food stamp recipients would have been allowed to purchase only a limited number of dairy products, including those produced in the state.

"I think it's a political bill, brought forward as a talking point for the Republicans, so that they can further divide the state by putting a wedge between the middle class and the poor," Zamarripa said.

Sponsored by state Rep. Dean Kaufert, R-Neenah, AB 110 would

limit food stamp recipients to purchasing primarily items approved by the Women Infant and Children supplemental nutrition program. That program is intended for nutritionally at-risk pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, as well as infants and children.

Under AB 110, users would have to limit roughly two-thirds of their food stamp purchases to approved items from WIC lists.

Even Kaufert admitted that no data exists correlating food stamp usage with junk food purchases. He said that he got the idea for the bill based on his own anecdotal experiences and those of his constituents, who say they've seen people use food stamps to buy junk food.

Unapproved items would go well beyond chips and candy, however. WIC users are prohibited from using food stamps to buy canned soups, nuts, seasonings and potatoes, among other items. Kaufert slightly retooled the legislation in late April to add provisions for beef, pork, poultry, fruits and vegetables.

Several dairy items, among them Swiss, sharp cheddar and shred-

ded cheeses, remained prohibited until Zamarripa and Rep. Amy Sue Vruwink, D-Milladore, introduced an amendment to exclude dairy products and cranberries from the list of prohibited items.

"Here we are – the dairy state – and we're limiting people's access to cheese," Zamarripa said. "The Republicans make a statement with this – farmers and small businesses are trying to make a case for people to purchase their cheese, and they were putting it on the 'banned' list."

"They have not taken the time to look at any real data," she added. "Rep. Kaufert just put forward this bill willy-nilly."

Many food producers and grocers have opposed the bill. In an April 8 statement, the Madison-based Midwest Food Processors Association said, "Though well intentioned, AB 110 will be costly to administer, opens nutrition programs to the subjective whims of bureaucrats, may hurt agricultural jobs in the Midwest and duplicates federal rules."

Implementing the legislation would require a

waiver from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which has refused prior attempts to food stamp choices beyond current prohibitions on hot foods, tobacco, alcohol, pet food, paper products, household supplies, medicines and vitamins. The agency also has said there is no statistical evidence that food stamp recipients

are more likely to buy unhealthy food than higher-income consumers. About 885,000 Wisconsin residents, roughly 15 percent of the state's population, receive some kind of public assistance. Zamarripa said AB 110 is an attempt, at their expense, to distract Wisconsin residents from the failures of the Republican leadership.

When AB 110 was read in committee, Zamarripa pointed out that a large percentage of food stamp recipients are white, drawing accusations of racism from Kaufert. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel columnist Mike Nichols echoed that charge in an opinion piece.

"Kaufert was offended by the remark, and should be, because either Zamarripa is a racist herself or – by suggesting proponents of limiting junk food might change their minds if they knew it would affect white people – is suggesting her opponents are," Nichols wrote.

"People often accuse people of color of 'playing the race card,'" said Zamarripa, who is Hispanic. "I have never accused any of my colleagues in the Legislature of being a racist. Again, it's another distraction, like this bill is a distraction from the fact that we're not creating the jobs that Gov. Walker and the Republicans committed to creating."

Zamarripa is resigned to the bill's passage by the Senate. "They also passed (the FoodShare anti-fraud measure)," she said. "Sadly I believe this bill will see the same fate."

Eight states introduced legislation last year to limit what types of food can be purchased, but none passed a measure.

FOOD STAMP SIDESHOW

The food stamp measure "does nothing to address the issues of the

state, which is that we're 44th in the nation with jobs and dead last in the Midwest – and right now in the midst of the controversy with WEDC," Zamarripa said.

WEDC is an acronym for the Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation, a quasi-public agency created by Gov. Scott Walker to replace the Department of Commerce. It has been mired in scandal and failed in its mission to create new jobs.

The non-partisan Legislative Audit Bureau reported last month that the agency repeatedly failed to follow basic standards in state law for ensuring the clear and proper use of millions of dollars in taxpayer money. Staffed by unqualified cronies of the governor, the agency has experienced staggering turnover, lost track of more than \$50 million in loans and engaged in wasteful and highly questionable expenditures for its politically connected staff.

"It is no wonder why Wisconsin currently ranks 44th in the nation in job growth, 45th in wage growth and dead last in short-term job growth, given that its job creation agency is failing in just about every measurable way possible," said Senate Minority Leader Chris Larson, D-Milwaukee, in a statement.

Instead of the Republican leadership addressing this scandal and the state's numerous other problems, "we're trying to implement a (food-stamp) program that's going to cost us who knows how many thousands of dollars to implement, on the basis of anecdotal stories from the author of the bill," Zamarripa said. "We're spending time on this bill because (Kaufert) had to wait too long in line at the grocery store."

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Department of Agriculture, which has refused prior attempts to food stamp choices beyond current prohibitions on hot foods, tobacco, alcohol, pet food, paper products, household supplies, medicines and vitamins. The agency also has said there is no statistical evidence that food stamp recipients

are more likely to buy unhealthy food than higher-income consumers. About 885,000 Wisconsin residents, roughly 15 percent of the state's population, receive some kind of public assistance. Zamarripa said AB 110 is an attempt, at their expense, to distract Wisconsin residents from the failures of the Republican leadership.

When AB 110 was read in committee, Zamarripa pointed out that a large percentage of food stamp recipients are white, drawing accusations of racism from Kaufert. Milwaukee Journal Sentinel columnist Mike Nichols echoed that charge in an opinion piece.

"Kaufert was offended by the remark, and should be, because either Zamarripa is a racist herself or – by suggesting proponents of limiting junk food might change their minds if they knew it would affect white people – is suggesting her opponents are," Nichols wrote.

"People often accuse people of color of 'playing the race card,'" said Zamarripa, who is Hispanic. "I have never accused any of my colleagues in the Legislature of being a racist. Again, it's another distraction, like this bill is a distraction from the fact that we're not creating the jobs that Gov. Walker and the Republicans committed to creating."

Zamarripa is resigned to the bill's passage by the Senate. "They also passed (the FoodShare anti-fraud measure)," she said. "Sadly I believe this bill will see the same fate."


Eight states introduced legislation last year to limit what types of food can be purchased, but none passed a measure.

FOOD STAMP SIDESHOW


The food stamp measure "does nothing to address the issues of the

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Lawmakers need money and roadbuilders have it – it's how the system works

HIGHWAYS from page one said. "If people aren't driving more, why are we building more?"

The answer is that some of the dollars spent on bogus highway projects find their way into campaign coffers. Critics contend the situation amounts to money laundering – a means of allowing taxpayer dollars to be converted legally into political donations.

Hiniker is raising the issue now because Gov. Scott Walker wants to ratchet up highway spending to \$688 million in the 2013–15 state budget. Since he's completely tapped out the transportation fund, Walker is asking legislators to shift the cost of highway construction to the general fund. That means political payoffs to road builders will come from the same funding source that provides aid to schools and medical care for the poor.

"By transferring the costs of transit from the transportation fund to the general fund, the governor effectively borrows an additional \$107 million from the general fund in the second year of the biennium (budget)," Hiniker said. "Using these funds to build more roads when the transportation fund doesn't have the money to take care of existing roads means that even more general funds will be needed to maintain the new roads."

Walker proposed the transfer to the general fund in the last budget, but legislators nixed it. Hiniker hopes an outcry of protest from the public will prevent Walker's attempt in the next budget as well.

Interestingly, the Legislature has approved language for a constitutional amendment that would wall off the transportation fund for non-transportation purposes but did nothing to protect the general fund from raids for transportation purposes.

Most people wrongly assume that their gasoline taxes fund highway construction. In truth, gas taxes have not risen since 1993, so the burden for unnecessary highway projects is borne mostly by property tax payers.

"It's time to recognize that highways are no longer even close to paying for themselves. We should either cut highway spending or make the tough decisions to raise revenues."

At the same time Walker wants to put



PHOTO: COURTESY 1000 FRIENDS OF WISCONSIN

The Legislature is pushing a \$128-million project to widen Highway 23, a little-used road that winds through farmland between Sheboygan and Fond du Lac. The project has been held up in court by challenges from 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, which objects to the waste of taxpayer dollars and the environmental damage the project would cause. To build the project, the state would have to pay \$60,000 for each acre of land purchased, because some of the land includes buildings. Land in the area normally sells for \$10,000 per acre. While lawmakers favor this project, they claim the state is so broke that it must reduce public transit funding by \$10 million.

more money into the coffers of road builders, he's slashing public transportation funding. One of his first acts as governor was turning down federal dollars to build a high-speed railway linking Chicago and Milwaukee, as well as Milwaukee and Madison. In addition to creating new jobs, the system would have increased economic activity by more efficiently linking the region's major cities.

More recently, the GOP-controlled Legislature changed the rules surrounding financing for a rudimentary light-rail system for Milwaukee. The new rules would make the project prohibitively expensive. Other cities have found that such systems stimulate real-estate investments and bring increased economic activity to the neighborhoods they serve – both of which the state's largest city and major economic generator could sorely use.

PUBLIC TRANSIT CUTS

Although lawmakers scored brownie points with the road builders and fossil fuel companies that contribute money to them, the Legislature's opposition to public transportation is out of synch with the times. Young people and the state's increasingly graying population are demanding more of it. They don't want to be totally dependent on cars.

Many cities that are thriving economically are investing not only in public transportation but also in bike trails and lanes, another strategy that Wisconsin Republicans strongly oppose.

"We have a \$31 billion transportation budget and we can't shuffle things around so that \$10 million can go for transit?" Hiniker asked. "It's so insignificant. It's 0.3 percent of the transportation budget. Why are these

guys so adamantly against it?"

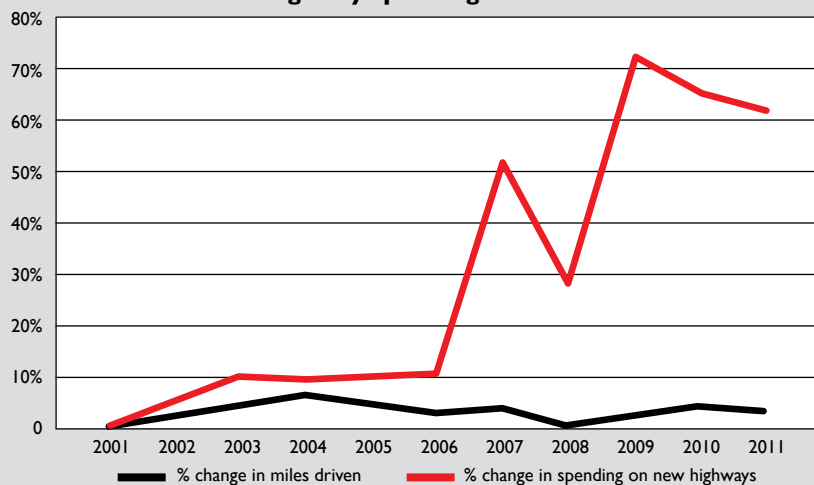
Walker and other Republicans contend that public transit ridership is down. But Hiniker said that's a situation they've purposely created.

"They cut transit service and raise fares. As a result, they lose riders. Then they say, 'There are fewer riders, so let's cut it some more,'" Hiniker explained.

"The road builders never want to see passenger rail come in and siphon away highway dollars," Hiniker added. "Meanwhile, it's the job of lawmakers to get reelected. They have to get money, and the road builders have it. Local transit and mayors don't, so they follow the money. It's the way the political economy works."

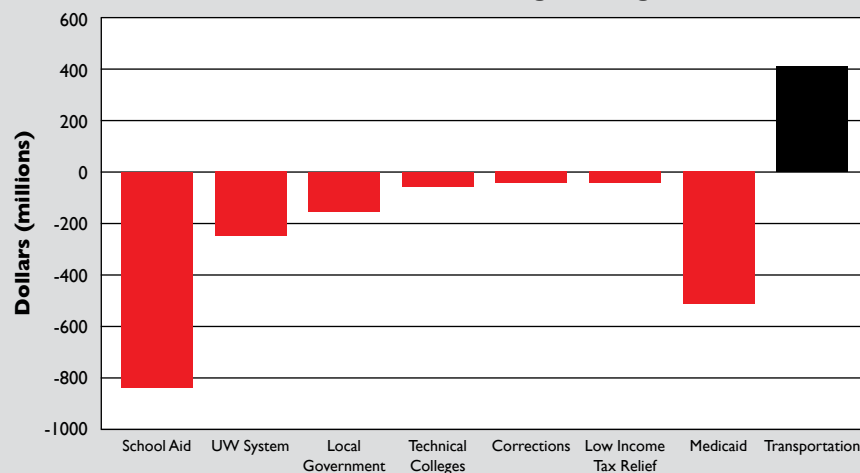
(Editor's note: WiG's CEO is a supporter of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin.)

Percentage change in miles driven and new highway spending since 2000



SOURCE: VMT: [HTTP://WWW.DOT.WISCONSIN.GOV/TRAVEL/COUNTS/VMT.HTM](http://www.dot.wisconsin.gov/travel/counts/vmt.htm)

2011 Wisconsin budget changes



SOURCE: DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATION, BUDGET TRENDS 2011-2013, [HTTP://WWW.DOA.STATE.WI.US/DEBF/EXECBUDGET.ASP](http://www.doa.state.wi.us/DEBF/EXECBUDGET.ASP)

Gays thrown 'under the bus' in immigration bill

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The Senate Judiciary Committee is marking up the massive bill that leaders in both parties agree presents the best opportunity to reform immigration policy in decades. The bill contains many provisions sought by progressive groups, but lacks protections for LGBT families, specifically binational same-sex couples whose relationships are not recognized by the government.

While endorsing key provisions in the bill drafted by the bipartisan "Gang of Eight," LGBT civil rights groups continue to urge the adoption of amendments that protect gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people and their families.

There are an estimated one million LGBT adult immigrants, about two-thirds of whom are documented and one-third undocumented. An estimated 32,300 LGBT binational couples live in the United States.

U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., who chairs the Judiciary Committee, filed one amendment on May 7 that would allow U.S. citizens to seek permanent resident visas, known as green cards, for same-sex foreign partners and another amendment that would apply to U.S. citizens with same-sex foreign spouses.

"For immigration reform to be truly comprehensive, it must include protections for all families," Leahy said in a news release. "We must end the discrimination that gay and lesbian families face in our immigration law."

But the amendments were not among the many considered and either rejected or approved during the first markup session on May 9.

And, as of press time, Leahy had not said whether he would bring up the amendments in committee or offer them when the bill reaches the floor, possibly next month.

That may be because of threats from GOP conservatives, including a coalition of Christian right leaders who spoke out against an inclusive bill the day before the markup began.

"We're extremely hopeful that this bill will remain an immigration bill and not get tangled up with the issue of gay rights," said Richard Land of the Southern Baptist Convention during a news conference call on May 8. "But if it did, if it did, the Southern Baptist Convention would not be able to support the bill."

Leith Anderson, president of the National Association of Evangelicals, called LGBT protections "a divisive distraction that must not derail immigration reform."

Several prominent Republicans, among them Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, have endorsed an LGBT-inclusive bill, but many others in the party – most significantly the Republicans in the Gang of Eight – have said including LGBT protections would kill the bill.

U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., recently told conservative radio host Hugh Hewitt, "This immigration bill is difficult enough as it is. If you inject something like this in the bill, it

will die. The coalition behind it will fall apart."

He added, "This is not the issue to engage this in. You will threaten the entire product."

This has Democrats concerned for the fate of a mammoth reform bill that would strengthen border security, create new programs to allow tens of thousands of workers into the United States legally, require all employers to verify workers' legal status, and create a path to citizenship for the 11 million immigrants now here without legal documents.

U.S. Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York said worries over the issue are costing him sleep. "This one is something I worry about all the time. I'm a good sleeper but I wake up in the morning thinking of these things, sometimes early in the morning," said Schumer, one of the Democrats in the Gang of Eight and another member of the Judiciary Committee.

Schumer supports LGBT protections in immigration reform but fears there may be no passage if the bill is amended to include the LGBT protections.

Such concerns led some in the blogosphere and pundits on cable news channels to suggest that LGBT civil rights advocates back off on the issue.

But advocates maintain that, with a majority of Americans supporting the rights of same-sex couples and their families, there's no reason an inclusive bill should fail – except that some lawmakers are homophobic.

In a statement released on May 7, Human

Rights Campaign said, "The four Republican members of the Gang of Eight have threatened to derail the immigration bill if gay couples are included in it, suggesting that protecting this group, currently left out of our broken immigration system, is somehow different than the other important fixes contemplated. It's not."

"If they end up doing that, they should just own it and call it what it is: homophobia."

Polls show that about 53-58 percent of voters, including 52 percent of Republicans under the age of 50, support marriage equality. Seventy-three percent of Americans, including 66 percent of Republicans, support banning workplace discrimination against LGBT people.

"There is a jarring disconnect between the American public and these senators when it comes to issues of LGBT equality," HRC said, referring to the GOP members of the Gang of Eight. "It's pretty dated to consider LGBT equality as a controversial, hot-button issue like these senators are portraying it to be. In fact, a strong and diverse majority of Americans support equality. These senators are towing a tired line that no longer represents mainstream opinion, and they're throwing same-sex couples under the bus in the process."

The immigration legislation, introduced on April 17, is S. 744, the Border Security, Economic Opportunity and Immigration Modernization Act.

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Marriages' \$42 million impact

MINNESOTA from page one

Opponents in both the House and the Senate argued the bill fails to protect business people who, because of their religious beliefs, don't want to sell or cater to gay or lesbian couples.

Supporters stressed that Minnesota law already prohibits businesses from discriminating against people based on gender or sexual orientation.

Those lawmakers who spoke in favor of the legislation shared deeply personal stories and made passionate calls to colleagues to do what's right.

In his floor speech, state Rep. Joe Radinovich talked about a gay friend. He described himself as so excited about the upcoming vote that "my heart is beating out my chest."

For both votes, the chambers were crowded with equality advocates wearing blue and orange. They carried signs that read variously, "I'm Catholic and I support the freedom to marry," "I'm a teacher and I support the freedom to marry," "I'm a pastor and I support the freedom to marry," "I'm a frat boy and I support the freedom to marry."

The Williams Institute at the University of California-Los Angeles tracks and forecasts the economic impact of same-sex marriages. Researchers there estimated that about 4,946 same-sex couples in Minnesota will choose to marry in the three years after Aug. 1. The spending on wedding arrangements

and tourism by those couples and their guests will add an estimated \$42 million to state and local economies in Minnesota over the next three years, with a boost of \$27 million in the first year.

The institute's forecast did not include estimates for out-of-state same-sex couples who might travel to Minnesota, especially couples in Wisconsin and other border states.

The votes in Minnesota followed closely on the heels of the legalization of same-sex marriage in Delaware and Rhode Island.

The only state in the Midwest where same-sex couples currently can marry is Iowa, as a result of a 2009 judicial order.

A marriage equality bill is pending in Illinois. The Senate has already approved the measure, and Illinois Gov. Pat Quinn has promised to sign it if the bill clears the House. On May 10, the governor again urged representatives to send him a bill to sign so Illinois could become No. 13.

If Illinois legalizes same-sex marriage, that would complicate the decision for Thomas and Springman, and other same-sex couples in Wisconsin.

WISCONSIN NOT NEXT

But it would be a welcome conundrum. There's virtually no chance that Wisconsin, which has a constitutional ban on both same-sex marriage and civil unions, will enact marriage equality in the next seven years – and probably longer. Republicans, dominated



PHOTO: AP/JIM MONE

Demonstrators on both sides of the issue wave their signs outside the Minnesota House chamber to greet lawmakers when they arrive to take up the gay marriage bill at the state Capitol in St. Paul on May 9.

by the GOP's hard-right tea party faction, redrew legislative boundaries after the 2010 census to ensure they'd continue to control the Legislature until 2020.

Last year, Wisconsin Republicans won a big majority in the Assembly even though they received 200,000 fewer votes than Democrats.

Meanwhile, the GOP hopes to win court backing for a law it enacted in Wisconsin requiring voters to show photo IDs at the polls. They believe that would suppress turnout among blacks, students and other Democratic constituencies in the future.

FOR THE RECORD

States that define marriage as the union of a man and a woman: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Mississippi, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, Wyoming.

Wisconsin has banned same-sex marriage, but provides partial spousal rights, recognizing domestic partnerships since August 2009.



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Delaware becomes 11th marriage equality state

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The "First State" became the 11th state to legalize same-sex marriage on May 7.

The Delaware Senate, after about three hours of debate that day, voted 12-9 for a bill allowing same-sex couples to enter civil marriages.

Soon after the vote, Democratic Gov. Jack Markell signed the bill. "I do not intend to make any of you wait one moment longer," the governor said.

Same-sex couples can begin marrying on July 1 in Delaware, which gets its nickname from being the first state to ratify the U.S. Constitution in 1787.

A jubilant Lisa Goodman, president of the statewide Equality Delaware, said, "Time and again over the past few weeks, lawmakers have affirmed the views of Delawareans in recognizing that the time for marriage equality is upon us."

At the national Freedom to Marry campaign, Mark Solomon cheered: "This win in Delaware builds on the amazing momentum we have experienced this year nationwide."

ON THE FLOOR

On the Senate floor, lawmakers and witnesses focused on how civil unions would be replaced by marriages and the impact of the legislation on religious institutions and people who object to gay marriage due to their faith. Opponents said Delaware was recklessly redefining "marriage" and messing with the social structure.

The Rev. Leonard Klein, a Catholic priest who represented the Catholic Diocese of Wilmington, said, "When you remove male and female from the definition of marriage, all bets are off."

Another opponent of the bill, the Rev. Chuck Better of the Glasgow Reformed Presbyterian Church, said lawmakers were threatening cultural institutions and religious freedoms "in order to make people feel good about themselves." He warned that the law would require people to assist in supporting same-sex marriage in conflict with their religious beliefs and teachings.

Goodman, in her testimony, emphasized that no clergy will be required to marry a same-sex couple and that no religious institution will be required to host a same-sex wedding or recognize a same-sex marriage.

But, she added, under existing law businesses cannot discriminate against people in Delaware, including based on sexual orientation.

"We've made a decision as Delawareans – this body made that decision – that we'll treat people equally under the law," Goodman said.

With the vote expected to be close, state Sen. Karen Peterson took to the floor to urge support for equality. As she worked to persuade her colleagues, she publicly came out as a lesbian.

"If my happiness somehow demeans or diminishes your marriage, you need to work

on your marriage," said Peterson.

After about three hours, the roll was called, and a 12-9 victory for equality was tallied.

Soon afterward, with about 200 people looking on, Markell signed the bill. "Delaware should be, is and will be a welcoming place to live and love and to raise a family for all who call our great state home," he said.

CIVIL UNIONS OUT

The legislation extends to same-sex couples the ability to enter civil marriages. Civil unions, legalized two years ago in Delaware, will be phased out, with no new civil unions granted after July 1 and existing civil unions converted into marriages. Civil unions from other states will be treated as marriages in Delaware, under the new law.

U.S. Census numbers for 2010 indicate that about 2,646 same-sex couples live in Delaware. Of those couples, 50 percent will likely marry in the next three years, according to researchers at the Williams Institute at the University of California-Los Angeles. Their estimate is based on patterns in other states.

Those marriages will bring significant changes for same-sex couples and their families, and have a positive impact on the Delaware economy. The Williams Institute estimates extending marriage rights to same-sex couples will bring about \$7 million to state and local economies in the early years.

Researcher M.V. Lee Badgett said, "Other states in the region, such as Massachusetts and Rhode Island, have already legalized same-sex marriage. As Delaware becomes the 11th state to extend marriage to same-sex couples, they will begin to see the economic benefits that other states are already experiencing."

In the first three years of extending marriage to same-sex couples, the state's wedding and tourism business will see spending rise by \$7 million, including \$5 million in additional wedding spending and \$2 million in tourism expenditures made by out-of-town guests.

Delaware doesn't impose a sales tax, but it collects a public accommodations tax and revenues will increase \$210,000 in the first three years of the new law.

Also, the boost in travel spending will generate about 36 jobs in the state, according to the researchers, who did not include in their report spending estimates for out-of-state couples that might travel to the state to marry. Such tourism likely will have a major impact on Rehoboth Beach, one of the gayest resort communities on the East Coast.

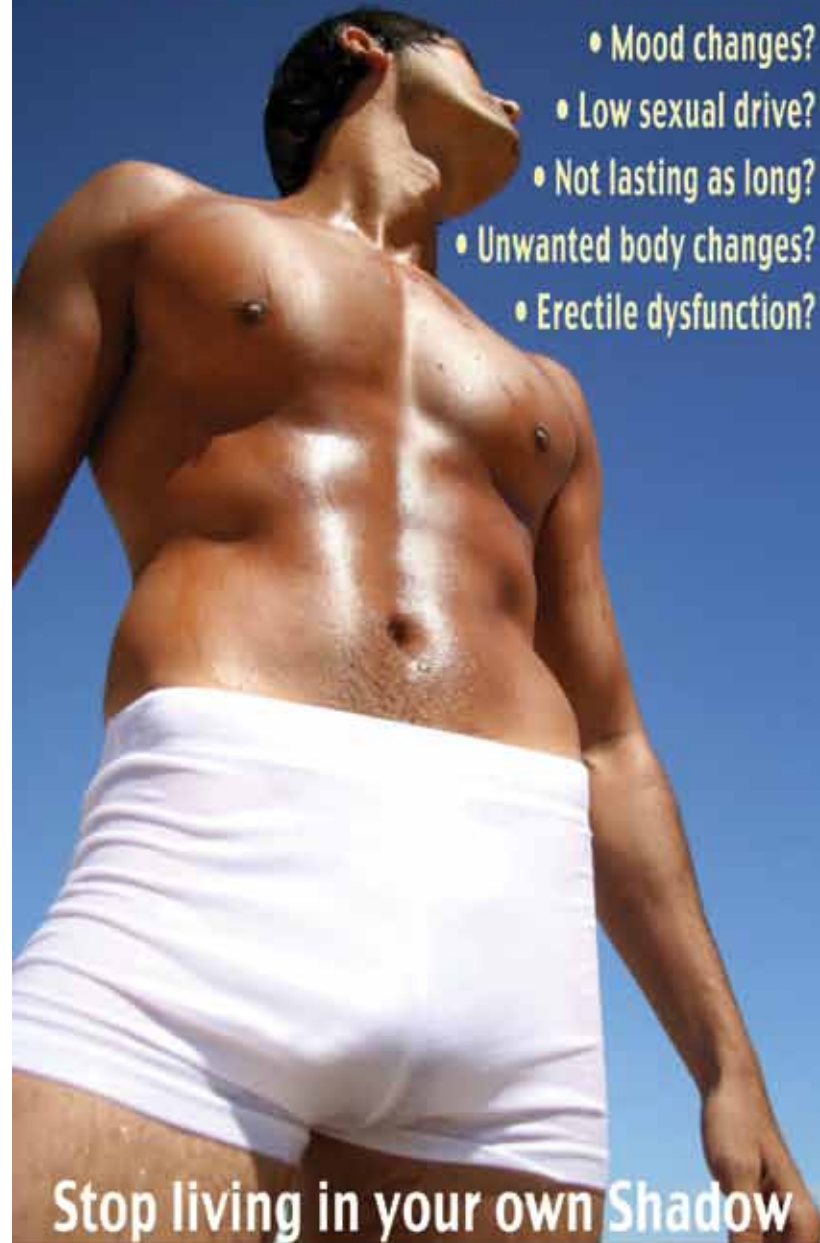
"This law strengthens our families, strengthens our communities and makes Delaware an even better place to live and work. I couldn't be prouder to be a Delawarean than I am right now," said Goodman.

Kathleen McRae, executive director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware, called the day historic – in a historic year.

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{ Editorial }

**Wisconsin GOP
scoffs at inclusion**

In March, Republican National Committee chairman Reince Priebus, the former head of the Wisconsin GOP, issued a report warning that the party's future depends on cultivating minority and younger voters. He proposed doing this by taking such actions as supporting immigration reform and embracing "welcoming and inclusive" attitudes on gay rights.

But at their annual state convention in Wausau earlier this month, Republicans largely scoffed at those recommendations.

Republican Senate Majority Leader Scott Fitzgerald insisted his party doesn't need to reinvent itself, pointing to the 2012 Republican wins in the state Legislature as evidence. He ignored the fact that Democrats received nearly 200,000 more votes than Republicans in combined state Assembly contests last year. GOP candidates won a majority of seats only because they controlled the 2010 redistricting process – the once-in-a-decade redrawing of political boundaries – and created districts giving Republicans a huge electoral advantage.

Fitzgerald also ignored the fact that in statewide races last year, Democrat Tammy Baldwin beat popular former Gov. Tommy Thompson and President Barack Obama extended the GOP's presidential losing streak in Wisconsin to 24 years. The presidential loss was even more glaring because the Republican vice presidential nominee was Wisconsin Congressman Paul Ryan.

In the last two presidential elections, Obama won overwhelming majorities of non-white voters and younger voters, while the anchors of Republican support – older white men – have become an increasingly smaller share of the electorate. In both elections, a significant uptick in African-American voters played a major role in the Republicans' defeat.

Nationwide, the number of white voters declined between 2008 and 2012 for the first time in recent history. That was the final nail in GOP presidential candidate Mitt Romney's political coffin. White voters were the only major racial group that favored him – by an overwhelming majority of 59-39 percent.

Fitzgerald and other Republican leaders hope to deal with their racial problem by enacting laws such as requiring voters to show photo IDs, which they believe would discourage blacks and young people from going to the polls. But in 2012, a backlash against photo ID laws actually boosted black voter turnout.

In an interview with AP before the state Republican convention, Priebus said he couldn't understand why there was a backlash in his party over the concept of inclusiveness. But a cornerstone of the Republican Party base are religious right voters, who regard "inclusivity" as a code word for approving of unmarried, sexually active women and gays, two groups they exist to marginalize. Leaders of religious hate groups have threatened to form their own party if the GOP weakens its resolve to prevent same-sex marriage and ban women from access to contraception, STD prevention and abortion.

No wonder Democratic Party executive director Maggie Brickerman branded Priebus' call for inclusiveness as "window dressing."

"The only real outreach we've seen Scott Walker do to new groups is to out-of-state contributors," she said in a statement.

Unfortunately, we have to agree. Wisconsin Republicans are relying on scamming the system and undermining the democratic process to keep them in power – not broadening their base. We urge Republican voters to support Priebus and fight to move their party forward.

WiG's WEB PICKS

Some of our favorite recent pictorials from cyberspace



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The Wisconsin Gazette is published every other week and distributed throughout the Milwaukee area, Madison, Racine, Kenosha, and 40 other cities statewide. To have WiG delivered to your address, contact rwright@wisconsin-gazette.com or call 414-961-3240, ext. 101
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ON THE RECORD



“Some youngsters will be positioned to draw other youngsters into situations where, because they react against sexual advances according to the moral precepts of the faith of their fathers, they will be viciously accused of unrighteous bigotry. Or else their vulnerable adolescent emotions will impel them to ... slip into a whirlpool of compulsive sensual indulgence, moral guilt and spiritual confusion.”

– Perpetual right-wing Republican political candidate ALAN KEYES predicting that gay Boy Scouts will turn straight scouts gay by appealing to their sense of political correctness.

“If the party does that, the party’s done. The party is done if the Republican Party abandons traditional marriage. It would mean that it has turned its back again on not only its base, but on the overwhelming majority of folks who identify as Republicans.”

– BRIAN BROWN, of the National Organization for Marriage, telling a USA Today reporter that if the GOP weakens its resolve to fight same-sex marriage, then the party would fold.

“I respect men more for coming out. They joke on Frank Ocean a lot, but at least he ain’t out here ‘frontin.’ I respect gay men who identify it and they out with it. I don’t have a problem with gay people at all.”

– Harlem rapper A\$AP ROCLY answering a question about Jason Collins during an interview on Washington, D.C.’s WKYS 93.9 FM.

“Just because you’re gay doesn’t mean you can’t be the athlete you want to be. Doesn’t mean you can’t be a star. Doesn’t mean you can’t go out there and go just as hard as anybody else, if not harder.”

– KEVIN GRAYSON, college football star and aspiring NFL player, coming out in an interview with Virginia CBS affiliate WTVR-Channel 6.

“Everybody experiences sexual impulses that, if they acted on those impulses, it would destroy them. You’ve experienced them. I’ve experienced them. Every man, every woman has experienced certain sexual impulses that, if they acted on them, if they conducted themselves by yielding to those impulses, would destroy them. Ask Tiger Woods about that.”

– BRYAN FISCHER, the obsessively anti-gay spokesman for the hate group American Family Association, refusing to answer Fox News radio host Alan Colmes’ question about whether Fischer has to suppress his own same-sex attractions.

“Marriage equality comes to Minnesota – because why should Marcus Bachmann be the only legally married gay man in the state?”

– DAN SAVAGE tweeting his reaction to Minnesota’s adoption of marriage equality.

“We want to warn families before they expose their children to Gay Day’s same-sex revelry, before they pay money to Disney for parking, admission, novelties and food. We also want to send a message that Gay Day’s public promotion of homosexuality to a captured audience inside the park is wrong.”

– The anti-gay group ONE MILLION MOMS warning followers by email that their children might be turned gay if they accidentally happen to attend Disney World on Gay Day.



WisCon hosts sci-fi heaven



The 37th annual WisCon Feminist Science Fiction & Fantasy Convention takes place in Madison at the Concourse Hotel May 24-27. WisCon is the biggest convention of its kind in the world. Speakers, discussions, movies, parties, music and more focus on feminist ideas in sci-fi, fantasy and speculative literature. I’ve been to WisCon, and it’s the coolest combination of nerds and radicals, eggheads and fan girlz and boyz in the cosmos. The four-day event costs just \$50, which proves WisCon’s admirable commitment to accessibility while portending its doom in interstellar commerce. It is an inclusive event. Carbon and non-carbon-based creatures of all ages, races, genders, orientations and genetic codes are welcome. Feminism, like an alien intruder, burst into the self-satisfied, sexist world of sci-fi and fantasy in the 1970s. With few exceptions,

the genres had been dominated by male writers and macho heroes who were the Thinkers, Seekers, Doers. Women were often objectified, passive, witless or completely absent. Women writers of sci-fi and fantasy had a hard time getting their work published. Publishers did not value their storytelling and were convinced their books would not sell to a market assumed to be irreversibly male.

Marion Zimmer Bradley (the “Darkover” series), Ursula K. Le Guin (“The Left Hand of Darkness”), Joanna Russ (“The Female Man”) and Suzy McKee Charnas (the “Holdfast Chronicles”) were among the pioneers who broke into the boys club with wildly imaginative fictions that had special resonance for women and became best-sellers. These writers opened the field for other women who experimented with different styles and tackled broader themes: Sally Gearhart (“The Wanderground”), Octavia Butler (“Kindred”), Nicola Griffith (“Slow River”), and Maureen F. McHugh (“China Moun-

tain Zhang,” a terrific yarn about a gay man surviving in a future America controlled by China).

Over time, women’s voices and gender themes became recognized as the new frontier in sci-fi/fantasy. Books that explore gender, race and power relations and present more diverse visions of alternate universes now provoke the lion’s share of critical commentary and sweep the genre’s top awards.

Jo Walton, who won the World Fantasy Award in 2004 for “Tooth and Claw” and both the Nebula and Hugo Awards in 2012 for “Among Others,” will be a special guest at WisCon.

“Among Others” is a multi-layered story that encompasses a girl’s dramatic coming of age, the classic battle of good magic versus evil magic (between daughter and mother), and the transformative power of literature – specifically, the classics of science fiction – to nourish and guide a searching heart. Death and evil are palpable, and much of the drama is conveyed through compelling journal entries by the

15-year-old heroine Morwenna.

“I don’t believe I’ve seen, either in fiction or in memoir, as brilliant and tone-perfect an account of what discovering SF and fantasy can mean to its young readers,” wrote a reviewer for Locus.

Joan Slonczewski will also appear at WisCon. Publicity for her Campbell Award-winning book “A Door into Ocean” says it creates “a world covered entirely by ocean, inhabited by an all-female race of purple people who use genetic engineering to defend their unique ecosystem.”

They kind of lost me with “purple people,” but the rest sounds righteous. Slonczewski teaches a course at Kenyon College called “Biology and Science Fiction,” which has to be the most fascinating course I never got to take in college.

For full information about this great event, visit www.wiscon.info.

Find us on Twitter at @wigazette.

Honoring local heroes: Jolie McKenna



Tucked away on a quiet side street in Racine sits the LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin, and without a doubt you will find inside its doors the subject of my “honoring local heroes” column: Jolie McKenna.

Jolie has been the executive director since August 2010 and, since taking the helm, has done amazing work. The once tiny center has grown by leaps and bounds under her leadership.

Recently, Jolie secured donations to pay off the mortgage on the center’s building, making hers one of the most stable centers in the country. The now debt-free center operates on a budget that continues to grow every year – and it just obtained funding to open an additional

location in Kenosha.

In addition, under Jolie’s leadership, Kenosha has been working with a dedicated group of volunteers to eventually allow for expansion into Walworth County. This will make the LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin the only LGBT service provider with ongoing programs in Racine, Kenosha and Walworth counties.

While Racine’s physical center remains small, its programs continue to grow. In February, Fair Wisconsin Education Fund named the center “Organization of the Year.”

“Under Jolie’s leadership, the center is flourishing and building critical relationships with community partners. Jolie is truly an inspiring and impressive leader, and I am proud to call her a colleague and a friend,” said Katie Belanger, executive director of Fair Wisconsin.

As the former develop-

ment director and major gifts officer for The Pride Center, South Florida’s LGBT community center, I know the important role that LGBT community centers play in our community. Often they are at the center of all that is going on for the community, but more importantly they live or die based on the ability of their leadership to connect the community to their valuable services. The Racine center’s growth is due in large part to Jolie’s vision and leadership.

When Jolie isn’t working inside the center, you can find her making a difference in another way. An avid political strategist, she played a crucial role in the passage of domestic partner benefits in Racine and Kenosha last year. In fact, the first time I met Jolie was in Racine, when the city council voted 10-4 to extend the benefits. She was instrumental – present at all of the meetings and schedul-

Jolie has been director of the LGBT Center of SE Wisconsin since 2010.

ing sessions with aldermen.

When it was all said and done, she said simply, “What’s next?”

People with Jolie’s courage, conviction and dedication are not found every day. She is a leader who passes the credit on to others. Keep your eye on Jolie and the LGBT Center of Southeast Wisconsin. Exciting things are happening there through her inspirational example.

To Jolie, from all those whom you serve so tirelessly every day, thank you.

BSA compromise on anti-gay ban unites foes

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The Boy Scouts of America continues to scout for compromise on its long-standing policy against gays, but its draft policy – released in advance of a national meeting set for this month – didn't earn any merit badge.

The BSA executive committee unveiled a proposed resolution to establish a non-discrimination policy and end the ban on gay Scouts. However, the resolution does not call for an end to the ban on gay volunteers, including Scouting leaders, or job applicants.

"No youth may be denied membership in the Boy Scouts of America on the basis of sexual orientation or preference alone," states the proposed policy, which would be applied nationwide. The proposal departs from a BSA recommendation introduced earlier this year that suggested the organization might allow local and regional Scout groups to decide for themselves whether to ban gay children and adults.

A fact sheet from the BSA explaining the current policy and the recommended reform states, "This proposal acknowledges changes in society while remaining true to Scouting's mission and is reflective of how our major religious chartered organizations operate. Our vision is to serve every eligible youth in America, and this policy would allow us to serve more kids and focus on their development."

The proposal leaves unanswered complaints about employment discrimination. The BSA's current application for employment explicitly states that "the Boy Scouts of America will not employ atheists, agnostics, known or avowed homosexuals."

The proposal also does not satisfy petitioners demanding that LGBT parents be allowed to serve as leaders of packs, dens and troops.

"It is good news that BSA leadership is open to ending the ban on gay Scouts, but this resolution must go further," said Chad Griffin of the Human Rights Campaign, the

nation's largest LGBT civil rights group. "Parents and adults of good moral character, regardless of sexual orientation, should be able to volunteer their time to mentor the next generation of Americans. What message does this resolution send to the gay Eagle Scout who, as an adult, wants to continue a lifetime of Scouting by becoming a troop leader?"

Jennifer Tyrrell, the lesbian mom who was ousted as the leader of her son's Scouting group, has become an activist for changing the policy. "The Boy Scouts are once again forcing me to look my children in the eyes and tell them that our family isn't good enough," she said. "My heart goes out to the young adults in Scouting who would be able to continue as Scouts if this is passed, but then be thrown out when they reach the age to become leaders."

Meanwhile, on the right, there is widespread opposition to any change in membership requirements, with the exception of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day

Saints, which endorsed the policy change as a "thoughtful, good-faith effort to address issues."

Tony Perkins of the Family Research Council called the proposed change "incoherent. ... The proposal says, in essence, that homosexuality is morally acceptable until a boy turns 18 – then, when he comes of age, he's removed from the Scouts."

About 1,400 BSA leaders are set to vote on the resolution at a national council meeting May 22-24 in Texas.

Until then, the BSA continues to survey members on the matter through outreach to local councils.

The group maintains that its research, described as the most comprehensive listening exercise in BSA history, has found:

- Attitudes toward lesbian and gay relationships have changed rapidly in three years.
- Younger parents and teens tend to oppose the current policy.
- Parents in three out of four BSA regions oppose the



PHOTO: COURTESY OF GLAAD

Opponents of the Boy Scouts of America's ban against gay youth and adults delivered petitions – signed by more than a million people – to the nonprofit's headquarters in Texas in early February.

REGIONAL BRIEFS

EMBATTLED ILLINOIS GOP CHAIR RESIGNS

Illinois GOP Chairman Pat Brady resigned on May 7, citing his wife's battle with cancer and his desire to focus on family.

Social conservatives opposed to Brady's support of gay marriage had persistently called for him to resign the position he held for nearly four years. His critics also cited last year's elections when Illinois Democrats won veto-proof legislative majorities and picked up congressional seats.

But Brady said he was not bowing to pressure and that internal rifts worsened by 2012's poor election results didn't influence his decision to exit the post.

Brady said his wife has battled "very serious" cancer for two years and that he wants to spend more time with her and their children.

Still, a key Illinois Republican Party donor said GOP conservatives were destroying the party's chances in the 2014 elections because they have sparked an internal feud over a social issue.

Businessman and GOP cheerleader Ron Gidwitz told the Chicago Sun-Times that to push out the party chairman with no plan to install a replacement "is absurd."

IN OTHER NEWS ...

- The **Iowa Supreme Court** recently

ruled that same-sex couples and their families must be treated equally under Iowa law and ordered the state Department of Public Health to provide an accurate two-parent birth certificate to all children born to lesbian married parents in Iowa. The court was unanimous.

• **The Minnesota Vikings** released Chris Kluwe on May 6, ending the punter's eight-year stay in Minnesota. During his time with the Vikings, Kluwe earned a reputation as one of the most opinionated players in the league. He criticized union leadership during the lockout, wore a patch on his uniform to protest the lack of punters in the Hall of Fame and, most notably, became a vocal supporter of gay rights.

• **A former rural Iowa court official** pleaded guilty on May 6 to forgery for filing false documents to issue a marriage license to a same-sex couple from central Florida. She received a fine and a suspended sentence.

• **Same-sex domestic partners** of state employees will continue to qualify for health insurance after the Michigan Supreme Court decided not to hear an appeal filed by the state. In a short order, justices unanimously said they were not persuaded they should review the case.



PHOTO: DAVID LAUERSDORF

DANCING LIKE AN EGYPTIAN

An alternative prom brought nearly 100 LGBTQ youth, ages 13-24, to the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center on April 27. Co-sponsored by the Medical College of Wisconsin, the prom's theme was "Egyptian allure." Many guests took inspiration for their costumes from the theme, helping to create a colorful and joyous experience – as well as memories that will last a lifetime.

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LGBT travel group joins anti-trafficking campaign

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The world's largest LGBT travel group has joined a global campaign against human trafficking.

The International Gay & Lesbian Travel Association made the commitment at its annual convention in Chicago in early May.

IGLTA, which represents travel agents, tour operators, destinations and services, is the third association to sign the Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct drafted and circulated by ECPAT International.

ECPAT is a global network of 81 groups in 74 countries working to combat child exploitation.

The code, signed by more than a thousand companies, consists of voluntary guidelines that travel companies can implement to prevent child exploitation. Signers agree to establish a policy against sexual exploitation of children; train employees in children's rights, the prevention of sexual exploitation

and how to report suspected cases; include a clause in contracts stating zero tolerance of sexual exploitation of children; and provide information to travellers on children's rights.

The United Nations estimates that 1.2 million children are trafficked worldwide each year. ECPAT statistics concerning the U.S. conclude:

- 300,000 children nationwide are at risk of some form of commercial sexual exploitation.
- 14,500-7,500 foreign nationals are trafficked into the United States each year.
- 43 percent of child victims of commercial sexual exploitation in Los Angeles engaged in survival sex – sex for money, food, a place to stay, clothes or drugs.
- 45 percent of commercial sexual exploitation of children in New York City occurred in hotels.
- 95 percent of all trafficking victims experience physical

or sexual violence.

- 25 percent of tourists sexually abusing children outside the United States are American or Canadian.

IGLTA board member Rika Jean-Francois was instrumental in creating the partnership between the LGBT group and ECPAT. Jean-Francois also is a commissioner of ITB Corporate Social Responsi-

bility, and ITB Berlin signed the code in 2011.

"IGLTA signing the child-protection code sends a strong signal to its members and the tourism industry as a whole," said Jean-Francois. "I believe that it is part of our social responsibility to speak out against sexual exploitation of children and to stand up for human rights in tourism."

Carol Smolenski, the executive director ECPAT-USA, said, "ECPAT-USA is thrilled to partner with IGLTA in raising awareness about the unique role travel companies have in identifying and protecting victims of trafficking. The international reach of IGLTA and its members is crucial to fight trafficking in all regions of the world."

ON THE WEB

To read more about the Tourism Child-Protection Code of Conduct and find companies that have pledged to uphold the code, go to www.thecode.org.

NATIONAL BRIEFS

PUSH TO NAME AIRPORT FOR MILK GROUNDED

A San Francisco lawmaker has abandoned a push to rename San Francisco International Airport after slain gay rights leader Harvey Milk. Instead, San Francisco Supervisor David Campos will pursue getting an airport terminal named for Milk.

Campos said he gave up on the idea of putting a question on the city ballot asking voters to approve the name change because of opposition, including from the city's

daily newspaper and Mayor Edwin Lee.

IN OTHER NEWS ...

- **Texas Attorney General Greg Abbott** said in a non-binding opinion that it is unconstitutional for municipalities to offer partnership benefits. Local governments from El Paso to San Antonio and north to Dallas County now have their legal departments reviewing benefits plans, but none seemed likely to drop the plans.

- **The California Supreme Court** recently ruled that cities and counties can ban medical marijuana dispensaries, a decision likely to further diminish the network of storefront pot shops and fuel efforts to have the state regulate the industry.

- **Lesbian teacher Carla Hale**, who said she was fired by an Ohio Catholic school after her mother's published obituary included the name of her partner, is

fighting to get her job back. Hale has filed a complaint against the school. A petition drive on her behalf also is underway.

- **The U.S. government** halted a large vaccine study because experimental shots weren't preventing HIV infection, nor did the shots reduce the amount of the AIDS virus in the blood when people who had been vaccinated later became infected.

— from WiG and AP reports

| (holidays done right)

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COMMUNITY BRIEFS

SAGE MILWAUKEE BECOMES PART OF LGBT CENTER

SAGE Milwaukee became part of the Milwaukee Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender Community Center on May 1.

"We are delighted to be joining the momentum at the center," Dawn Schmidt of SAGE Milwaukee said in a news release. "Our organization will have access to the larger LGBT community who use our community center. The facilities are accessible to all. As our local SAGE community grows, we are in a position to look at the new opportunities the center offers."

Anne Perry Curley of the center board stated, "This combination of these two organizations will provide many more opportunities for LGBT seniors and their friends to gather together for fun, learning, friendship and services. The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center will maintain the ties with SAGE USA. Additionally, current SAGE memberships will transfer directly to a full community center membership."

Paul Williams of the center added, "Positioning SAGE as a program of the center unites two strong organizations with a long history in Milwaukee and makes them both more diverse."

For more, call the center at 414-292-3060.

PNC JOINS LGBT CHAMBER

PNC Financial Services Group has joined the Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce as a Gold Founding Member, the organization announced on May 9.

The announcement came just days ahead of the group's Madison launch event on May 14 at Plan B, 924 Williamson St.

"PNC has a strong commitment to diversity and to the LGBT community," said Jason Rae, the chamber's executive director. "They share our strong desire in helping LGBT-owned-and-allied businesses succeed and prosper here in Wisconsin."

The Human Rights Campaign recently named PNC as one of the best places for LGBT people to work. "As part of our commitment to serve our employees, customers and communities, PNC observes seven history and heritage months designated by the U.S. Congress as national celebrations,



PHOTO: DAVID LAUERSDORF

Members of more than 30 organizations attended a Cream City Foundation networking event on May 2 at Serb Hall. The event provided an opportunity for local nonprofits to learn about each other's work.

including PRIDE month," said PNC Wisconsin regional president Chris Goller.

PNC was founded in 1852 and has 34 branches in southeastern Wisconsin.

"The LGBT Chamber of Commerce is looking forward to working with PNC as we grow the LGBT business community in our great state," said Rae.

The Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce is an organization of LGBT and LGBT-allied businesses, corporations and professionals that offers networking opportunities, business development efforts and educational programming to its members.

The Madison launch event is open to the public. For more, go to www.wislgbtchamber.com.

IN OTHER NEWS ...

• **The Milwaukee LGBT Community Center** joined in efforts to raise money for LGBT causes as part of Give OUT Day, a national initiative held on May 9. The center raised \$7,930, which was matched by a \$7,500 grant from Will Martin and Peter Larson. Board members Warren Scherer and Kevin Flaherty held a party that brought in more than \$4,500, including a

\$1,500 matching grant from the couple.

• **Kassandra White**, a South Milwaukee High School student, is the winner of a scholarship from the Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools. The student started a project promoting positive LGBT representation in the media. She made her school a safer place for transgender and gender nonconforming students by working to ensure the availability of gender-inclusive bathrooms and

distributing diversity kits to local preschools.

• **Cocoon Room**, 820 E. Locust St. in Milwaukee's Riverwest neighborhood, presents "Celebrate Queer Milwaukee," a mixed-media showcase of work by three emerging local artists – Malena Magnolia, Allison Eve Mollet and Alexandra Hawley. An opening night party on May 31 begins at 6 p.m. For more, visit celebratequeermke.tumblr.com.

– L.N. and L.W.



PHOTO: COURTESY

PNC Financial Services Group joined the Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce as a Gold Founding Member on May 9.

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WISCONSIN GAZETTE ENTERTAINMENT

PrideFest expands stages and programming

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

The organizers of PrideFest Milwaukee say they've expanded this year's event to include a new stage along with a broader array of activities and performances than ever before.

Last year PrideFest—North America's largest LGBT music festival—broke 25 years of attendance records, drawing 28,137 people to the Summerfest grounds. Near-perfect weather and a strong lineup of headliners brought the event's books back into the black after a disappointing turnout in 2011 left PrideFest's future imperilled, said PrideFest president Scott Gunkel.

This year's star-studded event promises to be another great success, if Mother Nature cooperates.

Out pop icon Andy Bell of Erasure is the Miller Lite Mainstage headliner on opening night, June 7. He's the first male, opening-night headliner in the event's history, according to Gunkel. Other first night performers include Sophie B. Hawkins and ABBA Salute.

On June 8, the legendary duo Indigo Girls hits the mainstage, and on June 9, outspoken LGBT and women's rights supporter Amanda Palmer closes out the festival. She'll follow a performance by Dangerous Muse, featuring electro-pop dance sounds and sexy stage theatrics never before seen on the Miller Lite Mainstage, according to a PrideFest press release.

Other artists performing over the weekend include God-Des & She, Beverly McClellan, Big Bad Gina, DJ Grind, Bad Romance, Something to Do, and Wisconsin's own first lady of rock, Ronnie Nyles.

The festival's popular dance pavilion will be enhanced this year with more sophisticated sound and lighting



PHOTO: COURTESY

Juan Carlos (JC) Munguia, above, is performing on PrideFest's new, multicultural Riviera Maya Stage on June 9. Right, DJ Grind spins at 7 p.m. on June 9 in the dance pavilion. This year the pavilion will be outfitted with an improved \$60,000 lighting system.

equipment. Gunkel said an additional \$60,000 worth of lighting effects will raise the dance experience to a new level of razzle-dazzle.

Numerous events are scheduled throughout the weekend, ranging from fireworks to drag shows to a leather/fetish show.

Last year, PrideFest launched Wom!nz Spot

Lounge and Café, a successful new stage area toward the south end of the festival grounds. The venue, which offered poetry readings, acoustic performers, women artists and dancers in a laid-back atmosphere, "was packed all day long," Gunkel said.

"We trademarked it and we're bringing it back," he

said, adding that men are welcome to join the wom!n.

It's another year, and there will be yet another new stage — The Riviera Maya Stage. Sponsored by La Nueva Ritmo, the stage will highlight the multicultural dimension of the LGBT and allied community.

"This multicultural stage is dedicated to presenting



PHOTO: COURTESY

musical groups from diverse backgrounds," board member Francisco Araiza said in a statement. "We wanted a place to showcase different nationalities, ethnicities, languages and religions, and by showcasing our diversity, we hope to find the commonalities that make the fabric that forms one worldwide LGBT and straight commu-

nity."

The stage will open on Friday night with oldies from the 1970s, '80s and '90s spun by Kim from Club 219 and BJ Daniels from The Factory — both iconic DJs from Milwaukee's disco era. "It's kind of a reunion thing," Gunkel said.

Saturday night will feature Latin music acts and DJs, and

PRIDE on next page



Running start

Hit PrideFest early and running with the Big Gay 5K!, a walk/run that takes off at 5 p.m. on June 6 from the health and wellness area. Afterward participants can shake out their tired leg muscles at the dance pavilion until 11 p.m.



PHOTO: COURTESY

On sale

Save \$3 on PrideFest admission by purchasing tickets online in advance (tickets are \$13 online, \$16 at the gate). Three-day weekend passes are only \$30. Single-day VIP passes, which include access to the Potawatomi Bingo Casino VIP Deck, are available for \$100 advance or \$225 for June 7-9.

Go to pridefest.com/tickets.



PHOTO: COURTESY



PHOTO: COURTESY

GIVE A LITTLE

When purchasing tickets at the gate, PrideFest visitors will be offered the opportunity to add \$1 to be donated to the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center.

PRIDE from prior page

Sunday the new stage will put hip-hop under the spotlight.

The revitalized Milwaukee LGBT Community Center plans to have a high profile at PrideFest 2013. The group is taking over a two-story structure on the south end of the festival grounds near the Harley-Davidson Roadhouse Stage and the Wom!nz Spot.

"We're sort of taking the community center on the road," said board secretary Martin Palicki. "Everything you'd find at the center, we're taking to the grounds."

Palicki said the center will offer an alternative for attendees who want to spend some time at "a quieter place, where you can talk to people."

The center will host seminars on such diverse topics as housing, retirement and gardening. There will also be a virtual gallery featuring artwork the center has exhibited and a videographer on site to record visitors' coming-out stories.

The center also will host family-friendly activities, including an inflatable slide for kids of all ages. An alcohol-free area for young people ages 13-24 will have a

DJ and dancing.

"There's been a family explosion at PrideFest," said board member Denise Cawley. "When we (she and her partner Anne) first had our son, we counted like two babies at PrideFest. Now he's 6 and there's been a baby explosion."

Cawley's son Aidan looks forward to PrideFest, where he particularly enjoys the roasted corn, the hot dogs – and having his picture taken with drag queens, he said.

When purchasing tickets at the gate, PrideFest visitors will be offered the opportunity to add \$1 to be donated to the center.

One of the most novel features about PrideFest is that a volunteer, unpaid staff runs the elaborate event, which is the first major festival of the season.

"Every year, these folks come back and dedicate hours and hours of volunteer time to organize, and run this three-day festival," said festival director Pete Minns. "And every year, it's a great time."

Find us on Twitter at @wigazette.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Clockwise from top: God-des and She; Dangerous Muse, an electro-pop duo that specializes in sexy stage theatrics; Big Bad Gina, a genre-hopping, folk-rocking trio with a girl groove edge; and Beverly McClellan are among the scores of acts featured this year at North America's largest LGBT music festival – Milwaukee PrideFest.



Emily Saliers is psyched about PrideFest

The Indigo Girls—Amy Ray, left, and Emily Saliers.

Interview

GREGG SHAPIRO

Since bursting onto the music scene more than 20 years ago, the Indigo Girls have inspired many imitators. But few of them have achieved the songwriting success or harmonic perfection of lesbian duo Emily Saliers and Amy Ray. Individually and collectively, the two lifelong friends have created some of American folk rock's most unforgettable tunes. Their signature classics, including "Closer to Fine," "Galileo," "Power of Two" and "Get Out the Map," still have devoted followers singing along, swaying in their seats and dancing in the grass.

Saliers and Ray have continued to evolve as songwriters and performers, as demonstrated on the double-disc set "Poseidon and the Bitter Bug" and 2011's dazzling "Beauty Queen Sister." I spoke recently with Saliers about the newer album

and about the Indigo Girls' return to Milwaukee PrideFest on June 8. Their previous appearance a few years ago was cut short due to rain, so let's hope Mother Nature gives them something closer to fine this time around.

Gregg Shapiro: The "Beauty Queen Sister" CD artwork, by Joseph Peery, has a tattoo style. Tattoos also appear in the title cut and in "War Rugs." Do you have any tattoos to speak of?

Emily Saliers: I do have two small tattoos — one on my left inner wrist and one on my right inner wrist.

Do they say something special?

One is an image of infinity and the other is an initial. They're small. Amy is quite tattooed. You're probably less likely to find me writing about tattoos than Amy. I like the thought that goes into wanting to put a piece of art or a remembrance permanently (on your skin) that is

with you wherever you go.

You have a reputation for writing beautiful and distinctive love songs and "We Get to Feel It All" is no exception. Are they harder to write?

They're so easy! If all I had to do was write pretty love songs, it wouldn't take that much effort for me. I definitely am drawn to a pretty melody first, and then an emotional lyric about love and personal relationships. That's my oeuvre, my natural thing to go to.

"Able to Sing" is a song about a wedding. Have you written — or been asked to write — for same-sex weddings?

Yes, I have! Two of my very best friends got married a couple of years ago. I wrote a song for their wedding. It was a beautiful experience. I'm going to record it and give them a special copy. I've written songs for straight weddings as well, but that was really special,

because they were my friends and it was very easy to access imagery knowing their history. "Able to Sing" has a lot going on in it. It's about the wedding, but it was really inspired by the death of all the red-winged blackbirds on the Fourth of July, and the ensuing dialogue between scientists and people of faith — and how people want to explain bizarre things that happen. That got me thinking about the Fourth of July and patriotism and blood and faith and all kinds of stuff. I was really on a roll with that one. It's one of my favorites on the record, if not my very favorite.

A lot of artists have re-recorded their songs with a symphony, as Joni Mitchell did with her "Travelogue" and "Both Sides Now" discs.

I was just reading about Joni Mitchell last night and that very thing, about the ballet she was doing in Alberta (Canada). The answer is yes. We are recording a symphonic album with the Bir-

mingham Symphony. We are doing that the first week of June, this summer. That will be out by the end of the year (or) the beginning of next year.

What does it mean to you to be performing at Milwaukee PrideFest on June 8?

We've done it before (and) we had an absolute blast. But there was a huge thunderstorm and we had to quit early, which was a bummer. We often go to the city of Milwaukee, and we're really good friends with (queer Wisconsin duo) Mrs. Fun. They're good friends of ours and we always try to rope them in somehow. The other thing is that the movement for rights for our communities, it's quite dynamic what's going on right now. There's a lot of positive change and there's a lot of chance for change that hasn't happened yet. I think playing a queer fest is especially meaningful with the Supreme Court considering its cases and immigra-

tion law, which affects my life personally because my partner is Canadian. Pride fests are always a celebration, but particularly poignant and galvanizing this year in the context of what's happening politically and socially.

Indigo Girls have made a name for themselves as outspoken activists. Were you and Amy able to take part in any of the rallies or protests in Madison last year?

We weren't involved in those specifically. We were hoping that Mr. Walker (was recalled), but it didn't turn out that way. What we deal with, specifically in Wisconsin, (is) through our group Honor Earth. We do a lot of environmental justice work. We work with indigenous peoples, particularly across the Americas, and there are a lot of mining issues in Wisconsin, historically and currently. When Pridefest is over, we're planning on coming back to the area and focusing on some of those issues.



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Photo by Mark Frohna.

DisH*it Out!

Kasana brings culinary vision to Third Ward

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Food is an art form to Ana Docta, president of the Kasana Group, a collection of culinary enterprises promoting a rich mélange of fine, nutritious and sustainable dining for Milwaukee foodies. Docta hopes to make Kasana's adjoining bistro, gallery and commercial kitchen at 241 N. Broadway into the city's premier gastro-hub and culinary incubator for budding chefs.

Docta has a strong culinary background on which to base her ambitions. A native of Argentina, she formerly served as a corporate food and beverage consultant and owned a restaurant in Porto Alegre, Brazil, before moving to the United States. In addition to Latin American influences, Docta's food exhibits a strong commitment to health and nutrition, an appreciation gained during her formal training as a ballet dancer.

"When I cook, I want people to under-

stand the different facets of the process – the smell, texture, consistency, flavor and comfort found in food," says Docta, who owns the business with her husband Peter. "Fine dining does not have to be snobbish, but for me it does have to exhilarate my senses."

Docta learned a lot from her father and mother, who ran an Italian restaurant and a candy kitchen, respectively, in her native country. Her enterprise's name is a fanciful contraction of Casa de Ana, Spanish for "Ana's house."

"I just changed the 'C' to a 'K' to make it a little more funky," she says.

Although Docta has been running a Milwaukee catering business for five years, specializing in "pop-up" dinners in homes and businesses around the Milwaukee area, the Kasana Group only began operating in the Third Ward space formerly occupied by Broadway Bistro & Bakery in January. Located on the ground floor, Kasana Café & Bistro

is the business' most visible component. It serves breakfast, brunch and light dinner fare, much of it drawn from Docta's Latin-American heritage, with a nod to healthy, often vegetarian and gluten-free cuisine.

The bistro's Tortilla Espanola, baked with organic eggs, potatoes and carrots, is gluten-free and vegetarian. The three types of empanadas – one each with beef, chicken and a spinach-and-mushroom blend – feature organic ingredients. As much as possible, the menu is sourced from local providers.

The downstairs location also serves as headquarters for Kasana Gourmet, Docta's long-standing catering operation; Kasana Good-to-Go, a line of take-away and vending machine items made from fresh, wholesome ingredients; and the Kasana Collective, a membership-based, shared-space commercial kitchen for budding food entrepreneurs who want to break into the market but don't have their own commercial facilities.

Caroline Carter, owner of Chef Caroline's Raw & Vegan Cuisine, regularly uses the 3,500-square-foot commercial kitchen to produce a line of crackers and other "unbaked" goods that emphasize nutritive value. Carter credits good nutrition with helping her to overcome a lifetime of depression. The Kasana Collective has enabled her to commercialize her passion for preparing and serving healthy foods.

"For small food producers like myself it's difficult to find a licensed commercial kitchen that's affordable," says Carter, who plans to sell her products at various local markets and specialty food stores. "To be able to produce my food and do what I love is awesome."

Carter's approach perfectly suits the Kasana Collective's goals, and her products extend Milwaukee's culinary culture in meaningful ways, Docta stresses. Carter is one of several collective members whose goods are for sale

KASANA on next page



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KASANA from prior page

in the bistro.

"Kasana is a values-driven business based on socially conscious and responsible practices, following the triple bottom-line construct of people, planet and profit," Docta says. "We strive to generate positive social impact by creating jobs and providing wider access to healthy food."

The bistro's checkout counter also offers Docta's baked items, including: alfajores, stuffed Argentine cookies made from organic wheat and available wrapped in coconut, pistachios, ground peanuts and chocolate; dry fruit bonos, made from organic dates, organic walnuts and whiskey; assorted organic chocolate truffles; and other dessert items.

The gallery adjoining the bistro takes the enterprise's artistic mission beyond cuisine. The walls are covered with for-sale paintings and photographs by local artists. It's an aspect of expression that beautifully complements the restaurant's creative cuisine, Docta says.

On May 3, Kasana took the artistic concept one step further by presenting a floral design workshop featuring Michael Gaffney, a nationally known designer who has both his roots and one of his schools firmly planted in the Milwaukee area.

Gaffney, who has designed for clients from coast to coast and whose work was seen in the film "Black Swan," taught the elements of exquisite floral design during a two-part, nearly four-hour session in the gallery's adjoining exhibition space. Each student received a copy of Gaffney's book "Design Star."

"Kasana stands for quality, innovation and community empowerment," Docta says. "We emphasize improving the quality of life of our customers, our employees, our communities and the environment."

For more, visit www.kasana-mke.com.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Ana Docta, above, president of the Kasana Group. Below, Kasana's bistro, gallery and commercial kitchen at 241 N. Broadway. Docta hopes it will become Milwaukee's premier gastro-hub and culinary incubator for budding area chefs.

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Skylight returns to original 'Porgy and Bess'

Milwaukee's Skylight Music Theatre closes its current season with a production of "The Gershwin's Porgy and Bess," but artistic director Bill Theisen wants the city to know this isn't the version that caused a stir on Broadway last year.

That production, featuring Norm Lewis and Audra McDonald in the title roles, won a 2012 Tony Award for best revival. But it also drew criticism for changes that were made to the original 1935 work. Recitatives were dropped in favor of dialogue, bringing the production more in line with musical theater than operatic standards. Purists protested, but the show ran for an impressive 322 performances.

Skylight's version will follow the original operatic format, sharing only the name with the Broadway version. That's more of a copyright issue than an artistic decision, Theisen says. In 2010, "Porgy and Bess" reached the ripe old age of 75, meaning that it passed into public domain. But the Gershwin estate was able to capitalize on a loophole in copyright law that allowed it to retain ownership by simply changing the title.

Henceforth, all productions of both the opera and the musical adaptation will be known as "The Gershwin's Porgy and Bess," at least for the next 75 years, Theisen says.

The opera, based on Dubose Heyward's 1927 novel "Porgy," with a libretto and lyrics by Heyward and Ira Gershwin, recounts the tale of a crippled street beggar and a prostitute who live in the fictional Catfish Row neighborhood of Charleston, S.C. Groundbreaking in its day, it's considered the first truly American opera, both in terms of the music and its subject matter.

Musical numbers, including the familiar "Summertime," "Bess, You Is My Woman Now" and "I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'," have entered the American lexicon and given the show its own brand of immortality. The jazz and blues influence in the melodies provide the show with an undeniably original flavor.

Up until then, no operatic composer had ever embraced the jazz idiom to the degree that George

Gershwin did with this work. And in 1935, no theatrical production had utilized such a large, all African-American cast. The work was not widely accepted as legitimate opera at the time, and it wasn't until 1976, when the Houston Grand Opera mounted its production with a completely restored original score, that the tide turned in Gershwin's favor.

The Houston Grand Opera production won a Tony Award and the RCA recording of the opera won a Grammy Award for the company and its conductor John DeMain, who currently presides over the Madison Symphony Orchestra. In fact, DeMain is considered the leading interpreter of "Porgy and Bess." He might have conducted more productions of the opera than any other living conductor, Theisen says.

DeMain loaned the Skylight his copies of the score for the current production, and the theater company received permission from the Gershwin estate to re-orchestrate the opera for a smaller ensemble, Theisen says.

Surprisingly, this is the first time Skylight has undertaken the classic.

"We're in our 54th season, and we have never done 'Porgy and Bess,' which is arguably the most important American opera ever written because it was Gershwin — and it was his first opera," says Theisen. "It doesn't sound European. It really sounds like us."

The Skylight's intimate 358-seat Cabot Theatre will bring the show closer to the audience, giving it a clearer view of who is singing which roles, Theisen said. Milwaukee native Jason McKinney plays Porgy and Kearstin Piper Brown and Rhea Olivaccé share the role of Bess. The show runs May 17–June 9.

Theisen, who is leaving after nine years as Skylight's artistic director for the University of Iowa, sees "Porgy and Bess" as the perfect swan song for his Milwaukee career.

"I chose this specifically as my last production," says Theisen, who will take over U of I's opera program. "It's a tricky piece and a little expensive, but this was at the top of my wish list."

Theater

MICHAEL MUCKIAN



Photo: Courtesy

ON STAGE

Skylight Music Theatre's production of "The Gershwin's Porgy and Bess" runs May 17–June 9 at the Cabot Theatre. For more information, visit www.skylightmusictheatre.org.

Bill Theisen joining University of Iowa faculty

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

At one point in his life, Bill Theisen thought he might become a priest. But the universe had other plans for him.

The Milwaukee native and Milwaukee Technical High School graduate was pursuing a career as a metallurgist when he saw a newspaper notice announcing an audition for "Man of La Mancha." He tried out, got the part and soon left his other career aspirations behind.

"Within a year I was performing at the Skylight Theatre and getting paid to do what I love," says Theisen, 52. "I didn't go to college. I learned by doing."

Theisen is taking that experience to college — as a teacher. After directing the Skylight Music Theatre's current production of "The Gershwin's Porgy and Bess," he's moving on to direct the University of Iowa's opera program. Theisen has had a relationship with Iowa since 1998, when he was hired as interim opera director for the 1998–99 academic year. He has returned numerous times

since as a guest lecturer and director.

"This is an exciting time to join the faculty of the U of I as they are breaking ground on a new School of Music building," Theisen says. "There is a great deal of potential with the opera program, and I look forward to working with the students and sharing my professional experience in hopes of furthering their careers."

Theisen has served as the Skylight's artistic director since 2004, but his relationship with the company goes back to 1981, when he began as a performer. Theisen, who describes his voice as "a bari-tenor," has gone on to direct more than 100 operas and musical shows. He has worked with Carnegie Mellon University, the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music, New York University and other institutions. Prior to his current post at Skylight, he was a freelancer who had directed many Skylight shows.

"I loved my freelance career and was sorry to leave it behind, but when the Skylight offered me the position of artistic director, it

was a no brainer," he says.

Last year's world premieres of "The Rivals" and "Daddy Longlegs" count among Theisen's favorite productions. He also cites Milwaukee composer Josh Schmidt's adaptation of Elmer Rice's "The Adding Machine" as one of the most original and compelling works he has brought to the stage. It was a production for which he felt his audiences were ready.

"Milwaukee has a pretty great theater scene, and Skylight audiences have come to expect just about anything," Theisen says. "Last year we did 'Avenue Q' and immediately followed it with 'The Sound of Music,' which says a lot about our range."

Although his new post focuses almost exclusively on opera, Theisen expects the lines between classical opera and musical theater to continue to blur as composers of both genres narrow the divide. "The in-between world is going to come to life and it's just going to be that much more exciting," he says.

Find us on Twitter at @wigazette.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Artistic director Bill Theisen has been involved with Skylight Music Theater since 1981.

John Waters still lights up the stage, but is he too much for television?

Interview

GREGG SHAPIRO

There doesn't seem to be anything that John Waters, America's queer Renaissance man, can't do. He's a filmmaker, an author, a journalist, a visual artist, an obscure music aficionado and monologist. He practically invented (and later perfected) the indie film genre with such classic cinematic works as "Pink Flamingos," "Polyester" and "Hairspray," which was later adapted as a musical for both the stage and screen. A raconteur of the highest order, Waters has been touring his one-man show "This Filthy World" around this filthy world for several years, revising and refining the show with each performance.

I spoke with Waters earlier this month.

Gregg Shapiro: John, I'm glad to have the chance to speak to the living you, especially after the unfortunate March 2013 Internet report claiming you had passed. Was that the first time that you were ever the subject of an Internet prank or hoax?

John Waters: That I know of, yes. And it wasn't that funny. The Onion would have done it much better.

The last time we spoke was at the time of the publication of your book "Role Models." Looking back on it, how would you rate the experience of writing and publishing that book?

It was one of the best experiences of my life. It was a best-seller on The New York Times best-seller list – one week! – and it was many weeks on the LA Times best-seller list and other lists. I just finished my new book, called "Car Sick," for FSG, the same publisher. Writing books is something that I've always enjoyed doing. Both "Shock Value" and "Crackpot" have never gone out of print. I've had good luck with writing books. I read all the time, so it's proper that I continue to write books just as much as I try to make movies.

What is "Car Sick" about?

In "Car Sick," I hitchhiked by myself across America, a year ago this coming Monday (May 13). The first part of the book is me imagining, before I left, the 15 very best rides that could happen, with sex and adventure, and then the very worst 15 rides I can imagine, which ended in my death. And then the next day I did it for real, which was 21 rides in nine days.

Where did you go?

From the front door of my Baltimore house to the front door of my San Francisco apartment.

In addition to being an author, filmmaker and aficionado of distinctive holiday music, you are also a stage performer. What do you enjoy about performing in front of an audience?

I can always play myself easier than I can play somebody else. I like writing the material. It's another writing job. It's another way for me to tell stories. I meet my audience. I test jokes and I can talk about something that happened that very day. It's something that is constantly revitalized, I hope, and updated. I sing for my supper, that's how I make my living.

Can you see a significant evolution of "This Filthy World" since you first performed it?

It came from when Divine and I used to go to colleges and show the movies. It would be a 5–10 minute introduction, and I would come out dressed kind of like a hippie pimp in shirts with shrunken heads on them. I think (punk musician and actor) Stiv Bators wore that same shirt in "Polyester" years later. I would talk about nudist camp movies and things that nobody else ever talked about then. Then I would introduce Divine and he would come out. His act was very much like the act that was in "Female Trouble." He would rip a telephone book in half. He would throw dead fish in the audience. Then, if we had more of a budget, we would have a fake cop – because I had a stolen police uniform and a short-haired wig – and we would cast some cute guy as the cop who would come on stage and pretend to take us away for obscenity, and Divine would strangle the cop. The audience would cheer and the movie would start. That's how it began. I was influenced by the baggy-pants comedians that I used to see at the Gaiety Burlesque in Baltimore at the end of vaudeville. I'm probably the only film director that has a standup act. No, Kevin Smith does, too. He has one. His is very good.

Are there new music compilations on the agenda – perhaps one with a same-sex marriage theme?

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PHOTO: COURTESY

John Waters performs "This Filthy World" on May 21 in Chicago.

Maybe same-sex divorce. That would be, to me, a newer subject. I always said if you want to make money, invest in gay divorce and tattoo removal. Two of the biggest growth industries we're going to have in the next decade. All great music is about breaking up. You ever heard a good, soulful song about a happy, functional marriage? I don't know of any. I doubt I'll do another compilation – the record business is not so great.

Will you ever create a sitcom or dramatic series for television?

I have already written "Hairspray" as a pilot, so, yes, I think it would certainly be possible. I think TV certainly has as much freedom as independent film does, and you're paid better and there's more chance of getting it made.

Do you have any new movies in the works?

I don't spend a lot of time doing that because I think the independent film as I knew it is over right now. They want me to make a movie for half a million dollars, which I've done, and have no desire to do again. The business has radically changed. It's great if you're 16 or 18 and starting to make movies, it is the best time ever. Hollywood is looking for you.

ON STAGE

John Waters performs "This Filthy World" on May 21 at the Harris Theater in Chicago.

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'Spider Woman' spins its tangled web at Off the Wall Theatre

Theater

MICHAEL MUCKIAN

Life lived out of balance is difficult at best, but a life lacking purpose is destined to end quickly.

That's the sort of existential message at the heart of "Kiss of the Spider Woman," says Dale Gutzman, whose Off the Wall Theatre is mounting a production of the John Kander/Fred Ebb musical this month. The plot follows the unlikely love that blossoms between two men sharing the horrors of an Argentine prison.

"I'm always in favor of any work of art that believes love is the most important and perhaps the only thing that really counts in this world,"

Gutzman says. "What would you give your life for? The resounding answer from almost everyone is love."

The play's narrative derives from out Argentine author Manuel Puig's novel, which became the basis for an acclaimed 1985 film for which actor William Hurt won a best actor Oscar. Out playwright Terrence McNally wrote the book for the stage musical.

The two leading characters are Molina (Karl Miller), a gay window dresser imprisoned for having sex with a minor, and Valentin (Jeremy C. Welter), a straight, almost bestial Marxist revolutionary incarcerated for political radicalism.

To pass the time – and drown out the screams of tortured prisoners – Molina fantasizes about romantic

movies starring the vampy diva Aurora (Liz Norton). Molina is particularly obsessed with her role as the Spider Woman, whose kiss is deadly. As the two men's relationship develops, Aurora emerges as a character in the play.

Published in 1976, Puig's novel was controversial both for its themes and its style – a mix of stream of consciousness, government documents and dialogue between unidentified speakers. The work, an attempt by Puig to present an objective view of homosexuality, was first published in Spain. It won the best Latin American novel of the year in 1981 from the Instituto Italo Latino Americano in Italy, but did not appear in his native Argentina until 1983.

"Every gay man should



PHOTO: COURTESY

Cast members of Off the Wall Theatre's production of the musical "Kiss of the Spider Woman."

have 'Kiss of the Spider Woman' on his bookshelf," Gutzman says.

The music by Kander and Webb, best known for "Cabaret" and "Chicago" – also musicals that effectively tackle dark themes – adds a valuable dimension to "Spider Woman." Haunting Latino rhythms and the "vamps" (funky, syncopated repeated phrases) for which the pair have become known blend with lighter, more traditional melodies. The unique combination helped lead to the show winning 1993's Tony Award for best musical.

The songs, which emerge in Molina's movie dreams, play a crucial role in the show, Gutzman says. Musical director Ann Van Deusen, who also works with Milwaukee's Florentine Opera, over-

saw what Gutzman describes as a very talented cast of actors and singers to bring the show to Off the Wall's intimate stage.

At least two of the play's songs have become iconic in gay theater culture. "There's a very funny Carmen Miranda-type number and a song that treats the relationship of a mother to her gay son better than any I have ever heard," Gutzman says. "Another song, 'The Day After That,' became the anthem in the fight to find a cure for AIDS."

In addition to the performers already mentioned, the primary cast is rounded out by Marilyn White as Molina's mother and Alexandra Bonesho as Marta, Valentin's girlfriend whose identity becomes a bargaining chip in Molina's bid for freedom.

While love is the story's critical thread, responsibility is the narrative's secondary strand, Gutzman says. The two threads woven together are what Molina and Valentin learn from each other, according to the director.

"Molina learns that it's not enough to dream, but that one needs to take responsibility, and Valentin learns to love and feel not just for a cause, but for another actual person," he says.

ON STAGE

Off the Wall Theatre's production of "Kiss of the Spider Woman" runs May 16–26 at 127 E. Wells St. Go to www.offthewalltheatre.com.

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ACROSS

1. Kingdom in South Pacific
6. Worn on shoulders
9. *Lena Horne's venue, "Cotton _____"
13. Poppy seed derivative
14. Chemist's office?
15. Picture
16. Out of style
17. Roswell subject
18. Relating to tones
19. *Germany's chancellor
21. *It caused the Dust Bowl of the 1930s
23. "____ 'em!" to a dog
24. Fine print add-ons
25. Latissimus dorsi, for short
28. *Palo _____, where Hewlett-Packard was formed
30. Golf headgear, pl.
35. Yemeni port
37. Call to a mate
39. Scatter
40. All's opposite
41. Alexander the Great to Aristotle, e.g.
43. Sasquatch's cousin?
44. *"The _____ Hornet"
46. *J. Edgar Hoover's man
47. Garner wages
48. Main dish
50. Riyadh native
52. *Spot of "Dick and Jane," e.g.

53. Small songbird
55. *Lincoln-Zephyr, or Mercury, e.g.
57. *FDR's brainchild
61. *German invasion of Poland, e.g.
64. Distinctive spirit of a culture
65. Bird-to-be
67. Often measured by the hour
69. Bloodhound's clue
70. Tax preparer, for short
71. Island surrounded by a lagoon
72. *George and Ira Gershwin's "Of _____ I Sing"
73. Craggy peak
74. Dapper

DOWN

1. Spinning toy
2. a.k.a. kingfish or sunfish
3. Not yet final
4. Wind bursts
5. *She flew solo
6. Hangover memory?
7. Stupid person
8. Often described as humble
9. Cabbage in France
10. *Louisiana's Huey _____
11. Beehive State
12. World's fastest man
15. Droopy eyelid condition

20. Audience's approval
22. R in rpm
24. William or Alfred on "Down-ton Abbey"
25. *"Migrant Mother" photog-rapher
26. Decorate
27. Religious doctrine
29. Hoodlum
31. Eye sore
32. Mountain nymph
33. Reminiscent of the past
34. *Benny Goodman's style
36. _____-do-well
38. *1934, e.g.
42. Roleplay
45. Most new
49. *Depression _____
51. *Caped Crusader
54. Choose
56. Indian restaurant condiment
57. Egg holder
58. Carve, as in stone
59. Cry of glee
60. Over
61. Biology lab supply
62. Blood coagulate
63. Same as Celt
66. Government Printing Office
68. Like a fox

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