

The Cho must go on

Uber busy gay ally Margaret Cho is on tour again and paying a visit to Milwaukee. *page 19*



THE VOICE OF PROGRESS FOR WISCONSIN'S LGBT COMMUNITY

Prisoners of love

Despite new
IRS rules,
Wisconsin
gay couples
who file joint
state taxes
could face
jail time

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The IRS now recognizes married same-sex couples in every state



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Forty years ago, tennis star Billy Jean King proved the power of women athletes to a riveted nation



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With 35 cast members, it's the Rep's most ambitious show ever

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Shorewood hosts its first plein art show, drawing 50 painters to its shady sidewalks



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UW-Madison alumna Jill Soloway discusses her award-winning new film about sisterhood

News with a twist



TRUE ALLY

NFL star and outspoken gay ally Brendon Ayanbadejo posed nude for the popular NOH8 campaign. In the photo, only a discretely placed football protects the former Super Bowl champion's family jewels from public view. The NOH8 campaign posted Ayanbadejo's picture with the caption: "A real man supports equality."

MATCHBOX

Zurich recently made headlines for opening drive-in

"sex boxes" in a new multimillion-dollar campaign intended to make prostitution less of a public nuisance and safer for prostitutes. The bold, novel idea? Sex in a car in a garage. The city is spending \$2.6 million to get the project going and will spend \$760,000 to keep the "sex boxes" operational.

IS REPUBLICAN COUNTY FULL OF ALIENS?

The Washington County community of Hartford made the list of the Top 10 UFO Cases of 2012. The list was released in August by the Mutual UFO Network, or MUFON, which is said to be one of the oldest and largest UFO investigative organizations in the United States. Their website is mufon.com.

NOT SO PRETTY IN PINK

Police in St. Petersburg, Russia, seized several paintings from a gallery exhibit



WIGWAG

titled "Rulers." One of the paintings showed President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev wearing women's underwear. Putin is in a pink-and-white slip and Medvedev is wearing a push-up bra and slim panties. Another image showed the leader of the Russian Orthodox Church covered in prison tattoos. Gallery staff said the painter of the Putin piece fled Russia for France in late August.

PAT ATTACK

Even those running Pat Robertson's network and show — that would be the Christian Broadcasting Network and the "700 Club" — are embarrassed by the televangelist's anti-gay paranoia. The CBN tried to hide from the public a segment on the "700 Club" in which Robertson claimed gays in San Francisco wear special rings to cut people and transmit

HIV. "Really," he said. "It's that kind of vicious stuff, which would be the equivalent of murder."

USHERING IN STUPID

Meanwhile, David Usher, the president of a Christian right group called the Center for Marriage Policy, is claiming that if same-sex couples married in every state, then lesbians would enslave men. Usher argued that legalizing same-sex marriage tips the balance of equality and favors women, who will marry one another, get all kinds of government benefits and trick men into procreating and paying for the kids. Plus, he suggests, women who are married to women can still have their boyfriends.

SANCTITY OF CLOWNHOOD

Clowns Billy Tedeski and Patty Kulwicki tied the knot recently at an annual clown festival in central Pennsylvania. Tedeski wore a fake nose,

By Lisa Neff & Louis Weisberg

black lipstick and full clown regalia as he exchanged vows with Kulwicki. The bride wore a lace headband to match her flame-red wig. Guests got in on the act and so did the officiant, a fellow clown. Tedeski says his fellow clowns are more than friends, they're family. There's no punchline here.

RUSH TO JUDGMENT?

A man who was declared dead when his heart stopped beating for 45 minutes suddenly revived, said his stunned doctors, who can't find an explanation. The man, though, credits his faith. The presumed-dead diesel mechanic, Tony Yahle, was being prepared by nurses to be seen by his family Aug. 5 when he began to show signs of life, the doctors said. He fully awoke at the hospital five days later, they said.

HITLER AND RUN

An ad in which a Mercedes-Benz smart car runs

over a young Adolf Hitler prompted the automaker to request a disclaimer on the video. The ad was created by German film school students for a competition sponsored, in part, by Mercedes. In the short ad, a Mercedes C-Class is traveling through Hitler's hometown. Built-in anti-collision technology stops the car before it strikes two girls, but the smartcar detects something evil ahead — and runs over the boy Hitler, who lies twisted in the street like a swastika.

CHIPPING IN

The big souvenir from Hempfest in Seattle isn't what you might think. Seattle police distributed to festivalgoers munchies with stickers explaining Washington's new pot law. About 1,000 bags of free chips were handed out and not all of them were consumed at Hempfest. One unopened bag of Doritos from the celebration went for \$58 on eBay.

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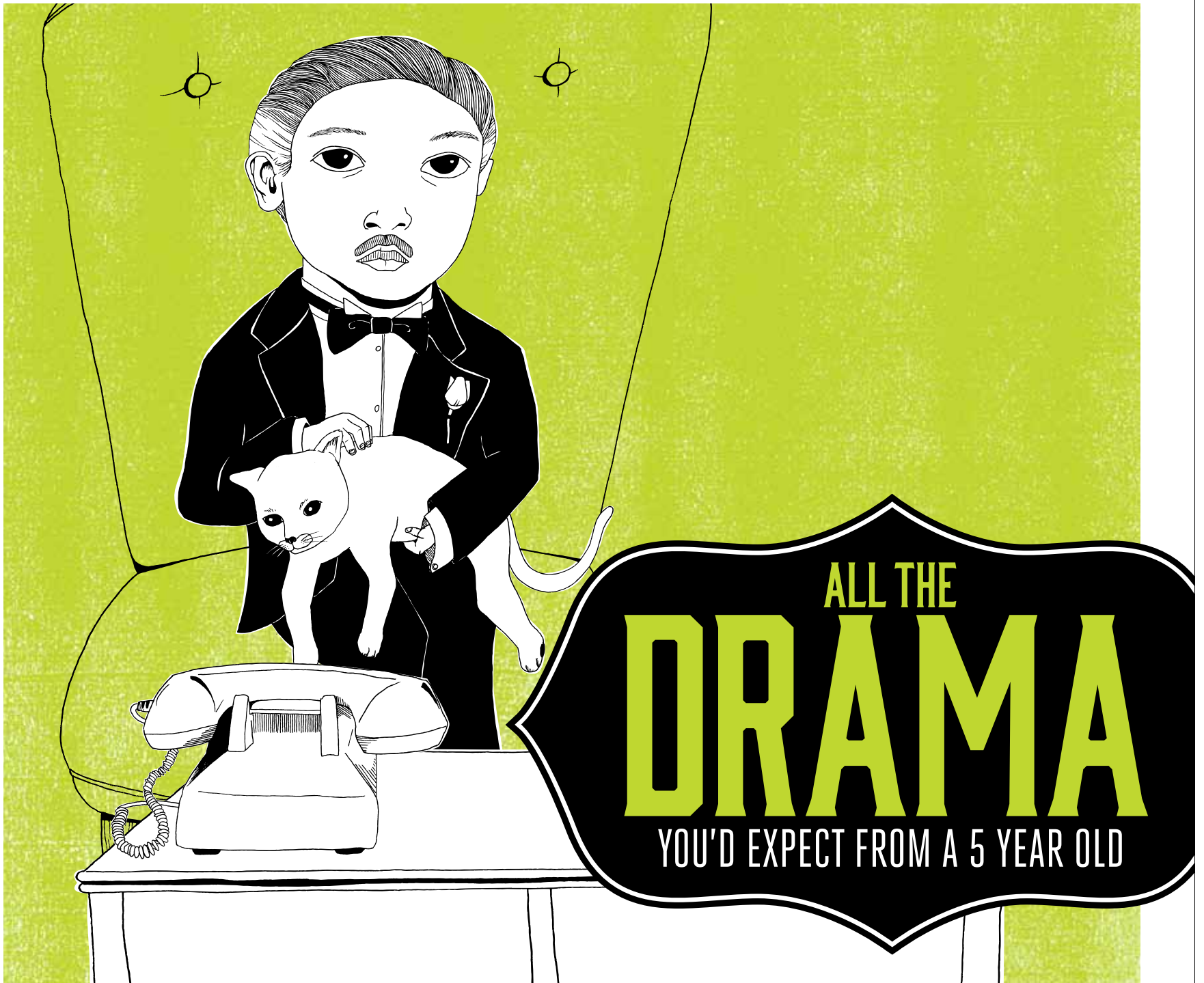
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Same-sex couples marry in New Mexico

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

New Mexico county clerks began issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Within one week, gay couples were marrying in at least six counties, even though judicial orders only applied to four counties and a case remained before the state Supreme Court.

"Our state is now on the brink of joining the growing list of states who ... honor the values of family, liberty and love," said ACLU of New Mexico executive director Peter Simonson said. "This is a great day to be a resident of New Mexico. Every family in this state is made richer by this step toward justice for all."

The first licenses were issued in Doña Ana County, where county clerk Lynn Ellins said he felt compelled by the state constitution to treat couples who want to marry — regardless of their gender — equally. The state constitution says, "No person

shall be deprived of life, liberty or property without due process of law; nor shall any person be denied equal protection of the laws. Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied on account of the sex of any person."

"It's a happy office today," Ellins said. "Lots of happy people. One of the first couples that came in today said they had been waiting 31 years. Another couple says they've been waiting 43 years. It's time to stop waiting."

New Mexico Attorney General Gary King said there would be no challenge to Ellins' initiative and, two days later, a district court judge ordered Santa Fe County Clerk Geraldine Salazar to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples who sought them.

A judge also ordered Bernalillo County Clerk Maggie Toulouse Oliver to issue licenses to gay couples. State law "does not preclude nor prohibit issuance of a marriage license to otherwise



PHOTO: AP PHOTO/ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL/ROBERTO ROSALES

ENCHANTMENT: Couples embrace as they exchange vows in Albuquerque. Ellen Grigsby kisses Tracie Bartlett, her partner of 25 years, and Anthony Gonzales gets a kiss from Mark Johnson, his partner of 15 years.

qualified couples on the basis of sexual orientation or the gender of its members ... to the extent the (statutes) may be read to prohibit issuance of a marriage license to otherwise qualified same-sex couples, those prohibitions are unconstitutional and

unenforceable under (the) Constitution of New Mexico," Judge Alan Malott wrote in his judgment.

Laura Schauer Ives, with ACLU New Mexico, called the order "monumental."

Oliver said she was eager and ready to follow it, with

more than 1,000 gender-neutral licenses printed.

On Aug. 27, about 100 people assembled at the Bernalillo County Courthouse in Albuquerque to get licenses from the clerk. Some took their vows in a ceremony at noon in Albuquerque's Civic

Plaza.

"Twenty years ago, my sister was a witness at my wedding," said Stacy Orlovsky. "Neither one of us ever thought I'd witness her wedding. But there she was, marrying her partner after 28 years of being together. This is a beautiful, beautiful day."

Later that day, clerks in San Miguel and Valencia counties announced they'd be issuing licenses to same-sex couples.

And then there was another judicial ruling and Taos County Clerk Anna Martínez began issuing licenses to same-sex couples.

"At one point you had to wonder if there were any unmarried gays left in the state," said Frank MacDonald of Albuquerque, who is single and straight but joined the celebration in the plaza.

Republican lawmakers have sued to stop the clerks from issuing licenses to same-sex couples.

New Mexico Sen. Willi

MARRY next page

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MARRY from prior page

Sharer, who repeatedly has proposed anti-gay marriage amendments, said the Legislature makes laws, not county clerks or district judges.

"A county clerk simply should not be allowed to create law out of thin air," said Sharer, referring specifically to Ellins. "There is a way to change the law – little dictators should not be allowed to act as the sole lawgiver in a free society. My opposition to the county clerk is based on the simple fact that he is not the dictator."

New Mexico statutes do not specifically say that same-sex couples can marry, as do statutes in 13 states and the District of Columbia. But New Mexico statutes also don't specifically state that same-sex couples cannot marry.

The state Supreme Court has been asked to rule on the matter, but it also is possible that the Legislature, which convenes for a 30-day session in January, will take up marriage.

There's a similar situation in Pennsylvania, where an elected court clerk in

the Philadelphia suburbs has been handing out marriage licenses to same-sex couples for more than two months.

Now a court has to decide whether the clerk has single-handedly added Pennsylvania to the growing list of states that formally sanction same-sex marriages or whether he's acting illegally.

As WiG headed to press, a hearing was underway in Harrisburg that pits Gov. Tom Corbett's Health Department against D. Bruce Hanes, Montgomery County's register of wills.

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IRS recognizes gay marriages across U.S.

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The U.S. Treasury Department ruled in late August that married same-sex couples in all 50 states, U.S. territories and districts will be treated as married for federal tax purposes.

The ruling applies to all federal tax provisions where marriage is a factor, including filing status, claiming personal and dependency

exemptions, taking the standard deduction, employee benefits, contributing to an IRA and claiming the earned income tax credit or child tax credit.

"Today's ruling provides certainty and clear, coherent tax filing guidance for all legally married same-sex couples nationwide. It provides access to benefits, responsibilities and protections under federal tax law

that all Americans deserve," Treasury Secretary Jacob J. Lew said in a statement. "This ruling also assures legally married same-sex couples that they can move freely throughout the country knowing that their federal filing status will not change."

Proponents of marriage equality heralded the ruling, released by the Internal Revenue Service mid-day on

Aug. 29, for having widespread implications.

"The federal government is right to recognize that people's marriages shouldn't dissolve when they cross state lines," said James Esseks of the American Civil Liberties Union LGBT Project.

In late June, the U.S. Supreme Court released two marriage rulings. One, a technical decision, cleared the way for finally overturning California's constitutional amendment barring same-sex marriage. The second decision overturned a key provision in the 1996 federal Defense of Marriage Act – Section 3, which barred the federal government from recognizing same-sex marriages.

Section 3 of DOMA defined marriage for federal purposes as the union of a man and a woman. It was enacted before any state recognized same-sex marriages, but at a time when Hawaii seemed poised to do so in 1996. The provision

prevented same-sex couples who legally married in their states from accessing more than 1,300 federal rights and benefits associated with marriage.

Since the Court's ruling, federal officials have been examining how to update rules and regulations to extend federal marriage rights and benefits to gay and lesbian couples across the nation. The work has involved research and rulings throughout the vast federal system, with leadership from the president, attorney general, office of management and budget and secretaries of state, homeland security, health and human services, labor, housing, education, defense, veterans affairs, treasury and even transportation, energy and interior.

The joint announcement from the Treasury Department and the IRS means that married same-sex couples now can file joint federal income tax returns, even if they live in a jurisdiction that

does not recognize their same-sex marriage.

"This is the biggest news we've seen since the Supreme Court struck down the Defense of Marriage Act, and it's a game changer," said Katie Belanger, president and CEO of Fair Wisconsin. "Same-sex couples living in Wisconsin, who were legally married elsewhere, will be treated the same as those living in states with full marriage equality, for tax purposes. And in the coming weeks and months, I believe we'll continue to see more announcements from federal departments offering guidance and clarification on how they're implementing the Supreme Court decision ending DOMA."

Before the ruling, married same-sex couples had to declare themselves "unmarried" to file their federal income tax returns. Furthermore, transfers of property, gifts and inheritances between same-sex

IRS next page

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IRS from prior page

spouses were taxed, unlike those between opposite-sex spouses. Even health insurance benefits provided for a same-sex spouse were treated as taxable income, costing the average same-sex couple more than \$1,000 a year in additional taxes, according to the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBT civil rights group.

The ruling, according to the Treasury Department, does not apply to registered domestic partnerships, civil unions or similar formal relationships recognized under state law, and it likely will mean that a married same-sex couple in a non-equality state will file jointly at the federal level but as individuals with the state.

Some details from the IRS:

- Legally-married same-sex couples generally must file their 2013 federal income tax return using either the "married filing jointly" or "married filing separately" filing status.

- Generally, the statute of limitations for filing a refund claim is three years from the date the return was filed or two years from the date the tax was paid, whichever is later. As a result, refund claims can still be filed for tax years 2010, 2011 and 2012. Some taxpayers may have special circumstances that permit them to file refund claims for tax years 2009 and earlier.

- Employees who purchased same-sex spouse health insurance coverage from their employers on an after-tax basis may treat the amounts paid for that coverage as pre-tax and excludable from income.

The new rules from the department will become effective on Sept. 16.

"With today's ruling, committed and loving gay and lesbian married couples will now be treated equally under our nation's federal tax laws, regardless of what state they call home," said HRC president Chad Griffin. "These families finally have access to crucial tax benefits and protections previously denied to them under the discriminatory Defense of



Marriage Act."

He urged all federal agencies to join the Treasury Department and the IRS in recognizing the legal marriages of all same-sex couples in the United States, including those residing in non-equality states.

"No family should have to worry about losing important federal rights and benefits, simply because they live in a state that doesn't recognize them as equal under the law," Griffin said.

U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Madison, said he applauded the Treasury for "siding with equality and treating all legally married couples in America the same."

The congressman, who is gay, married his husband in Canada in 2006. Based on the IRS's statement, the couple should be eligible to receive all federal marriage-based tax benefits, including employee benefits, child tax credits, as well as gift and estate taxes.

MEDICARE EQUALITY

Earlier on Aug. 29, Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced that all beneficiaries in private Medicare plans have access to equal coverage when it comes to care in a nursing home where their spouse lives.

Before the finding, a beneficiary in a same-sex marriage enrolled in a Medicare Advantage plan did not have equal access to such coverage and, as a result, could have faced time away from his or her spouse or higher costs because of the way that marriage was defined for this purpose.

The announcement is the "first of many steps that we will be taking over the coming months to clarify the effects of the Supreme Court's decision and to

ensure that gay and lesbian married couples are treated equally under the law," Sebelius said in a news release.

She added that the guarantee of coverage applies equally to couples who are in a legally recognized same-sex marriage, regardless of where they live.

"These are huge wins we're seeing thanks to the Supreme Court ruling that struck down a key component of DOMA," said Rea Carey of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force.

Earlier this summer, Homeland Security, the State Department, the Defense Department and the personnel office released rules in response to the DOMA decision. But

the agencies are using different standards: The IRS and HHS are basing benefits on where a marriage takes place, while the Social Security Administration is currently relying on residential status, which means that a married gay couple living in a non-equality state may not have the same Social Security benefits as a same-sex couple in a state that recognizes the marriage.

Editor's Note: See next story for more on Social Security equality.

Louis Weisberg contributed to this story.

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State law criminalizes Wisconsin gays who marry out-of-state

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

Under an arcane and seldom enforced "marriage evasion" law, Wisconsin same-sex couples who tie the knot in a marriage-equality state, such as neighboring Iowa or Minnesota, could face nine months in jail and a \$10,000 fine when they return home as newlyweds.

Statute 765.30(1)(a) of the Wisconsin code provides the penalty to "any person residing and intending to continue to reside in this state who goes outside the state and there contracts a marriage prohibited or declared void under the laws of this state."

The law, which is similar to evasion laws in other states, was enacted in 1915 to prevent Wisconsinites from going to other states and entering into marriages prohibited here, such as marriages involving cousins or people under the state's legal age of consent. The most recent prosecution of the law that WiG was able to find was a 2001 case involving a man who left the state to get married 30 days after his

divorce became final. Wisconsin law requires divorced people to wait six months before entering into another marriage.

WiG was unable to find evidence that the law has ever been used to prosecute a same-sex Wisconsin couple, despite the fact that many have married outside the state, including U.S. Rep. Mark Pocan and his husband Phil Frank. But in the wake of the Supreme Court decision revoking Section 3 of the Defense of Marriage Act, which withheld federal recognition for same-sex marriages, the White House is on an expedited course to extend as many federal marriage benefits as possible to lesbian and gay couples who are eligible.

The rapidly changing federal policies on same-sex marriage have made evasion laws like the one in Wisconsin potential legal quagmires.

ACLU of Wisconsin executive director Chris Ahmuty said it's not difficult to imagine a rogue district attorney apprehending a same-sex couple married out of state in order to make a state-

ment or score political points, just as renegade county clerks in New Mexico and Pennsylvania are handing out marriage licenses to test the law in that state.

In a July 9, 2008, interview that aired on CNN.com, Julaine Appling, CEO of Wisconsin Family Council, advocated for the prosecution of same-sex couples under the marriage evasion law.

"You purposely left the state for another state and you get married and you know it's not going to be legal where you reside and you have every intention of returning. That's defrauding the government," Appling said in the interview.

Appling, a never-married woman who has lived for decades with another never-married woman in a home they own jointly in Watertown, continues to work fiercely against equality. She's currently behind a lawsuit to overturn the state's domestic partner registry law, which offers some key rights to same-sex couples in Wisconsin, such as inheritance and hospital visitation.

At the time Appling advocated

for the prosecution of same-sex couples who marry out of state, labor and employment law attorney Tamara Beth Packard told the Wisconsin Law Journal that while prosecution under the law seemed unlikely, it also seemed possible.

"I don't think we should underestimate the level of animosity that some people have toward gay and lesbian couples who try and receive some legal recognition of their relationship," she said then.

Since then, the issue of same-sex marriage has become more prominent than ever, with a dwindling number of opponents more entrenched than ever.

TAXING PROBLEMS

The ACLU's Ahmuty said that in order to be in violation of the law, a married same-sex couple would have to attempt to exercise a legal right in Wisconsin that's reserved only for married couples, such as file a joint state tax return or treat property as if

EVASION next page

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EVASION from prior page

it was community property.

Ahmuty said couples would be foolhardy to test the state's marriage evasion law. "The penalties are so strict," he warned. "People who go ahead and do this are putting themselves at a considerable risk."

But at the same time, Ahmuty is actively encouraging same-sex couples registered with Wisconsin's domestic partner registry to apply for Social Security benefits as a couple. That, he explained, is because the registry allows partners to inherit property without a will, which is the legal standard used by the Social Security Administration in approving claims for couples.

Single people are entitled to Social Security benefits based solely on their own earnings, but married couples have more generous options. Not only can they inherit their spouse's benefits, but if one spouse earned lower wages than the other, or did not earn enough Social Security credits to be insured for retirement benefits, he or she may be eligible to receive the benefits of a spouse.

To demonstrate just how complicated the legal situation is, Ahmuty said Wisconsin couples should apply for Social Security benefits under the state's partner registry law and not on the basis of an out-of-state marriage, which would be an active violation of the state's marriage evasion law.

This use of the registry is unproven, however, and the registry faces a lawsuit seeking to overturn it for allegedly violating a voter-backed constitutional amendment banning any legal arrangement between same-sex partners that is "substantially similar" to heterosexual marriage. The Wisconsin Supreme Court, whose justices are primarily conservative Republicans, will determine the case.

The recent announcement that the federal government will allow same-sex couples married in any equality state, regardless of where they reside, to file joint federal tax returns poses yet another conundrum under Wisconsin's marriage evasion law. Ahmuty said that same-sex couples who want to

take advantage of this benefit must be careful to file separate state tax returns as single individuals, even if they file joint federal returns.

Filing joint state tax returns as a married couple would not only be rejected by the Wisconsin Department of Revenue but could trigger prosecution under the marriage evasion law, Ahmuty warned.

FLUID SITUATION

Fair Wisconsin is "trying to make sure people understand what is coming out as it unfolds," said Fair Wisconsin president and CEO Katie Belanger. "Given our state ban on marriage equality and marriage evasion statutes, the IRS' decision to allow same-sex couples who are legally married in another jurisdiction to file joint taxes, puts Wisconsin in a difficult position. We would strongly encourage the Wisconsin Department of Revenue to generate clear guidelines for married same-sex couples in Wisconsin well before the tax filing season begins."

Belanger urged same-sex couples to seek professional advice from their lawyers and accountants.

She noted that in addition to presenting a hardship for same-sex couples, the patchwork of often-contradictory laws governing marriage in different states presents a nightmare for businesses with multi-state operations who must apply a confusing variety of withholding laws and personnel policies to different employees. The scenario presents yet another drag on the state's economy, which currently ranks 38th in the nation in terms of job creation.

Ahmuty said that the confusion will eventually be resolved by a boatload of legal cases wending their way through the judicial system and the eventual overturning of DOMA's Section 2, which declares that states and territories of the United States have the right to deny recognition of same-sex marriages that originated in other states or territories. The June 26 Supreme Court decision did not address Section 2, but Ahmuty and others believe it's only a matter of time.

"Section 2 is going to get overturned someday and there's a lot happening in the

pipeline, so people just need to be patient," he advised.

Editor's note: Wisconsin Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen and his office did not return calls seeking clarification of the state's position on same-sex Wisconsin couples married out of state. Van Hollen opposes marriage equality and, along with Gov. Scott Walker, refused to defend the state's domestic partner registry law from a lawsuit brought by the anti-gay group Wisconsin Family Action.

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LAWS FOR SAME-SEX COUPLES TO CONSIDER

STATE LAW

Statute 765.30(1)(a) of the Wisconsin code states that "any person residing and intending to continue to reside in this state who goes outside the state and there contracts a marriage prohibited or declared void under the laws of this state" can be fined up to \$10,000 or imprisoned for up to nine months, or both.

Wisconsin voters amended the state Constitution in 2006 to include the following language: "Only a marriage between one man and one woman shall be valid or recognized as a marriage in this state. A legal status identical or substantially similar to that of marriage for unmarried individuals shall not be valid or recognized in this state."

FEDERAL LAW

On June 26, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down Section 3 of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act, clearing the way for same-sex couples legally married at the state level to receive federal marriage benefits. But Section 2 of DOMA remains in effect. It says: "No State, territory, or possession of the United States, or Indian tribe, shall be required to give effect to any public act, record, or judicial proceeding of any other State, territory, possession, or tribe respecting a relationship between persons of the same sex that is treated as a marriage under the laws of such other State, territory, possession, or tribe, or a right or claim arising from such relationship."



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WikiLeaks soldier tests military's transgender policies

AP and WiG reports

Army Pvt. Chelsea E. Manning is the first transgender military inmate to ask for hormone treatments, officials say. The request could lead to a legal showdown over how – and if – the soldier convicted in the WikiLeaks case will be allowed to live behind bars.

Maria Tolleson, a spokeswoman for the Army Medical Command in Arlington, Va., said, "We're just now dealing with the issue."

She added that it would be premature to say there's been any movement toward

offering the care to all transgender inmates.

Already there has been a finding that Manning, sentenced to 35 years for giving mountains of classified material to WikiLeaks, will not be allowed to wear wigs or bras or other women's clothing at the all-male prison at Fort Leavenworth, Kan.

Manning announced she wanted to live as a woman the day after the sentencing.

At this point, Manning does not want surgery and expects to be kept at Fort Leavenworth. But hormone therapy could help her "just

to be comfortable in her own skin," said her lawyer.

The American Civil Liberties Union, the Human Rights Campaign and others say Manning should get – must get – the treatment.

"Gender dysphoria is a serious medical condition in which a person's gender identity does not correspond to his or her assigned sex at birth, and hormone therapy is part of the accepted standards of care for this condition," the ACLU said in a policy statement released in late August. "Without the necessary treatment, gender

dysphoria can cause severe psychological distress, including anxiety and suicide. When the government holds individuals in its custody, it must provide them with medically necessary care.

"The official policy of the Federal Bureau of Prisons and most state agencies is to provide medically necessary care for the treatment of gender dysphoria, and courts have consistently found that denying such care to prisoners violates ... the Eighth Amendment."

A Wisconsin case is one of two that may have set a prec-

edent mandating that medical care considered necessary by a doctor cannot be denied to transgender prisoners.

Meanwhile, Manning's supporters continue to campaign for her freedom.

"Chelsea Manning is a hero to those of us who care about the lives lost in Iraq and Afghanistan," said supporter and anti-war activist Billy Turner of Madison.

The Bradley Manning Support Network is changing its name to the Private Manning Support Network. The group has raised more than \$1 million to pay legal expenses and

recently asked the president to pardon Manning, as has Amnesty International.

Manning also requested a presidential pardon in a statement that was read at her sentencing and later sent to the White House. "Patriotism," Manning wrote, "is often the cry extolled when morally questionable acts are advocated by those in power. When these cries of patriotism drown out any logically based dissension, it is usually the American soldier that is given the order to carry out some ill-conceived mission."

NATIONAL BRIEFS

TRANSGENDER WOMAN DIES AFTER ATTACK IN HARLEM

Islan Nettles, a 21-year-old transgender woman attacked in Harlem, N.Y., died of her injuries, according to the New York City Anti-Violence Project. Nettles was out with friends on Aug. 17 when a group of men began throwing punches and yelling anti-gay and anti-transgender slurs.

The incident occurred at about West 148th Street and Eighth Avenue.

Nettles was taken to Harlem Hospital, where, on Aug. 22, she was declared brain dead and was taken off life-support equipment.

The New York City Police Department made one arrest in connection with the attack and investigations continue by the NYPD Hate Crimes Task Force and the Manhattan District Attorney's Office, as well as monitoring by the AVP.

The AVP held a vigil on Aug. 27.

On Aug. 23, after learning of Nettles' death, the Human Rights Campaign, the nation's largest LGBT civil rights group, issued a statement condemning "this horrendous act of violence" and calling on the NYPD to swiftly bring the perpetrators to justice."

HRC said, "We send our deepest condolences to Ms. Nettles' family, friends and loved ones and encourage those in NY area to join the AVP for the vigil honoring her life."

WALMART EXTENDING PARTNER BENEFITS

The nation's largest employer says it is extending its health care benefits to its workers' domestic partners – including those of the same sex.

Walmart, which has long been a target of attacks by

labor groups for its low wages and benefits, says the changes were made so it could have one uniform policy for all 50 states at a time when states have differing definitions of what constitutes domestic partnerships and civil unions. Almost two-thirds of Fortune 500 companies offer domestic partner benefits.

Walmart defines domestic partners as spouses of the same or opposite gender. Unmarried partners who are not legally separated, who have lived together for at least 12 months, are not married to anyone else, are in an exclusive relationship and plan to continue sharing a household indefinitely also qualify for the benefits.

The move follows the U.S. Supreme Court decision overturning a provision in the 1996 U.S. Defense of Marriage Act that denied federal benefits to legally married same-sex couples.

A leaked internal memo from Walmart's senior vice president of benefits to retail management called the move "a business decision, not a moral or political decision."

IN OTHER NEWS ...

• **Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg** officiated at a same-sex wedding in late August in what is believed to be a first for a member of the Court. The wedding of Kennedy Center president Michael Kaiser and John Roberts, a government economist, took place at the center.

• **Darren Manzella**, a gay combat medic discharged from the Army after criticizing the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy in a 2007 television interview on "60 Minutes," died in a traffic accident in western New York. He was 36.

Manzella, who lived in the Chautauqua County town of Portland, had married his partner in July.

• **Kinsey Institute researchers** in Indiana recently won a two-year grant to study the medical accommodation and care of transgender servicemembers in the U.S. military. The study will include an overall investigation of military policies on transgender identity and inclusion, and how they fit with current medical understanding and professional standards of care for transgender health.

• **Arizona school board member Daniel Hernandez Jr.** faces a recall campaign by opponents using anti-gay material. A flyer states, "Put a REAL man on the Sunnyside Board" and "We need someone who will support Sports

and cares about our kids. We don't need someone who HATES our values." Hernandez is the openly gay former intern who rushed to care for Gabriele Giffords after a shooting outside a supermarket where she was holding a congressional meet-and-greet.

• **American Civil Liberties Union** in late August filed a lawsuit in Nebraska court seeking to strike down a state policy that bans gay and lesbian individuals and couples from serving as foster parents.

• **Equality Florida activists** have called on representatives of Florida cities to suspend sister city relationships with Russian cities. EF leaders sent letters to their mayors of Gainesville, Orlando, Sarasota, St. Petersburg and Tallahassee. "One important goal of the Sister City relationship is to encourage travel and cultural exchange amongst the citizens of our cities," said Nadine Smith, executive director of Equality Florida. "The anti-gay laws and lawless violence now being encouraged in Russia negate this promise, not only for Florida's LGBT citizens, but also for all who believe in equality, diversity and tolerance."

– L.N. and L.W.

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National and local speakers will include Madison's own Patrick Farabaugh, Publisher of *Our Lives* magazine (ourlivesmadison.com) and Nathan Manske, Founder and Executive Director of the extensive story-collecting project, *I'm from Driftwood* (imfromdriftwood.com).



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Documentary celebrates the 1973 'Battle of the Sexes'

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

6-4, 6-3, 6-3.

Billie Jean King trounced Bobby Riggs on Sept. 20, 1973, in the Houston Astrodome in the widely seen and most politically charged tennis match in history.

Naomi Carter remembers the night: The television set tuned to ABC. A bottle of Pepsi and a bowl of popcorn on the TV tray. The kids and husband gathered around the living room. And the tension, as if everything was riding on King's serve and volley.

"Oh, you know I didn't do the dishes that night," said Carter, 67, of Greenwich, Conn. "The significance of the event probably is lost on young people, but that night Billie Jean King proved something for all women."

Carter recently toured "The Battle of the Sexes: 40 Years Later" exhibit during the U.S. Open at the Billie Jean King Tennis Center in New York and, like many other fans, turned to social media to share her impressions and remembrances. The exhibit, featuring a collection of match artifacts and images, also celebrates the creation of the Women's Tennis Association and also the U.S. Open becoming the first Grand Slam tournament to award equal prize money to men and women. These are all milestones that King, who is openly lesbian, made happen.

"My job in the match was to change the hearts and minds of people to match the legislation of Title IX and what we were trying to do with the women's movement," King, 69, said in a



PHOTO: COURTESY OF AP/PRESS ASSOCIATION IMAGES/WNET
Billie Jean King bends down low to send the ball back over the net during the match with Bobby Riggs in the Astrodome in Houston on Sept. 20, 1973. King beat Riggs 6-4; 6-3; 6-3.

news release from the International Tennis Hall of Fame and Museum, presenters of the exhibit. "It was to validate it, to celebrate it and to get it going toward changing a world where we had equality for both genders."

Gail Harrell, 71, of Chicago, toured the exhibit, which included a "King Power" button, King's Adidas tennis shoes and custom-designed tennis dress, Riggs' Sugar-Daddy windbreaker, racquets and a "Liberation Match" scorecard. Later, Harrell said, "I'd forgotten how much I liked the term 'women's lib.' I'm going to bring that back."

U.S. Open fan Michael Cox, 49, of Detroit, also

toured the exhibit: "I'm a big fan of the Williams sisters and women's tennis, which wouldn't be what it is without Billie Jean."

PBS also is marking the anniversary of the Battle of the Sexes with "American Masters: Billie Jean King," the first episode in the long-running series to profile an athlete. The episode premieres on Sept. 10.

"Billie Jean King embodies the art of sports, of humanity and of activism," said "American Masters" executive producer Susan Lacy. "For more than 50 years, her excellence and example have sparked the way for changes that enrich us all."



PHOTO: COURTESY OF AP PHOTO/WNET

Tennis player Billie Jean King, left, makes a fist while she answers a question at a news conference in Houston on Sept. 20, 1973. At right is Bobby Riggs smiling as King makes her answer.

Filmmaker James Erskine said, "Almost from the first time she picked up a racket, Billie Jean King has understood the power of sport as a major cultural force to shape society; and it was her insight to use the emotional energy borne on the playing field to fight for equality and social justice. Through her life she has faced triumph and adversity with equal measure, battling both on and off the court for a better world."

In the documentary, King tells her story, with perspectives provided by Bobby Riggs' son, Hillary Rodham Clinton, Elton John, Serena and Venus Williams, Maria Sharapova, Chris Evert, Rosie Casals, Gloria Steinem, Valerie Jarrett and others.

All the accomplishments and career highlights are covered: King won her first of a record 20 Wimbledon titles in 1961 and went on to win 39 Grand Slam titles. She's received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and been named one of the "100 Most Important Americans of the 20th Century." She founded the Women's Sports Foundation in 1974 to advance the lives of women and girls through sports and more recently co-founded GreenSlam to promote environmentalism in sports. She's a trustee of the Elton John AIDS Foundation. She's the first female athlete to earn

more than \$100,000 in a single season and one of six inaugural inductees into the Court of Fame.

King, early in the documentary, recalls her childhood passion for sports, including finding odd jobs as a kid to buy her first tennis racket and playing all day to become the best. She loved the game and loved winning, and she recognized tennis, at the time an elitist sport, could become a platform to fight for equality.

Discrimination throughout the 1960s, the rise of women's liberation in the 1970s, the solidarity of nine suffragettes in tennis are reviewed as the show builds up to the big battle in Houston.

King had repeatedly resisted Riggs' requests for a match. A loss, she feared, could set back the women's rights movement. But Margaret Court, ranked No. 1 among the women players, agreed to a Mother's Day match with Riggs, for a guarantee of \$35,000, win or lose.

"I had no idea," Court, in the documentary, says of the hype and harassment Riggs had planned. She opened the match with a curtsy, got trounced and almost immediately the focus turned to King as defender of women's tennis.

"If I could win ... I could help social issues move forward," King remembers in

the show. At the same time she was preparing for the match and dealing with the media exposure, King was acknowledging her lesbianism and fearing what might happen to the women's tour if she was outed. "I had to play Bobby Riggs ... and just stay focused. I hit hundreds of overheads every day."

Battle of the Sexes viewers – there were more than 90 million worldwide – likely remember the spectacle before the match as much as the outcome. Riggs arrived on a rickshaw, accompanied by scantily clad female models, and King arrived in a throne carried by four muscle men, like a Cleopatra of the court. At the net, King presented Riggs – who had made certain the women in the worldwide audience considered him a male chauvinist pig – with a piglet named Larimore Hustle.

For King, winning the first set was critical.

Elton John was watching ABC that night: "I was praying."

Hillary Clinton was with a group of friends and watching so closely she had to remember to "breathe in, breathe out."

Howard Cosell provided the memorable coverage in his trademark staccato delivery: "You can sense the kill."

Casals has described it as "the match of the century" while Evert has said King's victory transcended tennis.

Riggs, after the loss, said he was "killed by the woman."

But to King, he confided that he'd underestimated her.



DID YOU KNOW?

In 1974, King became the first woman to coach a coed professional sports team – the Philadelphia Freedoms. The event inspired Elton John's "Philadelphia Freedom."



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Rallies, protests mark Women's Equality Day

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Wisconsinites marked Women's Equality Day on Aug. 26 with a rally at the state Capitol, where hundreds gathered to call on state lawmakers to halt the Republican Party's attack on women's rights.

Congress established Women's Equality Day in 1971 to commemorate the certification of the 19th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Wisconsin was the first state to ratify the amendment, a fact not lost on those who assembled on Aug. 26 for the Stand with Wisconsin Women Rally in Madison.

"Wisconsin had such a proud history, which makes what Gov. Scott Walker has done a real disgrace and a travesty," said rallier Ginny Scramp of Appleton. "Wisconsin once was a leader in progress. Now it leads in rolling back rights. Who else but Walker would repeal the state equal pay act?"

Speakers said Walker and the GOP leadership have introduced, moved and passed more than a dozen bills against women's rights and equality.

Several days after the rally, Planned Parenthood Advocates of Wisconsin invited activists to continue to stand with women and challenge state Senate President Mike Ellis, who facilitated passage of five bills limiting women's accessibility to affordable health care and also limiting their rights to make reproductive decisions.

PPAW executive director Tanya Atkinson said the Senate president, the focus of a new ad campaign, "has shown himself to be a career politician who doesn't listen to his constituents and consistently votes against women's ability to access essential health care."

PPAW described the campaign as the first in a series.

"We will remind community members that we can prevail in protecting women's health and rights, but only if we remain engaged and hold our elected leaders accountable and call on them to represent our best interests as a state," Atkinson said.

Equality Day events also took place at many other state capitols and in the U.S. capitol, where civil rights activists were assembled for a week of events commemorating the 1963 March on Washington.

Speakers and activists at the Equality Day events said they wanted to celebrate achievements – including certification in 1920 of the 19th Amendment guaranteeing women the right to vote. But they also wanted to make demands.

"I don't want to belittle the progress we've made," said Baltimore resident Robin Holmes, who attended a rally in Washington, D.C. "But we have a long way to go. I think about this every two weeks when I get my paycheck. In 1963, when the Equal Pay Act was signed, a woman earned about 59 cents to the dollar a man earned. Today, women earn about 81 cents to the dollar earned by men."

Penny Buschard said she attended an Equality Day rally in Sarasota because she's concerned about conservatives' attacks on abortion rights, but even more concerned about equal pay.

"We don't have equal pay in nearly every occupation," Buschard said. "There's no bigger issue for women – none. When our earnings are equal, we will see a shift, a balance in everything else. We're observing Equality Day because we don't have equality."

EQUALITY EXAM

1. Aug. 26 is celebrated as Women's Equality Day to commemorate:

- A. The work women did during WWII.
- B. The anniversary of women winning the right to vote.
- C. The flappers of the 1920s.
- D. The contemporary women's rights movement.

2. In what year did U.S. Rep. Bella Abzug introduce equality day legislation?

- A. 1992. B. 1984. C. 1971. D. 1965

3. In what year did women in the United States win the right to vote?

- A. 1776. B. 1848. C. 1920. D. 1946

4. How many years did it take for U.S. women to win the right to vote?

- A. 72 years. B. 120 years. C. 20 years. D. 51 years

5. Women in most Western states won the right to vote years before the federal amendment was secured. 2010 was the 100th anniversary of women in Washington State winning the vote. California celebrated the 100th anniversary of women winning the vote in 2011. Oregon celebrated the 100th anniversary in 2012.

What other state celebrated the 100th anniversary of women winning the right to vote in 2012?

- A. New York. B. Florida. C. Maine. D. Arizona

6. What was the name given to the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, which guaranteed women's right to vote?

- A. Abigail Adams Amendment
- B. Sojourner Truth Amendment
- C. Susan B. Anthony Amendment
- D. Gloria Steinem Amendment

7. Women who worked for women's right to vote were called:

- A. Radical. B. Immoral. C. Suffragist. D. All of the above

8. The term "suffragist" is derived from:

- A. One who suffers. B. A voting tablet in ancient times. C. the Constitution. D. the Bill of Rights

9. How many other countries had guaranteed women's right to vote before the campaign was won in the U.S.?

- A. 6. B. 2. C. 1. D. 16

Answers:

1-B, 2-C, 3-C, 4-A, 5-D, 6-C, 7-D, 8-B, 9-D.

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{ Editorial }

Oppose voucher schools

Students in Wisconsin head back to school in a politicized educational environment that's headed in the wrong direction.

Wisconsin Republicans took heat for slashing school spending by \$575 per pupil in the 2011–13 biennial budget. Now they want credit for providing a \$75-per-pupil increase in the 2014–15 budget.

Not only does the increase fail to make a dent in the damage they've done, but also the Republicans' plan will ultimately drain \$1.9 billion from the public school system every year, according to the Department of Public Instruction.

That's because accompanying the increase is an expansion of the state's school voucher system, which has evolved into a right-wing mechanism whereby taxpayer money goes to discriminatory, faith-based schools.

Voucher programs were designed as a way for poor kids from blighted neighborhoods to gain access to better schools in safer settings. But that's not how they've worked out.

Over the past 20 years, the state has spent \$1.5 billion on a pilot voucher program involving schools in Milwaukee and Racine. Repeated studies show these voucher school students not only fare no better, but often fare worse than their public school counterparts.

DPI data comparing the performances of voucher and Milwaukee Public School students in the 4th, 8th and 10th grades during the 2010–11 school year found that MPS students outperformed voucher students in eight out of nine categories.

Still, Gov. Scott Walker is expanding the program under pressure from national right-wing groups that have poured millions of dollars into Wisconsin elections. Their ultimate goal is to replace the public school system with private, for-profit schools.

While it has failed academically, the voucher system has accomplished some darker goals. Primarily, it diverts money from public schools to subsidize private-school tuition. Sixty-seven percent of the students who attend voucher schools already attended a Wisconsin private school in the previous school year. Thus, rather than helping poor students gain access to private schools, two-thirds of the money spent on vouchers in Wisconsin go to parents who could already afford private school tuition without public assistance.

The voucher system also is used to help parents – at taxpayer expense – send their kids to religious schools that can openly discriminate against LGBT people and teach that science is nonsense. Only a handful of the 123 schools participating in Milwaukee's 20-year-old voucher program are secular.

Voucher schools also can discriminate against students with learning and other disabilities.

The state has no accountability standards for voucher schools. That means money needed by public schools that are mandated to maintain academic standards is going to an increasing number of schools that can provide inferior educations with impunity.

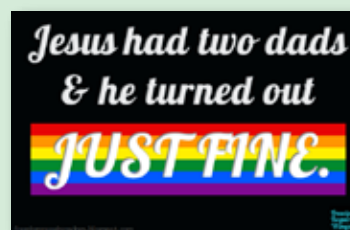
For parents who want a better education for their kids, voucher schools are not the answer. They can hire unlicensed teachers and have no responsibility to the taxpayer.

Those parents – indeed all of us who care about the future of our children and our state – should be very wary of the misleading “school choice” rhetoric used to promote voucher schools. We must fight to oppose their expansion and make support of voucher schools a litmus test for determining whether to vote for candidates at all levels.

The voucher approach is a step backward for education in Wisconsin and the nation.

WiG's WEB PICKS

Some of our favorite recent pictorials from cyberspace



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ON THE RECORD



"I want everyone to know the real me. I am Chelsea Manning. I am a female. Given the way that I feel, and have felt since childhood, I want to begin hormone therapy as soon as possible."

— CHELSEA MANNING announcing her intention to transition the day after receiving a 35-year sentence from a military court for leaking 700,000 files to WikiLeaks.

"For the record, I love my sister, but she is dead wrong on the issue of marriage. Freedom means freedom for everyone. That means that all families — regardless of how they look or how they are made — all families are entitled to the same rights, privileges and protections as every other."

— MARY CHENEY responding on Facebook to her sister Liz Cheney's recent statement against marriage equality.

"Without a (hit) single and without marketing, I'm not drawing on hetero males as a core audience. But thank God for the gays! My homos — they stick by me through thick and thin."

— COURTNEY LOVE telling Vanity Fair magazine that her gay fans have saved her current national tour.

"I cried a lot. But I was so privileged at being able to be officially and completely recognized as her wife. ... I feel extremely privileged over the support that we're getting."

— JEN ROPER, who has a potentially fatal form of brain cancer, expressing her gratitude for being granted a license to marry her longtime partner Angelique Neuman. The two married in a brief ceremony at the Christus St. Vincent Regional Cancer Center in Santa Fe, N.M., where Roper is hospitalized.

"People who think I'm gay, some part of me thinks it's wonderful. Because I want to challenge people on their homophobia. I love seeing on Twitter when someone says I'm gay, and I say, 'So what does it matter if I am? So be it. I hope you are not voting for me because you are making the presumption that I'm straight.'"

— Newark mayor and Senate candidate CORY BOOKER speaking to the Washington Post.

"Thank you for your kind invitation. As someone who has enjoyed visiting Russia in the past and can also claim a degree of Russian ancestry, it would make me happy to say yes. However, as a gay man, I must decline."

— WENTWORTH MILLER, star of "Prison Break," outing himself in declining an invitation to attend the St. Petersburg International Film Festival in Russia.

"Jews, homosexuals, blacks, gays, Islamists, you may think they're disparate groups, they're not, they're all tools. Pieces of crap, homosexuals like what's that one guy's name? (Dan) Savage. That faggot. That horrible, awful, terrible excuse for a human being who is at the White House promoting attacks on Christians. I hope he dies — he probably will — of every disease known. I'm sending him a fire hydrant for his birthday, I'm hoping he'll sit on it — he'll slide all the way down to the ground."

— Christian radio host STAN SOL-OMON sharing his version of Jesus' love with his listeners.



40 years of LGBT memories at a glance

Opinion

JAMAKAYA

40 YEARS AGO

In 1973, 10 years before employment rights for LGBTs were adopted by the state, a Dane County judge upheld the firing of Paul D. Safransky by Southern Colony, an institution for children with disabilities, due to Safransky's homosexuality. Safransky was not accused of any misconduct, yet the judge declared: "We do not think that the institution has to wait for something bad to happen when an employee such as plaintiff flaunts his unorthodox conduct and there is even a hint that he might go farther than talk about it."

The Wisconsin Supreme Court upheld the ruling. Safransky told GPU News: "I was fired because I am homosexual, period. It is patently ridiculous that I should be fired for some action that I might or might not do in the future. In that case, the other

men should be fired because they might take advantage of the girls."

Also in 1973, GPU News reported that 50 people unfurled a "Gay Power" banner at Milwaukee's July 4 fireworks celebration. GPU sponsored a Lavender Kissing Booth at the annual Brady Street Festival where kisses cost 50 cents. GPU News noted that "some of the kissers gave away more kisses than they sold, but the booth turned a modest profit."

30 YEARS AGO

In 1983, Democratic Gov. Tony Earl created a Council on Lesbian and Gay Issues to which he appointed 14 LGBT activists and allies. Their job was to advise the governor on the recently passed gay civil rights law and related issues. The council investigated anti-gay harassment, promoted education about AIDS, and questioned the fairness of ROTC recruitment and training on University of Wisconsin campuses. The ROTC excluded gays. Council members resigned en masse when Earl lost his

re-election bid and Republican Tommy Thompson promised to scrub the body.

20 YEARS AGO

In July 1993, Tina Terry, owner of several popular bars in the African-American community, was killed at Tina's RTI on Milwaukee's North Side. Terry's killer, who had done nine months for a previous shooting, is eligible for parole in 2029. Terry's death was a deep blow to many African-American LGBTs, who felt accepted by her and found friends and lovers at her establishments. "A lot of people will be lost without her," a mourner said at the time.

That same month, Outwords Books, Gifts & Coffee opened on Murray Avenue on Milwaukee's East Side. It's still there. Given the challenges facing small retailers, especially booksellers, I asked proprietor Carl Szatmary how he's managed to keep the store going for 20 years. "Masochism," he deadpanned. "Since our community's made so much progress, there's less of an imperative

to support gay businesses," he added.

"It's tough, but we're still here due to a small, exceedingly loyal customer base." See www.outwordsbooks.com.

10 YEARS AGO

In 2003, after years of expansion when expenses outpaced revenue, PrideFest found itself \$120,000 in the hole. A Legacy Task Force was formed, which negotiated debt reduction with vendors and solicited new donors and corporate sponsorships, enabling the festival to continue in 2004 and beyond.

In October 2003, a special committee led by then-Fire and Police Commissioner (and WiG CEO) Leonard Sobczak found that the Milwaukee Police Department fostered a culture of anti-LGBT attitudes that were tolerated by command staff. It recommended improved training and greater leadership by the police and fire chiefs to promote diversity.

Manning's brave fight continues

Opinion

HELEN BOYD

When Chelsea Manning came out to the world as transgender this past week, the jokes started almost immediately. As Bradley Manning, she had become famous for her involvement with WikiLeaks, for which she was sentenced to 35 years in prison. With the jokes came the confusion, the doubts and the suspicions. Even within the community, people wondered if she was only coming out as transgender to avoid the prison at Leavenworth. People wondered if she is "really" transgender, or just pretending to be in order to avoid the kind of punishment she would receive as a man.

It's the kind of question that comes up whenever transgender people tell the world they are going to transition. Transgender men are accused of wanting to benefit from being male in the world, and transgender women are

accused of wanting a break from the responsibility and consequences of being male.

But being transgender is never a break, nor does it confer on anyone special privileges or benefits.

The concern is whether Manning will receive the kind of medical treatment she needs in order to transition while in prison. In 2012, a federal court struck down the 2006 Wisconsin law that withheld medical treatment for transgender people in prison. Along with a case in Massachusetts in which a judge ruled that a transgender prisoner has the right to surgery, the Wisconsin case is one of the two that has set a precedent that medical care considered necessary by a doctor cannot be denied to transgender prisoners.

Denial of medical care — any and all medical care that a doctor or psychiatrist deems necessary — has been ruled unconstitutional under the Eighth Amendment, which bans "cruel and unusual punishment."

Nationally and internationally, there is broad legal and medical consensus that providing gender-transition-related medical care is medically necessary, inexpensive and legally and morally the right thing to do. The major medical bodies are in consensus on this, including the American Medical Association, the American Psychiatric Association and the World Professional Association of Transgender Health.

Whether Manning will receive that care is still unknown. But her case, because of its international spotlight, is drawing a lot more attention to the plight of transgender people in general, and specifically to those serving time, such as CeCe MacDonald.

Manning's risk of sexual assault will be much higher as a result of being out as transgender. The 1994 case *Farmer v. Brennan*, in which the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of transgender woman Dee Farmer, who had sued the federal government for

failing to protect her from assaults and repeated rape while incarcerated in an all-male federal prison in Indiana, highlights exactly what Manning may face. Studies have found that transgender women are 13 times more likely to be raped while incarcerated.

Our legal definitions of gender often require genital surgeries and gender-marker changes that can be both complicated and expensive. Therefore, transgender women often are housed in men's prisons or, in some cases, kept in solitary confinement. Legislation such as the Ending Prison Rape Act has only just begun to address these crimes.

There is nothing funny about prison rape whether the person is a man or a woman, cis or transgender, gay or straight.

Educator and lecturer Helen Boyd is the author of "My Husband Betty" and "She's Not the Man I Married."

Elena's House provides care, community for people living with HIV/AIDS

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

For the past 12 years, an unassuming ranch house in Wauwatosa has provided physical healing, spiritual comfort and a community of support for people living with HIV/AIDS.

Elena's House, 624 N. 103rd St., began in March 2001 after Raphael House, located next door, closed. The latter was run by the Roman Catholic order of St. Camillus, which shuttered the house, leaving the area bereft of a faith-based living facility for people dealing with HIV/AIDS.

Mary Ellen Huwiler, who was a volunteer at Raphael House, had witnessed its healing power and was determined to continue its mission.

"After the closing of the Raphael House, Milwaukee no longer had a faith-based home for people living with HIV/AIDS," she says. "Recognizing the need in the community, in August 2000, I along with a team of individuals, including a caregiver, social worker and minister who were associated with the St. Camillus AIDS Ministry, started Common-Ground Ministry."

Elena House is a project of that ministry. Funded through private individuals, foundations and residents, who pay 30 percent of their income – if they have one – the agency also has been a recipient of Milwaukee's

annual AIDS Walk since 2004. This year's walk takes place Oct. 5 along the lakefront at the Summerfest Grounds.

Elena's House's primary fundraiser is "Refashion for Life," presented by Callen Construction. The sixth annual event will be held Sept. 11, presenting the latest fashions in home remodeling as well as women's clothing. Last year's Refashion for Life drew about 250 supporters and raised \$20,000.

Bill Keeton, vice president of government and public relations for the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, which organizes AIDS Walk, says Elena's House demonstrates the vital role that fighting isolation plays in achieving successful health outcomes.

"Isolation is a barrier to successful health care outcomes and strips away the dignity of people living with HIV," Keeton says. "Elena's House focuses on housing a small group of HIV-positive individuals to become an extended family to them and provide them with a supportive community."

Each year, Elena's House serves as many as eight full-time residents. An average of 25 additional individuals participate in programs at the house, such as weekly support groups, joining residents for a meal, or staying at the house on a short-term basis as a respite from their current living situation.

Since opening, Elena's House has been

home to 66 individuals living with HIV/AIDS. Most of have moved back to independent living in the community, and 12 have died.

"I left Elena's House renewed in mind, body and spirit," says a former resident who asked to be identified as "Tim."

"Elena's House is tension-free and is set in front of a wooded area," he continues. "We plant many flowers. It has been my good fortune to have stayed in a most lovely place. I left refreshed and rejuvenated. It is a place with a charm of its own description."

"The level of warmth, caring, dignity and respect is second only to the air of peace, love and joy. Wellness happens at Elena's House."

Huwiler was a children's wear designer at Eagle Knitting Mills when HIV/AIDS entered her personal world: Her brother-in-law Stephen Huwiler discovered he had HIV in the mid-1980s, when a diagnosis was a virtual death sentence.

In 1993, Milwaukee experienced the largest waterborne disease outbreak in U.S. history when Cryptosporidium contaminated a portion of the city's drinking water, sickening 403,000 residents. At least 104 people died, mostly the elderly and people whose immune systems were compromised. One of them was Stephen Huwiler.

"He became too sick to live alone," Huwiler remembers. "He moved in with our family. Stephen was very scared when he was dying, and he kept saying, 'Don't put me in a nursing home.' A lot of his friends that were HIV-positive had the same feeling. Back in those days, they were treated like lepers – they were not treated with compassion and respect."

Huwiler left her career in fashion design after 23 years and cared for Stephen until he died in the summer of 1994.

"After Stephen's death, I no longer had a desire to work in the fashion industry. I wanted to work and care for people living with HIV/AIDS," she says.

Huwiler became a volunteer with the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin and the St. Camillus AIDS Ministry, where she eventually took a job coordinating volunteers and special events and working with the Raphael House residents.



PHOTO: COURTESY

From last year's "Refashion for Life" fundraiser.

ON THE CALENDAR

The sixth annual "Refashion for Life," the major fundraiser for Elena's House, takes place on Sept. 11 at Callen Construction, S63 W13131 Janesville Road, Muskego. The event presents the latest in home remodeling ideas, as well as a preview of the fall fashion season from area boutiques, including Lela, Goldies' Boutique Larrieux, ModE and Urban Laundry. The event includes live music, food from Saz's Catering, a fashion show and an auction. Register online at <http://www.refashionforlife.com/tickets.html.institutions>.

Elena's House was named for a resident of Raphael House.

"Elena Kuenzi was a beloved member of the Milwaukee community," Keeton says. "Incredibly, all in one day, she was diagnosed both with lymphoma and AIDS. Her care and concern for others left a lasting impression on her friends who made her the namesake of this home."

A Potawatomi Native American, Kuenzi drew on her spirituality for strength, which is one of the underpinnings of Elena's House's approach to care.

"She was diagnosed with AIDS and a brain lymphoma on the same day and given six months to live," Huwiler says. "But she lived two and a half additional years."



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PHOTO: YOUTUBE

The arrest of Damon Terrell, captured on video and posted on YouTube.

CAPITOL POLICE ARREST PROTESTER, CHARGE HIM WITH BATTERY

Three Capitol Police officers threw a protester to the ground, piled on top of him and pinned him by his neck before handcuffing and charging him with felony battery and resisting arrest on Aug. 26.

A video of the attack was posted on YouTube. Damon Terrell, 22, can be seen observing the daily "Solidarity Sing Along" in the Capitol Rotunda in Madison when several officers approach him. As he backs away from the officers, they lunge at him, drag him off to the side and pin him to the ground.

Bystanders can be heard chanting, "Shame, shame, shame."

The felony battery charge was the most severe that's been recommended since daily protests began at the Capitol in February 2011. But the charge has yet to be formally made. Terrell is set to appear in court on Sept. 12 to face formal charges.

More than 300 protesters have been arrested at the Capitol since Republicans launched a crackdown one month ago as Gov. Scott Walker prepares to run for re-election next year. Capitol Police Chief Dave Erwin was awarded a retroactive raise of 12 percent for his efforts.

REPUBLICAN WANTS TO MAKE ENGLISH STATE'S OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

A Wisconsin GOP lawmaker has reintroduced a bill to make English the state's official language.

Rep. Andre Jacque's proposal would require state and local government to write all their documents in English. Exceptions could be made in individual cases, as well as to teach another language and to protect a criminal defendant's rights. The bill would not restrict the use of a language other than English for non-governmental purposes.

Jacque, of DePere, said the bill would provide immigrants an incentive to learn English, which in turn would help them find jobs.

A spokesman said Gov. Scott Walker was noncommittal on the bill.

Democratic Rep. JoCasta Zamarripa, of Milwaukee, said her district includes the largest number of Hispanics in the state. She said the measure would prevent her from includ-

ing Spanish translations with her constituent newsletters.

"This is going to be detrimental to Jacque's party," she said. "Many Republicans saw the writing on the wall after the elections of 2012. This only hurts the Republican Party's ambitions to hopefully grow a Latino constituency."

Christine Neumann-Ortiz, executive director of immigrant advocacy group Voces de la Frontera, called the bill "an embarrassment" in an email.

"As a nation of immigrants," she wrote, "different generations from all over the world have relied on multiple languages and bilingual education to successfully integrate into the fabric of this country."

IN OTHER NEWS...

- **Ex-Illinois GOP Chair Pat Brady** was hired by the ACLU of Illinois to lobby for marriage equality legislation. Brady came out in support of the bill earlier this year and then faced at least two attempts to oust him by conservatives in the Republican Party. He eventually left the chairmanship.

- **Iowa Court of Appeals finalist Jeanie Vaudt** faced an unusual – critics say inappropriate – question during a recent public interview: Had she violated marriage vows made to her husband, former State Auditor David Vaudt? The question was lobbed at the assistant Iowa attorney general by Scott Bailey, a prominent Christian homeschooling advocate and member of the State Judicial Nominating Commission. The question, which violated the commission's guidelines, came as legal observers worry Republican Gov. Terry Branstad has packed the panel with conservative activists.

- **A gay rights advocacy group in Indiana** filed a complaint on behalf of a gay high school student whose mother says he was beaten up by a football player because of his sexual orientation. GetEqual IN director David Stevens filed the complaint with the Indianapolis Office of Equal Opportunity alleging Perry Township Schools denied the teen "access to a hostile-free education."

– from AP and WiG reports



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WISCONSIN GAZETTE ENTERTAINMENT

Margaret
Cho brings
'Mother' to
Milwaukee

PHOTO: COURTESY

Margaret Cho in the Web series "In Transition."

Interview

GREGG SHAPIRO

Grammy-nominee Margaret Cho is constantly evolving professionally and personally. Best known as a comedian, Cho is famous for stand-up routines that feature graphic, acerbic commentary on social and political issues. Outspoken in her advocacy for LGBT equality, Cho is herself an out bisexual married to artist Al Ridenour.

With "Cho Dependent," an album released in 2011, the prolific Cho also became a full-fledged singer-songwriter.

In addition to her stand-up work and music, Cho is a writer, actor and burlesque performer. She's a regular on the Lifetime TV series "Drop Dead Diva," which was renewed for its fifth season in March. In July, she launched the Web series "In Transition" on YouTube. The series, which follows three women recently released from prison, is classic Cho material.

Cho brings her latest comedy tour, which is titled "Mother," to Milwaukee's Pabst Theater on Oct. 20.

I spoke with her recently about the tour and other current issues in her life and career.

Gregg Shapiro: The tagline for "Mother" is "Nothing is sacred. Least of all this."

Margaret Cho: I think that motherhood is considered a sacred thing. But a mother has to have sex in order to be a mother. You have to have sex quite a lot of times, actually, in order to get it to work. That's sort of my thing. Being maternal doesn't necessarily mean being holy, being sacred. Even though I'm not a mother myself, there are a lot of people who relate to me as a maternal figure because of my age. I think that makes me a mother of the world by default, which is great. The show is also about my mother, which (has been) a popular thing in my work over the years.

How do you think your mother feels

about being a part of your act?

I think she loves it! I think she loves the feeling of being included and feeling like she's being seen and heard – that her words and presence have a lot of value to me. I've been making fun of my mom since I was a really young kid.

What's the worst advice your mother ever gave you?

To pluck above my eyebrow line. She does that. That was bad advice.

There are different kinds of motherhood. As a dog-person, do you feel like your dogs fulfill the mother/child relationship for you?

Oh, yes! It is a very enriching thing, a very powerful thing. I think animals and people are meant to cohabitate. I don't think it competes with the mother-and-child dynamic, but it's certainly something that satisfies a very important need. Children are obviously much more important. With an animal, your interspecies differences are always going to be there. It's just different.

Do you have plans to record or film the "Mother" tour?

Yes, that will happen later in the year when I finish out the tour. It should be out around Christmas or so.

I recently interviewed "Drop Dead Diva" creator Josh Berman, and we talked about what it means to him that the show was saved from cancellation. As a cast member, what does it mean to you?

It's really great. I think the show is great. I'm so excited. I've never seen that happen before. To have something that was canceled and then renewed, it was a new phenomenon. I didn't realize that could happen.

I was glad to hear that your new album incorporates music with comedy in a way similar to "Cho Dependent." What can you tell me about it?

It's finished. Right now I'm putting everything together. I won't release it until I finish my tour, because I want to

come back and make videos. It goes into really weird territory. I was imagining what musicians from North Korea would sound like. I thought they would sound like country musicians. I think North Korea probably sounds like Nashville in the '50s (laughs).

Not Death Metal?

No. It's very country and very simple. Also, I've written songs for Yoko Ono, which Sean Lennon cried when he heard them.

That's interesting because in recent years Yoko has topped the dance music charts.

She's a phenomenal artist. I wrote her a dance song that addresses the tragedy that exists around her personal life and history in music. Sean was really moved. I don't know if they're going to do it, but it would be an honor. I want to start a full Asian band with Cibo Matto and Sean Lennon. A big Asian supergroup (laughs).

As a frequent talk-show guest, as well as a guest co-host on "The View," do you have any interest in hosting your own talk show – maybe taking on the late night boys club of Letterman, Fallon, Kimmel and Leno?

(Laughs.) I would love to. There's nothing I would like to do more. I think it would be so fun to have a really wild place that would be like Chelsea Lately meets Graham Norton with the rock 'n' roll. I've been wanting to do that for a long time.

In these post-DOMA days, with your ability to officiate weddings, has anyone asked you to perform a marriage during one of your concert dates?

Yes. I'm going to be doing them off and on. I have deputization in California to perform weddings, and I also have that Universal Life Church Monastery card, so I have the ability to marry

people all over the world. I'm doing some ceremonies. But it's always going to be different in every state. For example, I don't know what it's going to mean in Georgia, where we film "Drop Dead Diva." But it's a great thing. I'm going to be performing lots of weddings. I have done them (during) concert dates before, but nobody's asked for this tour yet.

I want to thank you for your routines on outing closeted celebrities and Hollywood homophobia and hypocrisy.

For me, I'm super honest about my life. I think people would be happier just being themselves. That's my truth as coming from an older person. If people are truthful in the way I am then things go easier. But Hollywood is a weird place. It's a weird situation where people want to be perceived in a certain way. Also, I'm just trying to be funny. The whole point of making that joke was so that I could talk about the police sketch artist doing a drawing of John Travolta's asshole. I just wanted to make this really crass ridiculous joke about Helen Mirren coming across the police sketch artist's portrait of John Travolta's asshole (laughs). What people forget about comedy is that it's just there to be ridiculous.

Do you have concerns about your safety?

No, but it would be fierce if I did. Wouldn't that just be fierce? If I just had to have security. Having bodyguards and having to be protected, that is so fierce.

If you had metal detectors at your shows, what would happen to all the people with piercings and cock rings?

I know! It's so sad to separate a drag queen from her purse when she has to go through the X-ray machine.

Milwaukee Rep fills the stage with 'Ragtime'

Theater

MIKE MUCKIAN

The Milwaukee Repertory Theatre kicks off its fall season with its largest-ever production, the musical adaptation of E.L. Doctorow's American epic "Ragtime." And Rep artistic director

Mark Clements, who is directing the show, doesn't mind telling you he's both enthralled and exhausted by the process.

"With 35 actors onstage and an orchestra each night, we have the largest cast in the history of this theater company and a fitting start to the Rep's 60th anniversary season," says Clements. "It's quite an undertaking and I'm very excited."

Doctorow's novel, adapted for the stage by out playwright Terrence McNally, with music by Stephan Flaherty and lyrics by Lynn Ahrens, is set during the dawning of America's industrial age in the early 20th century. That's when the nation charted courses on immigration, mass production, race relations and other issues that have come to define American society as we know it today.

Against this backdrop, Doctorow wove the tales of three interconnected sets of lives that coalesce and collide in ways that define their society. Adapting such a complicated narrative was a daunting task, McNally says.

"The source material is strong, clear and resonant. The biggest challenge for the three of us (including Flaherty and Ahrens) was to choose wisely which parts of the novel to bring to the stage," McNally says. "We were so eager not to fuck it up."

The characters McNally and his co-creators chose to include were: Coalhouse Walker Jr., a successful Harlem musician, and his wife Sarah; Mother, the matriarch of a white upper-class family in New Rochelle; and Tateh, a Jewish immigrant from Latvia.

The novel also is populated by actual historical figures of the day, including illusionist Harry Houdini, industrialist Henry Ford, radical Emma Goldman, inventor Booker T. Washington and others. Those historical figures add depth to the novel, but created challenges for its adapters, says McNally, who won a 1998 Tony Award for his adaptation.

"Every sentence of Doctorow's prose suggests music and every scene could be musicalized. But had we done that, we would have had a piece longer than Wagner's 'Ring Cycle,'" McNally says. "So we focused on the consequences of Mother taking in Sarah and her baby. Everything else in the narrative comes from that single action."

The appearance of the African-American Sarah in a lily-white suburb prompts a racist act of retaliation that's designed to put Coalhouse Walker "in his place," setting the stage for the conflict that drives the show. The narrative sheds light on the emerging concept of the American dream and what it meant for people of different social classes, Clements says.

"Coalhouse trusts in the dream and believes if you live



PHOTO: MICHAEL BROSILOW

Jessie Hooker and Gavin Gregory in Milwaukee Repertory Theater's production of Ragtime.

your life right you should be rewarded accordingly," Clements says. "When it doesn't happen, he feels an abject sense of betrayal and he has a specific way to handle that disappointment."

How Walker handles that betrayal, while providing an exciting climax to the show, still leaves the audience asking questions.

"What is the acceptable and appropriate level of retribution for the injustice he experiences?" Clements asks. "There is no distinct answer to that question."

But the audience is left with a stunning piece of theater. In addition to McNally's honor, "Ragtime" won 11 other Tony Awards and 13 Drama Desk awards in 1998. The show earned 13 more Tony and Drama Desk awards when it was revived in 2009. Clements and McNally hope the Rep's production will capture both the spirit and excitement of the original show.

"I hope the show finds enthusiastic audiences in Milwaukee, especially among young people," McNally says. "I can think of no better show to introduce the wonders, the power and the infinite possibilities of theatrical storytelling to young theatergoers than 'Ragtime.'"

THE REP'S SEASON AT A GLANCE

The Milwaukee Rep again fills its stages with music, drama, laughter and song this season. The schedule offers a number of works that have particular appeal to LGBT audiences. The group's 2013-14 season includes:

- **"Venus in Furs"** (Stiemke Studio). In David Ives' new stage adaptation of the classic erotic novel, veteran Rep director Laura Gordon take on a comic blend of love, libido and literature, Sept. 25–Nov. 3.

- **"Forever Plaid"** (Stackner Cabaret). Everyone's favorite 1950s male quartet returns from the dead to doo-wop their way through a playlist of familiar hits, Oct. 25–Dec. 29.

- **"A Christmas Carol"** (Pabst Theatre). The Charles Dickens classic is an annual favorite at the Rep, offering a holiday libation for those in need of seasonal redemption, Nov. 27–Dec. 24.

- **"Noises Off"** (Quadracci Powerhouse). Michael Frayn's "funniest farce ever written" concerns a disastrous touring company and the even worse play it presents, Nov. 19–Dec. 22.

- **"Woody Sez: The Life & Music of Woody Guthrie"** (Stackner Cabaret). A must-see for Guthrie fans, this production features 25 songs from the writer of "This Land is Your Land," Jan. 3–March 9.

- **"End of the Rainbow"** (Quadracci Powerhouse). For both hardcore fans and people too young to remember Judy Garland's legendary 1968 London comeback performance, Hollis Resnick resurrects the gay icon and world's favorite tragic chanteuse, Jan. 7–Feb. 9.

- **"The Whipping Man"** (Stiemke Studio). Matthew Lopez's tale follows a wounded Jewish Confederate soldier who returns home after the Civil War to find a household comprised of two former slaves, also raised Jewish, Feb. 5–March 16.

- **"An Iliad"** (Quadracci Powerhouse). American Players Theatre favorite James DeVita embodies Homer's immortal tale in a one-man show sure to enthrall fans of both the epic and the actor, Feb. 25–March 23.

- **"Ain't Misbehavin'"** (Stackner Cabaret). This forerunner of all jukebox musicals mixes the height of the Harlem Renaissance with the music of Fats Waller, March 14–May 18.

- **"Rep Lab"** (Stiemke Studio). The Rep's lauded intern ensemble comes together again for the Rep's fourth annual short-play festival, March 28–31.

- **"The History of Invulnerability"** (Quadracci Powerhouse). Based on a true story, this production chronicles the creation of the character Superman in 1938 by Jerry Siegel, a Jewish boy from Cleveland who needed a hero as much as pre-World War II Europe needed a savior, April 8–May 4.



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Rep welcomes new managing director

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

After he applied for the position of Milwaukee Repertory Theater's managing director, Chad Bauman proceeded to check out the company's reputation in the national theater community. His caution was understandable.

At 33, Bauman already had an enviable position as associate executive director of Washington's Arena Stage – a venerable and high-profile East Coast theater company. In case he succeeded in getting the job at the Rep, Bauman wanted to know exactly what he would be getting into.

He'd already formed a favorable impression of the Rep, he said, when he helped to transfer "One Night with Janis Joplin" from Arena Stage, where it originated, to the Rep last year. But he wanted to be sure there were no hidden pitfalls, no underlying problems that would make him someday regret the move. And although the job at the Rep would be a promotion – the managing director is virtually a theater company's CEO – he would have to uproot not only his life but also that of husband Justin Dunleavy, an analyst for the U.S. Government Accountability Office, a nonpartisan

Congressional watchdog agency.

So Bauman began asking questions of former Rep employees, contractors, and other theater professionals in the know.

What he learned about the Rep was alarming, Bauman confessed.

"Everyone said such fantastic things about working for the Rep (that) it was quite disturbing," he explained. "It was sort of Stepfordish, because no one had anything negative to say. It seems like people just come here and fall in love with the place."

Since consistently lavish praise was the worst offense he could uncover about the Rep, Bauman accepted the managing director position as soon as it was offered, he said. Dunleavy transferred to the GAO's Chicago office, and now the couple maintains homes both there and in Milwaukee.

Bauman already has joined the Stepford-like chorus of Rep fans. He considers his decision to join the company an unqualified success for a variety of reasons. So does his new employer.

"There was an energy and vision for his role of managing director that was articulated in a very dynamic manner during the interview process and which is playing

out in his actual role," said Rep board president Judy Hansen. "His partnership with our artistic director, Mark Clements, is also a key component to the success in this position and that relationship is strong."

Bauman is a Missouri native who'd lived in such far-flung places as California and London. But he joined the Rep at a point in his life when he wanted to live closer to his family and reconnect with his Midwestern roots, he said.

"I was also at a point in my career where I was ready to take on a leadership position in a large theater," he said. "So the stars converged."

Bauman discovered that he was joining the Rep at an exciting and critical time in its history. "The company is in a place that is really solid right now," he said. "It's grown by 20 percent over the last three years. Clements recently signed a contract to lead the Rep for four more years, guaranteeing the organization's ongoing artistic stability."

But with two stages and 13 productions a year, the Rep requires a lot of money. And, as famously daring as he is talented, Clements has created an ambitious three-year strategic plan. Bauman said it's his

job to find the resources to create a sustainable path to achieve Clements' creative vision.

That's a tremendous challenge but Bauman relishes it, and the board has confidence that he's up to the task.

"He excels in marketing and revenue analysis, which includes forecasting – this is key to the success of a theater with an ambitious artistic vision," Hansen said. "Coming from a theater more than double the size of the Milwaukee Rep, Chad fully understands the intricacies of running a major theater."

Bauman said he's encouraged by the fact that Clements is an economically minded artistic director who "has a keen sense of the business side of theater." And, he added, the Rep's "donors are actually very eager" to help.

"If you can prove that you're stewarding their money to do tremendous things, then they are absolutely eager to invest more," Bauman said. "Our donors see that and they're ready for what's next."

Bauman spends about 70 percent of his time either meeting or speaking with donors. "I'm sort of on my new-guy tour," he quipped. "Everybody is incredibly gracious, warm and inviting. ... It's just been a great



PHOTO: JENNY KOSTREVA

several weeks. I've eaten way too much custard, and they're too many great restaurants in Milwaukee. I've put on 8 pounds."

Bauman lives just blocks away from the theater and appreciates the ability to walk to work. Like many newcomers, Bauman has been surprised by Milwaukee's cultural and lifestyle amenities.

"It's a world-class artists' city but without the problems of the other world-class artists' cities," Bauman said. "Artistically, the Rep is a much larger company than a city the size of Milwaukee should have, if you look at comparably sized cities."

He added: "I have apartments in Milwaukee and Chicago – and when I have a choice, I'd rather be in Milwaukee."

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On stage

A glimpse behind this season's curtain

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

September marks the official beginning of Wisconsin's theater season. Following are nutshell previews of three provocative opening productions by southeastern Wisconsin theater companies, along with each company's season schedule.

NEXT ACT THEATRE

255 S. Water St., Milwaukee
www.nextact.org

Director David Cesarini opens Next Act Theatre's new season with "Perfect Mendacity," playwright Jason Wells' dark comedy/thriller on the nature of truth in our post 9-11 world. Winner of the 2010 Elizabeth Osborn New Play Award for an emerging playwright, Wells tells the story of Walter Kreuzer (Mark Ulrich), a microbiologist working for a defense contractor who learns to beat the lie detector test to protect his family and friends. Also featured are Lee Palmer, Marti Goebel, Eddie Marion and Cesarini. Performances run Sept. 19–Oct. 13.

Next Act's season continues with:

- **"Groucho: A Life in Revue,"** Nov. 14–Dec. 8.
- **"It's A Wonderful Life: Live Radio Show,"** Dec. 12–Jan. 5.
- **"Race,"** the Milwaukee premiere of a work by David Mamet, Jan. 30–Feb. 23.
- **"Three Views of the Same Object,"** also a Milwaukee premiere, April 3–27.

OFF THE WALL THEATRE

127 E. Wells St., Milwaukee
www.offthewalltheatre.com

Dale Gutzman's intrepid theater troupe opens its season with the Midwest premiere of "Grey Gardens: The Musical." The show is based on the 1975 cult documentary about Big Edie and Little Edie Bouvier Beale, the eccentric aunt and cousin of Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis. Once bright names on New York's social register, the pair became East Hampton's most notorious recluses. The 2007 musical by Doug Wright, Scott Frankel and Michael Korie was nominated for 10 Tony Awards and won three. With Niffer Clark, Jack Forbes Wilson and Marilyn White. Performances run Sept. 11–22.

Off the Wall's production calendar continues with:

- **"The Divine Sister,"** a one-nun comedy featuring Mark Hagen, Oct. 24–Nov. 3.
- **"Cole for Christmas: A Cole Porter Christmas,"** a new musical revue by Gutzman, Dec. 18–31.
- **"Glengarry Glen Ross,"** a classic David Mamet play with Robert Hirschi, Feb. 6–16.
- **Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet,"** featuring Gutzman and Marilyn White, March 27–April 6.
- **"Giovanni: The Loves and Legends of Don Juan,"** starring Jeremy Welter as the famed lover and David Flores as his servant Leporello, May 29–June 8.

RACINE THEATRE GUILD

2519 Northwestern Ave., Racine
www.racine theatre.org

The Racine Theater Guild opened its 76th season in July with "The Rocky Horror Show," and the comedy continues this month with "Suite Surrender." Michael McKeever's farce concerns two feuding divas destined for a Florida USO show who are mistakenly booked into the same hotel suite. The fur flies amid mistaken identities, overwrought egos and high-energy

mayhem in this salute to classic Hollywood farces. Performances run Sept. 13–29.

Other shows on Racine Theatre Guild's current production schedule are:

- **"Deathtrap,"** Ira Levin's popular thriller, Oct. 25–Nov. 10.
- **"Disney's Beauty and the Beast,"** the musical based on the animated film, Dec. 6–15.
- **"Almost, Maine,"** nine pseudo-absurdist vignettes about relationships, Jan. 17–Feb. 2.
- **"37 Postcards,"** a comedy about an eccentric family, Feb. 28–March 16.
- **"The Miracle Worker,"** William Gibson's award-winning story of Helen Keller and her teacher Annie Sullivan, April 4–13.
- **"Les Misérables,"** which appears to be Wisconsin's most often-produced play this season, May 16–June 1.

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Milwaukee LGBT Center, Boulevard Theatre's Mark Bucher team up to produce a tear 'Jerker' of a play

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

Two gay men begin a phone-sex relationship against the terrifying backdrop of the emerging AIDS epidemic. Although their physical contact is limited to sound waves, the couple's erotic talk sessions lead to a deeper connection.

That's the simple premise of the 1986 play "Jerker." Boulevard Theatre artistic director Mark Bucher was moved by Robert Chesley's script when he first saw "Jerker" at Milwaukee's now-defunct Theatre X. He decided instantly that he wanted to direct it someday, he says.

That was about two decades ago. Now Bucher's longtime wish is coming true. He's directing a concert reading of the play that runs Sept. 18-22 at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center. The production marks the first collaboration between the two organizations.

Chesley originally saddled his 90-minute, one-act play with the imposing title "Jerker, or The Helping Hand: A Pornographic Elegy with Redeeming Social Value and a Hymn to the Queer Men of San Francisco in Twenty Telephone Calls, Many of Them Dirty." But the play's been known as simply "Jerker" since opening at a Los Angeles theater in October 1986. Together with "The Normal Heart" and "As Is," "Jerker" is

considered one of the definitive plays of the early AIDS era — a time of ignorance, panic and political indifference that's hard for today's young gay men to fathom.

For Bucher, 56, "Jerker" is more timely than the other two pioneering AIDS plays. The difference, he says, is partly in the way that "Jerker" uses telecommunications as the basis for a relationship — a phenomenon that digital technology has made even more prevalent.

"In 1986, you had to go out to a bar and engage in conversation to get laid," Bucher remembers. "What Chesley is talking about is the ability to work through the surface and actually develop a caring, affectionate connection" with a virtual stranger, he says.

"In an age of Grindr and Internet sex, there's this idea of being connected — but we are more disconnected than ever before," Bucher adds. "Jerker" has become more powerful over time because it depicts two men using technology to create a deep connection, he says.

Bucher says "Jerker" also works more fully than the other AIDS plays of its era because it focuses on the two men's relationship. Its approach is simple and direct, avoiding polemical rhetoric.

"This script talks around the politics of the time," Bucher says. "By taking a

more oblique approach, (its) political power is stronger than those other scripts, which are really in your face."

While the human heart might be the true center of the play, it's another organ that gets the most mentions. The sexual content of "Jerker" is highly explicit, making the play unsuitable for audiences under 18.

Bucher says he purposefully chose to present "Jerker" as a reading rather than a staged production complete with full frontal nudity and the rest of what comes with a play whose action revolves around masturbation. Bucher says his strategy will force the audience to focus beneath the surface.

"I didn't want a live sex show," Bucher says. "In Chicago, they did it with porn stars, and they actually acted it out. (In my production) you start to listen to the characterization and the meaning behind the words."

Bucher hopes that his presentation will not distract from the play's testament to the universal yearning for "connectedness." Instead, he hopes to underscore the meaning of a work that critics have called a love story for the AIDS era.

"This is a beautiful play, and (it's) not limited to the term 'gay play,' because it's about human interaction," Bucher says. "It's as much a gay play as 'Raisin in the Sun' is only a



PHOTO: TROY FREUND

Marty McNamee and Bill Jackson rehearse for the concert reading of "Jerker."

black play. It's a timeless love story. Audiences who get past the adult language will be rewarded by a tremendous theatrical experience."

Of course, "Jerker" also bears witness to the plague-like devastation of the incipient AIDS epidemic — as well as serving as a reminder that HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, is still impacts millions of gay men.

"I think for younger people, ("Jerker") obliquely addresses what a different

time 1985 was," Bucher says. "But they should remember that HIV has not gone away. Some would argue that it has morphed into something more insidious. People today think they can just take a cocktail of pills" and be done with it.

But Bucher hopes to remind audiences that HIV is hardly that simple.

As WiG reported several months ago, the Boulevard Theatre is investigating the possible sale of its current

building at 2250 S. Kinnickinnic Ave. in Bay View and becoming an itinerant theatrical group. Bucher says the production of "Jerker" at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center "will allow us to explore off-site and satellite performance venues." At the same time, the "relationship hopefully will introduce new patrons to the center."

"This is truly a synergistic relationship," Bucher says. "We're very thankful to the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center and to the Milwaukee Arts Board, which is underwriting this production through a grant."

ON STAGE

"Jerker" will be staged as a concert reading at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 1110 N. Market St., #2, Sept. 18 - 22. For more, phone 414-271-2656.

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Disfit Over!

Pizza Man serves up a new beginning

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Mike Amidzich figures that he made more than 10,700 people happy when he reopened Pizza Man, the iconic Milwaukee restaurant that burned to the ground in early 2010.

That number reflects the current followers of Pizza Man's Facebook page. When Amidzich announced earlier this year that he planned on reopening, the number of "likes" nearly doubled from 6,000.

The original Pizza Man, located at 1800 E. North Ave., was considered an East Side landmark. Incorrect information posted on the restaurant's Facebook page forced it to open at its new location, 2597 N. Downer Ave., on July 30 – two weeks prior to its scheduled Aug. 15 grand opening.

"I've been at the restaurant day and night for the past three months," said Amidzich, 71, who woke up at 11:30 a.m. on a recent Sunday morning for a phone interview. "I think I will go back to bed after we finish."

Pizza Man, founded in 1970 as the East Side's first late-night pizza delivery service, was destroyed in a five-alarm blaze on Jan. 19, 2010. Feras Rahman, who owned Black and White Café, which was located in the same building, was found not guilty of charges that he'd set fire to his business to collect \$135,000 in insurance.

Rahman was sentenced to 2½ years in prison and three years supervised probation for lying to investigating officials, a sentence he's appealing. In addition to the two restaurants, the building destroyed in the \$3 million blaze also housed the Greek restaurant Grecian Delight, the Cush Lounge and 10 sec-

ond-floor apartments.

HIPPY-DIPPY BEGINNINGS

But Pizza Man's legacy began long before the fire. In fact, Amidzich, who grew up in the city's Walker's Point neighborhood, traces his food service roots to the outdoor rock concerts of the late 1960s that followed in the wake of Woodstock. After purchasing a franchise from West Allis-based Joe Drag-on, the "King of Barbecue," Amidzich began offering food to hungry fest-goers at concerts in Iola and Poynette and other events in the Midwest. After going bust at a show in Iowa, Amidzich returned to Milwaukee in search of a job.

The young entrepreneur was offered work as a pizza cook, but the opportunity went to someone else. However, he learned about Rudy's Pizzeria, a bankrupt takeout place at the corner of Oakland and North avenues. In 1970, with a \$2,800 bank loan for which his parents co-signed, the 28-year-old bought Rudy's and renamed it Pizza Man.

Amidzich's counterculture connections and the restaurant's iconic logo of a long-haired, mustached super hero stepping over a mushroom paved the way for Pizza Man's success. At the time, no pizzerias delivered past 10 p.m. on weeknights or midnights on weekends, times when the parties on Milwaukee's vibrant East Side just got underway. Knowing its potential clients would be looking to satisfy hunger brought on by their smoke-filled activities, Pizza Man delivered until 3 a.m. on weeknights and 4 a.m. on weekends and included a free quart of Pepsi-Cola with each pie.

"We went through 200 cases of Pepsi each week,

making me one of the largest independent Pepsi accounts in the state," Amidzich says. "Appetites were very robust in the early morning hours."

Amidzich used Rudy's pizza recipes, but traded up to all fresh ingredients, which boosted sales. A year after opening his delivery-only enterprise, Amidzich asked his neighbors who operated Frank's Cycle Shop next door if they would mind moving a few doors down so he could add a dining room to his operation, which became the Pizza Man restaurant.

TIME FOR WINE

With the new dining room in place, Pizza Man added a bar with a full line of scotches, aperitifs and liquors. The effort didn't quite catch on and Amidzich soon replaced the back bar with wine racks to cater to his love for the grape.

"I asked a sommelier how to win an award for my wine list, and he suggested stocking a lot of wines with names I couldn't pronounce," Amidzich said. "I said what if I stocked only California wines and served every one of them by the glass? He said, 'That will win you an award.'"

It wasn't long before Pizza Man had built one of Milwaukee's most impressive wine lists, earning the restaurant a Wine Spectator Award of Excellence in the process. At its height, the restaurant offered more than 600 wines by the glass, making it one of the world's largest wine bars, Amidzich says.

Pizza Man's wine cellar was hard hit by the fire. Amidzich lost \$110,000 in wine inventory after the bottles had been doused by water and exposed to potential bacteria contamination. He also lost irreplaceable antiques and heirlooms to the blaze.

He did manage to salvage part of the bar, which was refurbished and retrofitted to match the new restaurant.

NEW DIGS FOR A NEW ERA

The new Pizza Man may not have the characteristic "wavy brick" designed by Layton School of Art student Dick Dufenhorst that confounded more than one stoned diner in the first restaurant, but the new space carries over many of the original restaurant's architectural themes, its owner says.

"The new restaurant is retro-Pizza Man with a dash of hipness thrown in," Amidzich says. "It's a sight to be seen."

The new place has replicas of the original doors, created from barn wood and so heavy that Amidzich had to create counter-weights of rocks in an onion bag because no commercial hardware was strong enough to control them. The demand from customers that those doors be installed in the new restaurant was as pronounced as the complaints about the originals, he says.

The new restaurant, arrayed over two floors, seats about 250 compared to the original's 55-customer capacity. There also is an outdoor roof patio and balcony that may be the only one in the city, Amidzich says.

As for wines, the new restaurant currently stocks about 250 by the glass and the wine list is now overseen by certified sommelier Heather Korte, formerly of the Mason Street Grill. Amidzich says he will keep adding wines he likes to the list, but doubts he will reach his previous level.

"I don't think I will live that long," he adds.



Pizza Man Mike Amidzich.

PHOTO: COURTESY

Fifty artists to participate in Shorewood's first plein art festival

By Anne Siegel

Contributing writer

Just like creating a beautiful garden, bringing a new art festival to life requires a lot of patience and nurturing, according to the organizers of Plein Air Shorewood, a three-day event that will bring more than 50 professional artists to the village beginning Sept. 19.

Some artists will "set up shop" near schools, parks, stores and residences. Others will locate in Shorewood's well-kept gardens. (Please note: Homeowners and businesses that are open to hosting the artists have signed a list. Artists won't be wandering through neighborhoods, trampling on anyone's prize azaleas.)

The art festival's opening night includes brats, beer and a live polka band at Hubbard Park Lodge. Food and drinks will be available for purchase, but all events are free and open to the public.

The festival's casual opening is only one of the unique features of this unconventional, first-ever event, which has attracted professional painters from across the Midwest. Nationally known Shorewood plein air artist Don Berg, who headed the artist selection committee, notes with pride that all 50 spots were filled more than two months prior to opening. Berg also runs a design firm in Shorewood.

Berg explains that "plein air," the French term for "in the open air," is one of the fastest-growing facets of the art world. And Wisconsin is the nation's No. 1 spot for plein air events. Second-ranked California doesn't even come close, Berg says. Wisconsin's largest and best-known plein air events are held annually in Door County and Cedarburg.

Shorewood carefully scrutinized those two events to determine what made them so suc-

cessful. "We realized right away that putting the artists first was going to be critical to our success," says Plein Air Shorewood committee member Jenny Heyden, a local freelance writer and artist. Because Heyden and Berg are artists themselves, they had valuable first-hand knowledge of artists' needs.

Turning Shorewood into a temporary art colony is more than just a way to attract visitors to the area for one weekend, says committee co-chair Patricia Algiers. "We want to demonstrate that Shorewood embraces the arts. There are a lot of creative people who live here, and I don't mean just artists. We have writers, musicians, poets and lots of entrepreneurs. We want to position ourselves as an art-friendly community."

Each artist participating in the festival will complete three canvases, regardless of the weather. The 150 paintings will be hung Saturday night in a temporary art gallery, designed by Patricia Algiers, in Shorewood's public library. A jury of painters and art historians will award prizes, and there will be a "public's choice" award as well. Then the paintings will be offered for sale to the public.

The temporary gallery will also serve as the festival's headquarters – the place where artists will register and the public can learn where they'll be painting.

Some of the Wisconsin artists participating in Plein Air Shorewood include James Hempel, Shelby Keefe, Tom Nachreiner and Johnna Papin. Keefe, a Shorewood resident, recently won the \$15,000 top prize for a work she created at a plein air festival in Frederick, Md. She's featured in a September cover story in the glossy Plein Air Magazine.

The festival's artists focus on a variety of subjects – cityscapes, lush floral landscapes, local landmarks and so on. Some will

undoubtedly be tempted to line up their canvases along Atwater Park, located on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan. But Berg says not to expect any two paintings, even paintings of the same subject, to be alike.

"Each artist will interpret the scene according to his/her own talents and perceptions," he says.

Between Sept. 19's meet-the-artists reception at Hubbard Park and the gala on Sept. 21, there will be a full schedule of cultural events. In an effort to offer something for everyone, the festival will feature live music, dancers and a fashion show at a Sept. 20 block party at Shorewood's Kensington Square (off Oakland Avenue). Local fashion designer Miranda K. Levy, a former contestant on TV's "Project Runway," says she's creating a white, canvas dress that artists will be invited to decorate.

The art festival received seed money from the Shorewood Foundation. Since then, many other local and national sponsors have jumped onboard, providing both cash and in-kind donations. Community groups will play an important role in handling some of the event's most important tasks, such as registering the artists when they arrive and setting up the Sept. 21 gala.

ON THE WEB

A list of events is available at the festival's website at pleinairshorewood.com.



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PHOTO: COURTESY

Shorewood artist Shelby Keefe works on a canvas in Frederick, Md. She took top prize at that festival and was profiled in Plein Air Magazine.



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UW-Madison alumna Jill Soloway says her Sundance Award-winning debut film is a tribute to sisterhood

Film

GREGG SHAPIRO

"Afternoon Delight," UW-Madison alumna Jill Soloway's feature film debut, is a delight any time of day. The film, which earned her the best director award at this year's Sundance Film Festival, follows a successful career as a theatrical producer and writer/producer for such television hits as "Grey's Anatomy," "Six Feet Under" and "The United States of Tara."

"Afternoon Delight" is the story of complacent-but-bored domestic goddess and mother Rachel (Kathryn Hahn, effortlessly stepping into a leading role). The primary features of Rachel's life are a shaky marriage to Jeff (Josh Radnor), unfulfilling therapy appointments with Lenore (Jane Lynch) and dull female friendships.

But she's transformed by a visit to a strip club. There, Rachel meets McKenna (Juno Temple in the best performance of her career). Rachel decides to make saving McKenna her mission – a decision that forever changes both women's lives.

The film "treads in some dangerous territory," Soloway says, in that the "idea of the sex worker in need of rescue is only a few steps away from the idea of a queer person in need of rehabilitation."

In the course of the film, "Rachel revolves through the poles of wanting to rescue McKenna, wanting to be McKenna and wanting to have sex with McKenna," Soloway says.

I spoke with Soloway about the film shortly before it opened in theaters this summer.

Gregg Shapiro: What does it mean to you to have won the directing award at Sundance for your first full-length feature?

Jill Soloway: For me, the victory feels like a victory for feminism in comedy. Simply to make a movie about real women and what

it means to be a woman today. It also has some deep dark stuff and some great sexy stuff and it achieves its goals as a comedy. To pull all that off – to me it feels like the meaning of the award for me.

I think it's fair to say that with "Afternoon Delight," you take your rightful place alongside female filmmakers such as Nicole Holofcener and Lisa Cholodenko.

Aside from the three of us all having "olo" in our names, we're all women, we're all Jewish women. I admire and love both of them. They are both amazing women. I met Lisa Cholodenko when she was a guest director on "Six Feet Under," and she's been incredibly supportive. They've both been incredibly supportive to me. There's a real network of women directors out here in Los Angeles (and) we're always reaching a hand out to each other.

How does working on a feature film compare with the cable series work you've done?

I honestly, at this point, am starting to feel like all content is content. I'm getting into the business of original content. I'm writing a pilot for Amazon. (The pilot, titled "Transparent," is for a proposed series starring Jeffrey Tambor of "Arrested Development" as a transgender parent). I look at something like "Top of the Lake," where at Sundance a lot of the filmmakers were going, "How does Jane Campion have a six-hour movie?" Then we get home and (find out) it's her new TV series. Then you combine that with how a lot of filmmakers are trying to figure out how to get to their audiences. The way independent film is making it to audiences is through iTunes, through Netflix. So if a large percentage of the content is ultimately being received through your home television or home computer, and independent film is alive and well for those who like to go see independent films, to me there really isn't that big of a difference.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Juno Temple and Kathryn Hahn in a scene from "Afternoon Delight."

How much of Jill is in Rachel?

There's a lot of me in her. I never have brought a stripper home. But I definitely have gotten confused during lap dances where I thought that the stripper wanted me to get her out of there (laughs). I've gotten a couple of lap dances in my life and have often had that feeling where, "Wow, we have a special connection. I see her unlike any of these other people in here see her."

Sisterhood is powerful.

Sisterhood is powerful, exactly. Sisterhood is sexual – that should be the tagline (laughs).

Out actress Jane Lynch plays lesbian therapist Lenore in the film. You have consistently included queer characters in your work.

I feel like I come from a queer family. I feel like I am a queer artist, like I've always been sort of queer-adjacent. This movie was workshopped at a queer artists' retreat called Radar LAB run by Michelle Tea from San Francisco, who is an inspiration to me. McKenna was inspired by a woman named Lorelei Lee that I met at that artists' retreat. Antonia Crane is a sex worker that I met

while I was performing in Michelle Tea's Sister Spit (troupe). So sex workers, feminism, queer art are all alive in the same space for me. In some ways, I feel like it's my work to be a translator between the queer world and the straight world.

"Afternoon Delight" also has a strong Jewish quotient. How were you raised?

We were raised culturally Jewish, but not in any way specifically religious or spiritual. (Now) I'm not really an observant Jew. I'm kind of interested in reinventing Jewish culture a little bit and doing some sort of community organizing with some sort of Jewy reinventy groups. But, no, I had bacon this morning (laughs).

As a graduate of UW-Madison, do you have fond memories of your time there?

Oh, yeah! There's a whole (University of) Wisconsin thing in the movie. We're going to be at UW-Madison in November. My cinematographer (Jim Frohna), went to the University of Wisconsin-Madison and Milwaukee. There's a whole Wisconsin backstory.

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Fashion

BRANDON MILLER

Public Museum hosts show by local 'Project Runway' contestant

Ever since Heidi Klum told him auf wiedersehen, former "Project Runway" contestant Timothy Westbrook has been in his Milwaukee studio preparing for his comeback fall fashion show. Titled "Paleontology of a Woman," the show opens Sept. 21 at the Milwaukee Public Museum.

Westbrook, whose aesthetic vision draws inspiration from nature, says he considers himself a fiber artist more than a fashion designer – and an environmental artist first and foremost. He's notorious for using repurposed and untraditional material – some of

it might even be considered garbage – in creating his garments. This tendency will be prominently on display in "Paleontology of a Woman," he says.

In fact, the 24 pieces in his Milwaukee Public Museum exhibit suggest alternative waste-management ideas. For example, some of his work is created from woven plastic bags. Westbrook hopes to demonstrate that plastic bags can be woven into vests and dresses of uniquely beautiful textures rather than tossed out to languish for centuries in landfills or add to the Texas-sized garbage island that's created a dead zone in the Pacific Ocean.

Other materials included in the show are bed sheets, vintage wedding gowns, curtains, discarded fabrics and old wire hangers transformed into masks inspired by Broadway's "The Lion King." Some of the materials Westbrook uses are re-purposed fabrics from his time on "Project Runway."

Westbrook's fans say he has an uncanny ability to transform such "garbage" into eloquent, whimsical Victorian-styled dresses. Exhibit attendees can expect to see classy gowns, tailcoats and mosaic shoes decorated with aluminum hole-punched cans.

Other participants in "Paleontology of a Woman" are four jewelry designers, a clothing designer, a mask sculptor, and a composer providing dinosaur-themed music from "Fan-

tasia" and "Jurassic Park." Local drag queen Trixie Mattel acts both as a model and a makeup artist.

In addition to fashion, Westbrook's exhibit will feature a mix of theater, performance art and environmental information. Guest speakers will talk about sustainability and conservation.

Westbrook says he and fellow "Project Runway" Milwaukee designer Miranda Levy (featured in WiG's Aug. 22 issue) have put their infamous on-screen drama behind them. Not only have they mended their split seam, he says, but Levy plans to attend the show's reception at the Hilton Milwaukee City Center. Westbrook hopes other celebrities, including Barbara Batts from "Fashion Star," will be there to support him.

Westbrook moved to Milwaukee when he was invited to become one of the Pfister Hotel's 2012 artists in-residence after graduating from Syracuse University. At 23, he was the youngest, first out-of-state and non-painting artist to be accepted into the program.

Westbrook says he found Milwaukee a more nurturing place to enter the fashion scene than New York City. Before heading off to season 12 of "Project Runway," he set up a studio space in the Shops of Grand Avenue.

At "Timothy Westbrook Studio," the artist takes his eco-friendly ethos so far that he works with the lights off. At the moment,



PHOTO: YOUTUBE

Timothy Westbrook on "Project Runway"

he operates only two appliances that use electrical power – his computer and his iron. He says he's looking into alternative energy sources to power them.

Westbrook's primary instruments include old-fashion looms and his inseparable non-electric treadle sewing machine. He and his interns plan to transport his pieces to the museum by bicycle to underscore Westbrook's commitment to the show's low-impact theme.

Westbrook's show is meant to coincide with the kick-off event for the Fashion Week MKE Initiative, which starts Sept. 23.

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Jillette Johnson releases first full-length album

Music

GREGG SHAPIRO

"Water in a Whale," Jillette Johnson's full-length debut album, is the kind of disc that fans of female singer-songwriters anxiously anticipate and will likely embrace eagerly. Johnson, an assured and mature songwriter and performer at 23, sets the tone with the single "Cameron," one of the most powerful statements made by a straight performer to the LGBT community since Patty Griffin's "Tony." About a trans kid, "Cameron" is insightful, uplifting and deserves to be a hit.

Johnson wisely keeps the music on the disc varied, from the explosive opener "Torpedo" and the stormy "Last Bus Out" to the sexually provocative "Pauvre Couer." There also is a "stripped" version of "Cameron" and a pair of B-sides ("17" and

"Box of Crayons") to provide listeners with the full scope of Johnson's abilities.

I spoke with Johnson, who is on tour in support of "Water in a Whale," shortly before the disc's release.

Gregg Shapiro: One of the first things I noticed about your live show is you're a great storyteller.

Jillette Johnson: It took me a while to cultivate that. I think I'm constantly growing with it. When I used to play shows, I was terrified about speaking between songs. It was so obvious when I was losing the audience and it scared the shit out of me. So I made a conscious effort to try and pretend like I was talking to my family and friends and breathe and take my time and not assume that people didn't care. That's never the right way to start out. I now feel that it's a hugely important part of my show because it allows people to see who I am and to

see that these songs come from me.

I also noticed several queer audience members responding to your performance, including your song "Cameron." Do you have an LGBT following?

Yes. I'm starting to see that happen and it's really exciting. I wrote that song because I have a friend who experienced that journey. I was compelled to talk about it. I'm not saying that I'm an expert in the field, but I know, in a different way, how it feels to be alien in your own skin. I love that people are rallying around it and that it speaks to people in a real way. The last thing I wanted was to write a song about someone else's story and have people tell me it's false.

Is that song related to your involvement with the anti-bullying organization Hey UGLY - Unique Gifted

Lovable You?

It does. I learned about Hey UGLY through the person on whom "Cameron" is based. That program has helped this kid quite a lot. I started doing more research and realized how amazing it is as an organization.

There is a long tradition of piano-playing female singer-songwriters from Joni Mitchell to Regina Spektor. Who do you consider your influences?

Regina is certainly the most current. But Joni Mitchell and Carole King, from the beginning, were women I really admired and never stopped listening to. The thing that I love about their music is it's wso full of soul and it's so honest. I am definitely lucky to be able to look at this legacy of powerful and soulful women.

You told a funny story about talking

to straight men who wouldn't think twice about having sex with Ryan Gosling. Is that a comment on how far the culture has evolved?

I think so. I definitely have met people my age who are still pretty terrified of their own sexuality and that projects hate, unfortunately. But I think that slowly but surely we're starting to live in a world where people are comfortable enough to say what they really are. So it's OK to say that you think a man is attractive if you're straight man. I think that's such a breath of fresh air.

What do you think Ryan Gosling would think of that?

I think he would agree. He seems the most comfortable in his own skin. I can imagine that he would not have any issues.

What are you most looking forward to



ON STAGE
Jillette Johnson performs at The Frequency, 121 W. Main St., in Madison on Sept. 24. Call 608-819-8777 or visit madisonfrequency-hub.com.

about the release of "Water in a Whale"?

I think that it's going to allow me to be an artist that is taken more seriously. I think it's going to make a big impact on where I am in my career. Also, I get to have my first album officially out, I can say that.

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