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April's Fool Day is an occasion to remember that truth is often much stranger than fiction.



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With a new baby, a move to Paris and her first time directing, Natalie Portman charts a new course.

News with a twist



WIGWAG

By Lisa Neff, Louis Weisberg & Matthew Reddin

POO-POOING ARREST

A Pennsylvania man in Wilkes-Barre thought he could ward off an arrest for public drunkenness by making himself untouchable. As police approached the apparently intoxicated man, he dropped to the ground and rolled around in dog waste. He then told police they couldn't arrest him covered in feces. But they did.

WILD TURKEY TROUBLE

In 2013 in Frankfort, Kentucky, someone made off with 195 bottles of 20-year-old Pappy Van Winkle's Family Reserve bourbon and 27 bottles of 13-year-old Van Winkle rye. Perhaps the \$26,000 worth of liquor has run out? Earlier in March, Kentucky authorities reported the theft of five barrels of Wild Turkey bourbon stolen from a distillery in Lawrenceburg. Each barrel was

valued at \$6,000. A tip led to the recovery of the barrels and the arrest of a man also in possession of 25 firearms and two silencers.

SURGICAL SUCCESS

A surgical team in Stellenbosch, South Africa, announced in mid-March the success of a penis transplant. The operation had lasted nine hours in December and doctors are predicting the 21-year-old patient will have full use of the transplanted organ in two years. The patient had his penis amputated several years ago following complications from a circumcision. An announcement said finding a donor was a major challenge.

LABELED SEXIST

Indonesian clothing company Salvo Sports is apologizing for a label stitched into shirts for Pusamania Bornea, an Indonesian sports team.

The label for clothing care said, "Washing instructions: Give this jersey to your woman. It's her job."

BREWER HYGIENE

An outbreak of pink eye had Milwaukee Brewers shunning high-fives and avoiding fist bumps, unless wearing batting gloves. The AP reported that catcher Jonathan Lucroy and pitching coach Rick Kranitz, among others, caught the highly contagious infection. The players were instructed to tap elbows instead.

AT LEAST HE'S REGULAR

Akron, Ohio, police are searching for someone they said has defecated on 19 parked cars in driveways. The suspect has been striking before dawn. A resident recently caught the suspect on film.

WHAT HAPPENS IN WINNEBAGO ...

An appeals court says a man was properly convicted of videotaping a sexual encounter with a naked prostitute. A jury in Winnebago County convicted Charles Adams in 2012 of illegally capturing an image of nudity. He was sentenced to five years and six months in prison. Adams argued the prostitute had no expectation of privacy and he needed the video to defend himself in case she overdosed on drugs or accused him of attacking her.

THINK WHERE IT'S BEEN ...

An inmate in New York is accused of hiding oxycodone pills in his rectum and selling them to other inmates at his jail. Correction officers at the Rockland County jail found about 50 pills after searching Bryan Lora and his cell.

LOWER HER PAY

Religious-right activist Phyllis Schlafly says that the current pay gap between men and women isn't wide enough and that's hurting marriage. In an op-ed published by the *Christian Post*, Schlafly maintained that increasing the pay gap would help women find suitable husbands, because women prefer to have higher-earning partners, while men prefer to be the higher-earning partner in a relationship.

THE WAY SHE WAS

Barbra Streisand's unusual spelling of her name became popular in the 1960s, when it peaked at No. 511 on the list of most popular names for baby girls. But Barbra is about to vanish. Fewer than five babies got the name last year, according to the Social Security administration.


LOOKING TO THE SKY FOR HELP

Televangelist Creflo Dollar has asked 200,000 followers to donate \$300 apiece so he can buy a luxury jet to preach worldwide. The jet that the reverend is eyeing retails for about \$65 million.

SON OF A PREACHER MAN

The son of Alabama's chief justice — who has made national headlines recently for his efforts to block same-sex marriage in the state — was arrested on drug charges. Court records show 24-year-old Caleb Moore, the son of Chief Justice Roy Moore, was arrested March 15 and charged with felony possession of a controlled substance and misdemeanor possession of marijuana. And not for the first time.

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No foolin' *Actual news can be stranger than fiction*

Compiled by Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The Secret Service wants millions of dollars to build another White House.

The highest elevation in Florida Gov. Rick Scott's state is just 345 feet above sea level, but state employees can't refer to "climate change."

The U.S. military says elephants might be better at detecting explosives than dogs.

OK, now, are you double-checking the calendar? Wondering if WiG is feeding you April Fools Day fodder? But no, we're not putting you on. Those stories are for real.

Read on through our second annual celebration of silly, strange, comical and confounding stories that are true.



READY, OR NOT

The Federal Emergency Management Agency recently issued new rules requiring state and local governments to address concerns related to climate change when planning for disasters. That may be difficult in Florida, where Republican Gov. Rick Scott's administration allegedly barred the use of the words "climate change" and "global warming."

Watchdog and environmental groups are calling for an investigation after former government employees say they were forbidden from using the terms in one of the states most at risk from rising seas and stronger storms.

Scott said the allegations are false. But the ex-employees are sticking with their claims.

In a recent speech, Secretary of State John Kerry weighed in on the matter. "Now folks, we literally do not have the time to waste debating whether we can say 'climate change,'" he said. "Because no matter how much people want to bury their heads in the sand, it will not alter the fact that 97 percent of peer-reviewed climate studies confirm that climate change is happening and that human activity is largely responsible."

FLASH GAMES

About 19,000 people recently signed up on a Facebook event page to play hide-and-seek at an Ikea in Amsterdam. And another 13,000 signed up to play at a store in Utrecht.

But the Swedish retailer says no more fun and games in its model kitchens, living rooms and bedrooms. The numbers are out of hand. Ikea spokeswoman Martina Smedberg said the company contacted the organizers of the games via social media and "humbly asked them to have their hide-and-seek games somewhere else."

RED PLATE SPECIAL

Did you hear the one about people writing \$1,000 checks to have lunch at the Capitol Hill Club in Washington, D.C., with U.S. Rep. Glen Grothman of Wisconsin. It's true. A thousand dollars. Must be some menu, because it certainly isn't the personality, wit and charm of the gaffe-prone, lunatic-fringe Grothman.

DAMAGING DOMAIN

Looking for a domain name to really make an online statement? The Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers has approved for sale .SUCKS.

But don't expect to get chickfila.sucks for a song. Vox Populi Registry owns exclusive rights to sell .SUCKS and set premium pricing levels — \$300-\$2,500, depending on the name.

Analysts said the first buyers likely would be businesses seeking to protect their brand identities.

Still, we know of one newspaper publisher who'd spend his savings — and maybe his husband's savings — to buy scottwalker.sucks.

BINGE-WATCHING BIDDING?

eBay is up-classing its online auction offerings. On April 1, bidders will be able to get online — live.ebay.com — to watch livestreams from Sotheby's and participate in auctions, with the exception of major sales of certain art.

First up on the calendar, an auction of photographs, followed by an auction of New York-themed art and then European silver.

An announcement on the site says live-action bidding is quick and lively — each item is for sale for about 2 minutes. That's going, going, gone.

PRINCELY TUNES

Last year on April Fools Day, Bloodshot Records conned consumers into believing it had lined up 21 artists for a rough and rugged roots-take on Prince tunes. Well, Bloodshot apparently misjudged fans, who got really pissed off because they really wanted those Prince covers.

So, this time around, Bloodshot announced the release of Prince covers by Lydia Loveless and Cory Branan and — and then really released the tunes. Loveless covers "I Would Die 4 U" and Branan covers "Under the Cherry Moon."

BATHROOM BIRTH

Isn't there a saying about a baby and bathwater?

An Iowa woman says she stepped into her shower and started to feel stomach pains. A few minutes later, she stepped out of the shower, with a baby, who is named "Miracle," weighing in at 6 pounds, 8 ounces.

The 24-year-old woman knew she was pregnant but says she must have misunderstood a hospital worker during a check up. She thought that she was "12 weeks pregnant," but she must have been told she had 12 weeks left.

CLEANUP IN THE WOMEN'S

A meth suppression team was called to a Wal-Mart near Muncie, Indiana, after an employee at the discount store discovered a mobile meth lab in the women's restroom. The employee saw a suspicious man enter the bathroom with a backpack but leave without the bag. Two people face charges of manufacturing meth, criminal recklessness and dumping controlled substance waste.

The *Muncie Star Press*, which first reported the story, followed up with a report of other mobile meth-lab busts: Missouri authorities arrested a man for a meth lab on his motorcycle. A man in Florida was arrested for allegedly carrying a mobile meth lab in his pant legs. A woman was arrested after the Louisiana casino where she was cooking meth caught fire. Three people were arrested at an Alabama campsite for manufacturing meth in their tent. And a 64-year-old man was arrested in Fresno, California, for cooking and selling meth from his room at a retirement home.

BROTHERLY LOVE

A Pennsylvania man was due in court late this month after an arrest for allegedly assaulting his brother. State police said the guy threw a vanity license plate at his older

brother. The blue-and-gold plate read, "You've got a friend in JESUS," and had a "John 15: 13-15" sticker, which refers to a passage in the Bible rather than an expiration date for the plate. The passage begins, "Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."

DROOPY DRAWERS, DOPEY LAW

The police chief in Opelousas, Louisiana, recently asked his city council to consider an ordinance prohibiting people from wearing saggy pants. The proposed ordinance, modeled on a measure adopted in another Louisiana community, states, "Pants worn by any person, regardless of age, should be size appropriate and secured at the waist to prevent the pants from falling more than 3 inches below the hips (crest of ilium)."

The ACLU says such a law would be unconstitutional — clothing is a form of expression.

Still, city officials continue to discuss a possible ban, as well as extending the prohibition to apply to "daisy dukes." Now, why do we think more cops would be willing to take a measurement of short shorts than sagging pants?



STRONG SNIFFER

Ringling Brothers Circus says it has plans to retire its circus elephants by 2018. Is it possible the U.S. military has plans for them?

New research that involved the U.S. military as a partner revealed that elephants excel at identifying explosives by smell. They also remember training longer than dogs.

The research took place at a game reserve in South Africa, where elephants learned to raise a front leg when they sniffed out TNT.

Researchers conducted the experiments after learning that elephants in Angola intentionally avoided areas that contained land mines.

THOU SHALT NOT REMOVE

A federal judge is allowing a privately funded Ten Commandments monument to remain at the Oklahoma Capitol. The granite monument, which is about 6 feet tall, was approved by the GOP-controlled Legislature in 2012. The original monument was destroyed last October, when a car drove across the Capitol lawn, but a replica has since been installed.

American Atheists Inc. sued to remove the monument, alleging the government was sanctioning a specific religion and violating the First Amendment.

The state now faces petitions from various groups — an animal rights group, a Hindu leader, a satanic association and the satirical Church of the Flying Spaghetti Monster —

WEIRD next page

WEIRD from prior page
to erect Capitol monuments.

INCARCERATED ELECTORATE

Anyone old enough to remember the election of 2000 — hanging chads, Katherine Harris, theft of the presidency — won't be surprised. The ACLU recently filed a federal lawsuit against Jefferson County, Florida, which counted the 1,157 inmates incarcerated at a local state prison in its redistricting. The thing is, Florida inmates can't vote. In fact, in Florida they'll have to fight for voting rights even after their release from prison. With more than 100,000 state inmates, the ACLU is now trying to determine the degree of prison-based gerrymandering in Florida.

WHITE HOUSE IN THE 'BURBS

The Secret Service, under scrutiny for security breaches and high-profile gaffes, is asking Congress to appropriate \$8 million to build a replica of the White House for training



purposes. The second White House — with East and West wings, the grounds and guard booths — would be built at the Secret Service training site in Beltsville, Maryland, about 20 miles from 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

Secret Service Director Joseph P. Clancy told the House Appropriations Committee that Secret Service agents

currently train in a parking lot. "We don't have the bushes, we don't have the fountains, we don't get a realistic look at the White House," he complained.

Now, wouldn't it be fun to elect the fake president of the fake White House?

HOLY ROLLERS

The Life Center church in Panama City Beach, Florida, has lost its local tax-exempt status for hosting naked paint parties and slumber parties featuring "sexist ladies on the beach" during a weeklong celebration dubbed "Amnesia: The Tabernacle."

The local sheriff called the church activity a "blatant slap in the face" to taxpayers. And the local property appraiser was bothered by the church's selling of novelty T-shirts, the collection of donations at the door and signage like, "I hate being sober."

GREAT GOTCHAS

Since the late 1990s, Hoaxes.org has monitored April Fools Day and collected the best hoaxes for its archives.

Hoaxes.org's top five April Fools Day pranks:

1. The Swiss Spaghetti Harvest. On April 1, 1957, the BBC's *Panorama* reported that due to a mild winter and the virtual elimination of the spaghetti weevil, Swiss farmers were seeing a big spaghetti crop. The report included video of people pulling spaghetti noodles from trees. The BBC heard from viewers who wanted to know how they could grow their own spaghetti trees.

2. Sidd Finch. The April 1985 issue of *Sports Illustrated* contained a story about a rookie pitcher named Sidd Finch who planned to play for the Mets. He could throw a baseball at 168 mph and had pinpoint accuracy. But, *SI* said, Finch had never played baseball. He learned to pitch in a Tibetan monastery. What clue did *SI* give to readers that the story was fake? The first letter of each word in the subhead spelled "Happy April Fools Day — Ah Fib."

3. Instant Color TV. On April 1, 1962, Sweden's only TV channel, which broadcast in black-and-white, aired a news report announcing that new technology made it possible for people to easily convert their

sets to display color reception. Viewers were instructed to tape nylon stockings over their televisions and then sit a certain distance from the box, possibly with their heads at a tilt. Hoaxes.org said Swedes today still talk about houses being ransacked in search of hosiery.

4. The Taco Liberty Bell. On April 1, 1996, Taco Bell purchased full-page ads in six major newspapers and announced it was the new owner of the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia. The bell, the company said, would be renamed the "Taco Liberty Bell." White House press secretary Mike McCurry joined in the prank when he was asked about the sale. He said the Lincoln

Memorial also was sold and was renamed the "Ford Lincoln Mercury Memorial."

5. San Serriffe. On April 1, 1977, *The Guardian* newspaper published a seven-page special section about San Serriffe, a small republic in the Indian Ocean that consists of several islands shaped like semi-colons. The capital was identified as Bodoni and the republic was governed by a Gen. Pica. Readers wanted to know all about the vacation destination.

— Lisa Neff

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Slippery slope: Budget imperils natural resources

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

Despite Wisconsin's deep partisan divide, there's one area of policy on which the state's Republicans and Democrats emphatically agree: conservation.

Maintaining the state's pristine, spectacular natural resources is that rare goal that rises above political wrangling. A bipartisan statewide poll released on March 18 by the Nature Conservancy, an environmental protection group, showed that Wisconsinites of both parties overwhelmingly support continuing state funding for land, water and wildlife conservation. Seventy-six percent of Republicans, 88 percent of independents and 97 percent of Democrats said the state should continue making such investments.

The findings create something of a dilemma for the state's Republican leaders. They are faced with a budget presented by Gov. Scott Walker that's anything but supportive of Wisconsin's great outdoors.

Walker already has cut current funding for the state's bipartisan Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund, a public land acquisition and access program that reserves woodland, wetlands and shorelines for the public. His proposed biennial budget goes even farther, calling for the stewardship program to be suspended for 13 years.

The cut represents less than 0.5 percent of Wisconsin's General Purpose Revenue expenditures — an amount smaller than the cost of a fishing license or state park sticker for every resident in the state.

"Nearly 9 in 10 Wisconsin voters believe that, even when the budget is tight, the state should continue to invest in protecting Wisconsin's land, water and wildlife," said Lori Weigel from Public Opinion Strategies, which conducted the survey on behalf of the conservancy. "Most voters also said that one of the best things state government does is protect Wisconsin's natural areas, outdoor recreation and history in state parks and other public lands."

'TAKING THE PUBLIC OUT'

Given Walker's policy inclinations, conservationists fear that suspending public land acquisition puts the state on a slippery slope that will lead to the sale of priceless wilderness and green spaces. The state's park lovers interpret other items in the budget as a move toward privatization of the system, an approach that's been tried — and has failed — in other states.

In his budget bill, Walker proposes cutting all general purpose tax funding of the park budgets, which currently amounts to \$4.6 million. The governor apparently wants either to force the system to become self-supporting or to privatize its management, which would turn the parks and their concessions — gift shops, firewood sales, etc. — over to for-profit businesses, say critics of the cut.

"Self-sufficiency is a noble cause, but



PHOTO: TRAVEL WISCONSIN

The dunes at Kohler-Andrae State Park.

it cannot be accomplished in the present year," wrote Bill Zager, president of the Friends of Wisconsin State Parks, in a letter to supporters. The proposed cut, he said, would prevent the parks from functioning at a level that users expect, even with the huge network of volunteers who have helped the parks survive prior budget cuts.

The parks once received 50 percent of their support from the state, but that amount has already declined to 21 percent, according to the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters.

"The parks are owned by the state's taxpayers. You can't just say that you don't want to take care of them," Zager said. Members of FWSP groups already pitch in to help with the costs. The groups have raised \$540,000 and provided nearly 187,000 volunteer hours to help maintain the parks.

Zager said his group is in favor of accepting corporate donations, which are already helping to pay for park improvements. "But there is not a mechanism in place to make (corporate donations) work for day-to-day operating costs at this time," he pointed out in his letter.

Like other groups, his is opposed to selling naming rights of state lands to corporate sponsors.

To help make up for the loss of state funding, the proposed budget would increase fees for an annual state park pass from \$25 to \$28 and raise camping fees by \$2 per night. Visitors would have to pay an additional fee of \$9.70 just to make reservations. While that might not seem like much, it would deter poorer families from

visiting the parks and reduce the amount of money that visitors spend at local businesses.

Handing the parks over to private management would raise fees further, since companies are structured to make profits.

"The park system is really there for the average Wisconsinite who doesn't have the ability to buy lakefront property," said Steve Hiniker, executive director of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin. "The parks provide an opportunity for the people to enjoy nature. Walker really is creating a state for the elite ... where the rich have things and the rest of us don't."

Another controversial item in Walker's budget calls for turning the Department of Natural Resources into an advisory board with no decision-making authority. That role would be shifted to Walker's administration.

Conservationists are not happy about the proposal. Walker's record has stirred intense anger among environmentalists. He eased the mine permitting process after Gogebic Taconite made a \$700,000 donation to Wisconsin Club for Growth, which benefits state Republicans, and he's suing President Barack Obama's administration over new regulations limiting carbon dioxide emissions from new and existing power plants.

"There's a lot of outrage," Hiniker said. "Walker is taking the public out of the management of state resources. Wisconsin's land management was always built on the idea that we'd have public input and a public voice to make sure that politics didn't get in the way of managing the parks in the best interest of the environment.

Management of our resources used to be beyond politics. Now we have a management style that allows all kinds of political issues to trump the people's interests."

ANTI-SCIENCE PURGES

An additional item in Walker's budget that is causing anger calls for the elimination of 66 positions from the DNR — one-quarter of them held by scientists whose research and knowledge are essential to properly managing the state's wildlife and natural resources, from bobcat populations to old growth forests.

Critics question whether Walker's attack on the DNR — and its scientists in particular — is payback for the agency's work on climate change, which state Republicans deny is occurring, as well as for the limits DNR officials have set on hunting and their opposition to mining operations that use caustic chemicals near sensitive wetlands and sources of drinking water.

In 2013, Walker signed the Koch brothers "no climate change action" pledge, according to Jim Rowen's blog *The Political Environment*. When Walker appointed real estate developer Cathy Stepp to head the DNR, he openly crowed that she was tapped because he wanted someone with "a chamber of commerce mentality," Rowen wrote.

Critics contend that Walker doesn't want science getting in the way of profits for his cronies. Whatever the motivation, it's impossible to detangle science from environmental management.

"Any real natural resources protection is based on sound science," Amber Meyer

PARKS next page

PARKS from prior page

Smith, director of programs and government relations for Clean Wisconsin, told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. "The more science you remove from the process, the more politics you add."

Meyer Smith told the *Journal Sentinel* that the science cuts to the DNR and Walker's proposed \$300 million budget slash to the University of Wisconsin system share a troubling characteristic — hostility toward intellectual work.

Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters executive director Kerry Schumann holds out hope that Walker's cuts to conservation and the park system can yet be avoided. She's heard criticism of Walker's plan from Republican and Democratic lawmakers alike. "People like (Assembly Speaker) Robin Vos are being very vocal in opposing this," she said.

"Right now, even money that has already been approved and allocated for land purchases isn't being spent," Schumann said. "They're being held up even though the money is there. First (Walker) cut funding to the stewardship program, then didn't make the land purchases and now there's a complete freeze. There's this slippery slope that makes you wonder where it's all headed."

Hiniker is less optimistic that the governor can be persuaded to change his stance.

"For one month, 100,000 people were chanting outside the Capitol and it didn't change a damn thing," Hiniker said. "Walker has shown that he's immune to protests."

PARKS' ECONOMIC ROLE

A majority of those surveyed said that protecting Wisconsin's natural resources is important to a healthy economy, and the numbers agree. The stewardship program protects many of the natural resources on which Wisconsin's \$13 billion tourism industry, \$22 billion forestry industry and \$4 billion hunting and fishing industry depend, according to WLCV. Recreation



PHOTO: TRAVEL WISCONSIN

Devil's Lake State Park.

also is high on the list of amenities that attract businesses to the state.

Park visitors help support rural economies that have few other ways to generate revenue.

"When a family goes to a state park, they spend an average of \$230 on the businesses around the park," Schumann said. The revenue is dependable and steadily growing. Visits to state parks have risen 12 percent since 2002, even as funding for the parks has declined.

The state's park system includes 46 state parks, 14 state trails, four recreational areas, eight state forests and two national scenic trails. In addition to the tourists who visit Wisconsin's scenic wonders, the state is home to an enthusiastic population of hikers, campers, backpack-

ers, snowmobilers, kayakers, boaters, rock climbers, hunters, anglers, cross-country skiers, birdwatchers, picnickers and others who enjoy outdoor recreation — or just the peace of communing with nature.

Wisconsin's parks and green spaces are as essential to the state's identity as beer and cheese. Indeed, the very name of Wisconsin's land stewardship fund reflects the state's deeply rooted bipartisan ties to conservation. Former Democratic Gov. Gaylord Nelson, the founder of Earth Day, and Republican Gov. Warren Knowles were its inspiration.

Wisconsin has produced several important conservationists. In addition to Nelson and Knowles, the list of Wisconsin conservationists includes the legendary John Muir, Aldo Leopold, Nina Leopold

Bradley and Hilary "Sparky" Waukau, a member of the Menomonee Nation who helped save the northern part of Wisconsin from becoming a nuclear waste dump. Perhaps those historical figures helped to establish the outdoorsy culture that the Nature Conservancy's survey found among state residents.

But the Walker budget rejects this tradition.

"When it comes to conservation, this budget is absolutely terrible," Schumann said.

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Backlash against ex-gay therapy

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Advocates for LGBT youth succeeded in March in thwarting a campaign in Oklahoma to give statutory protection to those who practice so-called "ex-gay" therapy on minors.

No major medical or mental health associations endorse the therapy, which is dangerous and characterized by some leading health professionals as child abuse.

Republican state Rep. Sally Kern introduced the Oklahoma bill, intending to legitimize conversion therapy and provide state sanction for the practice denounced by the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association. Kern's bill was the first of its kind and a direct response to the movement to outlaw "ex-gay" therapy for minors in other states.

"It's not often that we can say defeating a piece of legislation actually saved lives, but with HB 1598, that is exactly what happened," said Troy Stevenson, executive director of Freedom Oklahoma, a statewide LGBT civil rights group.

The bill died without reaching a vote in the House.

Marty Rouse, national field director for the Human Rights Campaign, said, "Stopping this bill was an incredibly important victory for LGBT youth in Oklahoma. So-called 'conversion therapy' uses fear and shame, telling young people that the only way to find love or acceptance is to change the very nature of why they

#BORNPERFECT

The National Center for Lesbian Rights based in San Francisco is campaigning to end conversion therapy — so-called "ex-gay" therapy — with a strategy that includes advancing legislation and public education.

The campaign is called #BornPerfect. To get involved, go online to nclrights.org. — Lisa Neff

are. Psychological abuse has no place in therapy, no matter the intention."

HRC and the National Center for Lesbian Rights are working with state LGBT civil rights groups to advance legislation banning "ex-gay" therapy for minors. California was the first state to enact such legislation, followed by New Jersey and the District of Columbia, where a ban went into effect this year.

This year, efforts to pass legislation against "ex-gay" therapy are underway in the states surrounding Wisconsin — Iowa, Minnesota and Illinois — and also Virginia, Colorado and Texas.

"Time and again we see the psychological wreckage of so-called conversion therapy and it has to stop," said Chuck Smith of the statewide group Equality Texas. "Even one-time champions of this dangerous technique have changed their minds as the evidence piles up that such 'therapy' doesn't work and, worse, is dangerous."

Anti-labor bills spring up in state legislatures



PHOTO: BRUCERAUNER.COM

Illinois Republican Gov. Bruce Rauner is attempting to eliminate fees paid to unions by workers who choose not to join. He's instructed state agencies to divert money from non-union employee paychecks away from organized labor until courts settle the issue.

From WiG and AP reports

It's not just Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker. Taking their cue from conservative, corporate-backed anti-labor groups, Republican lawmakers in statehouses across the country are working to weaken organized labor, sometimes with efforts that directly shrink union membership.

The Republican wave in the November 2014 elections left many unions vulnerable.

Walker's signature on a "right-to-work" law makes Wisconsin the 25th state to ban contracts that require all workers to pay union dues. Both he and Michigan Gov. Rick Snyder, who signed a "right-to-work" law in 2012, won re-election in November.

Now, nearly 800 union-related bills have been proposed in statehouses, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

In West Virginia, a union PAC spent \$1.4 million trying to keep the statehouse in Democratic hands but couldn't reverse the trend turning the state red. Now Republicans, in control of the state Legislature for the first time since 1931, are pushing measures to expand non-union charter schools and scale back requirements that public projects pay higher, union-scale wages.

Elsewhere:

- A "right-to-work" bill passed the lower house of the Missouri Legislature.
- Indiana moved to eliminate requiring union-level wages on public projects.
- Nevada is considering legislation that would let local governments dissolve collective bargaining agreements in times

of economic hardship.

• Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner signed an order prohibiting government unions from automatically collecting dues from nonmembers.

Even local governments are acting. Several Kentucky counties are implementing "right-to-work" measures even though the state, with its House still controlled by Democrats, does not have such a law.

The proposals' sponsors say they want to save taxpayers money and create jobs.

In the Rust Belt, Republicans hope such laws will curry favor with whiter and older populations in presidential elections to counter the loss of states with younger and more diverse populations in Southern and Western states.

Much of the anti-labor legislation circulating in the states is modeled on draft bills offered by groups such as the American Legislative Exchange Council.

The Center for Media and Democracy, in an analysis released earlier in March, demonstrated that Wisconsin's "right-to-work" legislation borrows almost word-for-word from ALEC's anti-union model measure. So did a measure that was defeated in New Hampshire. And Missouri's "right-to-work" bill, which Gov. Jay Nixon has vowed to veto, borrows from ALEC's model. Meanwhile, "right-to-work" advocates in other states — New Mexico, West Virginia, Montana and Colorado — have ties to ALEC, as do the strategists behind the county-by-county campaign in Kentucky.



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Kenosha team lauded after standing up for bullied cheerleader



PHOTO: AP PHOTO/KEVIN POIRIER
Alyssa Smith adjusts Desiree Andrews' hair as they cheer for the seventh-grade basketball team at Kenosha's Lincoln Elementary School on March 9.

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

Kenosha's Common Council on March 16 honored several middle-school basketball players for coming to the defense of a cheerleader who has Down syndrome during a game at Lincoln Middle School.

After hearing mean-spirited comments directed at cheerleader Desiree Andrews coming from the stands, three players confronted the opposing team's fans. Seventh-graders Chase Vazquez, Scooter Terrien and Miles Rodriguez approached the bullies and warned them to stop ridiculing Desiree, whose nickname is "D." The entire team stood behind them.

News media around the globe reported the incident, which provided a welcome contrast to the tragic endings that too often accompany bullying stories. Desiree's father Cliff Andrews told the *Kenosha News* that his phone rang "nonstop" after the story went viral, with calls from individuals, as well as from talk shows and news outlets. He said Desiree was "on cloud nine" from all the attention, but he added that the story is really about the boys taking a stand against bullying.

Lincoln Middle School principal Star Daley said that people had been calling the school and sending letters of congratulations.

The Kenosha Common Council publicly thanked the basketball team and presented a special video message to Desiree and the team from the actress who plays Becky, a cheerleader with Down syndrome, on the TV show *Glee*. Desiree told *WiG* that she got the idea of becoming a cheerleader from the show.

Team members described the incident as a spontaneous effort to protect someone they care about.

"We just jumped in right away," said Miles Rodriguez. "We didn't have time to ask what was happening."

"It was spontaneous and I don't know how to explain it ... it just happened," agreed team member Austin Carrana.

"We felt like we had to stand up for somebody like her," said Martin Lopez. "We were just saying it wasn't cool what they were doing and they needed to stop."

The young men said they're happy about the way the world responded to what they did and proud they could show their city in a positive light.

"To do this for Desiree shows that this town has some character and young gentleman who are nice and polite," said Scooter Terrien. "You see a lot of stories about crime, but not stories like this coming from a small town."

Team member Harrice Hodges said he believes Lincoln's anti-bullying program deserves credit for making students more sensitive about the feelings of others. He said it seemed as if bullying at the school has gone down "a whole bunch" since the program began.

Daley said she'd like to think the program, which began last year, had something to do with the basketball team's actions. The program helps students develop positive character traits, including "caring about self and others," she said.

Kenosha has adopted a districtwide campaign, dubbed "Stand Up, Kenosha," Daley added.

Since the bullying incident, the gym at Lincoln Middle School has been named "D's House," in Desiree's honor.

U.S. LAW WOULD BAN BULLYING

U.S. Sen. Tammy Baldwin, D-Wis., and Rep. Mark Pocan, D-Wis., recently reintroduced legislation to address bullying and harassment, which affects one in five students at colleges and universities across the country. The Tyler Clementi Higher Education Anti-Harassment Act of 2015 would require institutions of higher education to establish policies prohibiting harassment based on actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or religion. The bill also would establish a grant program to support campus anti-harassment activities.

The legislation is named after Tyler Clementi, a freshman at Rutgers University who took his life after his roommate and another student harassed him over the Internet.

"Bullying is a real and persistent danger for far too many students at our colleges and universities and too many of these students are targeted for their sexual orientation," Pocan said in a statement. "This bill ensures no student has to suffer the humiliation of being harassed for who they are, or who they love. Institutions of higher learning should be a place of open expression, which celebrate diversity and embrace students from all different backgrounds."

— Louis Weisberg

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Judge overturns one of Wisconsin's abortion restrictions

From WiG and AP reports

A federal judge on March 20 struck down a Wisconsin law requiring doctors performing abortions to get hospital admitting privileges, ruling that any benefits to women's health from the requirement are "substantially outweighed" by its restricting access to abortion.

U.S. District Judge William Conley, who earlier had put the law on hold, said the 2013 law is unconstitutional. He issued a permanent injunction blocking enforcement.

Planned Parenthood and Affiliated Medical Services had sued the state, arguing the requirement will force AMS's Milwaukee clinic to close because its doctors can't get admitting privileges. The groups argued that would amount to restricting access to abortions.

State attorneys contended the mandate would ensure continuity of care for women hospitalized with abortion complications.

"While the court agrees with the State that sometimes it is necessary to reduce access to ensure safety, this is decidedly not one of those instances," Conley wrote. "In particular, the State has failed to meet its burden of demonstrating through credible evidence a link between the admitting privileges requirement and a legitimate health interest."

In a statement, Planned Parenthood and the American Civil Liberties Union noted that only four health centers provide abortions in Wisconsin. If the law took effect, the largest of those centers would be forced to close immediately and the remaining three "will not be able to absorb the unmet need."

"Politicians, not doctors, crafted this law for the sole purpose of shutting down women's health care centers and preventing women from getting safe, legal abortions," ACLU deputy legal director Louise Melling stated.

"With an over 99 percent safety record, abortion is very safe," Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin said in an email. "Politically-motivated restrictions like this make it harder for a woman to access safe and legal abortion in Wisconsin."

Conley said at the hearing on the lawsuit that he was worried the law was too rigid. He noted that the law required providers to get privileges within three days of its enactment. Republican Gov. Scott Walker signed the law on July 5, 2013, and it required providers to have privileges in place by July 8, 2013.

In his ruling, Conley noted that the "sud-

Evidence 'compels a finding that its purpose was to impose a substantial obstacle on women's right to abortions in Wisconsin.'

den adoption" of the permitting requirements, without giving enough time for compliance, "compels a finding that its purpose was to impose a substantial obstacle on women's right to abortions in Wisconsin."

Fourteen states require doctors performing abortions to either have hospital admitting privileges or some sort of alternative agreement, according to the Guttmacher Institute, which supports abortion rights. Five other states have passed such restrictions but courts have put them on hold.

The ruling did not strike down Wisconsin's controversial policy of forcing pregnant women to undergo invasive ultrasound procedures to view their fetuses prior to obtaining abortions. The lawsuit did not seek judgment on that facet of the restrictive abortion laws adopted in Wisconsin under Republican leadership.

Panel upholds officer's firing

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The former Milwaukee police officer fired after killing an unarmed man last April will not get his job back. That's the ruling from a panel of three Milwaukee fire and police commissioners who heard an appeal from ex-officer Christopher Manney.

According to the official record, Manney attempted to frisk 31-year-old Dontre Hamilton moments before the two began fighting in Red Arrow Park in downtown Milwaukee on April 30, 2014. Manney used his wooden baton against Hamilton, who allegedly grabbed the baton and fought back against Manney. Manney, who is white, then repeatedly fired at Hamilton, who was black and diagnosed with paranoid schizophrenia. The officer emptied his ammunition clip.

Manney was fired last October by Police Chief Ed Flynn, who said the officer improperly initiated a pat-down of Hamilton.

Manney, during the hearing on his appeal, told commissioners that he still wants to "be a cop" and that his life has been about helping people.

The Milwaukee Police Department defended Manney's dismissal, maintaining that he couldn't offer a reason for initiating the pat-down other than a general belief that the mentally ill or homeless often carry knives. During his arguments, attorney Mark L. Thomsen, representing the department, said no one suspected Hamilton of committing a crime and there was no basis for the pat-down. Officers, Thomsen said, are only allowed to frisk a person if they reasonably suspect the individual possesses a weapon.

Manney's attorney Jonathan Cermele argued he had reason to suspect Hamilton was armed. "He knew homeless people have a shard of glass, a knife, et cetera," Cermele said during the hearing, which lasted several days and was attended by Hamilton's relatives, who have said the slain man had no record of violence and was not homeless.

The panel reviewed evidence and heard testimony, including from the police chief, who said Manney's "bad decision-making created a chain of events which would ultimately place him in a situation of using deadly force." The panel then determined that Manney departed from department protocol and his punishment was proper.

The decision prompted a statement from Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett: "What was most important then, and still is today, is to find a way for our city to heal and move forward. The tragic death of Dontre Hamilton has shaken our community and we have much work to do."

In late 2014, Milwaukee County District Attorney John Chisholm announced an investigation into the shooting ended with a decision not to prosecute Manney. Chisholm said, based on the review by the state Division of Criminal Investigation, the shooting was justified.

Soon after the announcement, the U.S. Justice Department announced an investigation to determine whether Hamilton's civil rights were violated.

The medical examiner's report showed that one of the 14 bullets Manney fired hit Hamilton in the back; half the shots were fired downward and no gun-powder residue was found near Hamilton's wounds.

Manney approached Hamilton after two other Milwaukee police officers, summoned by Starbucks employees, had checked on Hamilton on two occasions and said he was doing nothing wrong.

The state now is also investigating an officer-involved fatal shooting in Madison. As WiG went to press, the Wisconsin Department of Justice was expected on March 27 to deliver to Dane County District Attorney Ismael Ozanne a report on the killing of 19-year-old Tony Robinson by Madison Police Officer Matt Kenny. Robinson was biracial. Kenny is white.

The findings will not be released until Ozanne makes a decision on whether to charge Kenny, who shot Robinson in an apartment house on March 6. According to police reports, Kenny was responding to calls that Robinson had attacked two people and was running in traffic.

Multiple protests followed the killing of Tony Robinson and also the killing of Dontre Hamilton, whose death was more than three months before a white police officer killed Michael Brown, an unarmed black man, in Ferguson, Missouri, and more than two months before the police-killing of another black man, Eric Garner, in New York City.

The AP contributed to this report.



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Puppy love: Dad waits all night outside shelter to adopt dog for son's birthday

By Amy Flowers Umble

The Free Lance-Star via AP

It was puppy love at first sight for Robert Lucas III. The preschooler fell in love with a small, silky terrier he saw at the Spotsylvania Animal Shelter in Virginia.

"He made it known that that was the dog he wanted and he didn't want any other dog," said his father, Robert Lucas Jr. He tried to interest the young boy in other furry friends at the shelter. But little Robert wouldn't hear of it. He would play only with Gibbs.

His persistence presented a problem for his parents, who were determined to get a dog for the young boy's fifth birthday. They stopped by the shelter a few days before Gibbs would be available for adoption. And shelter workers told the family that several other people had expressed interest in the butterscotch-and-choco-

late-colored dog.

The shelter allows dogs to be adopted on a first-come, first-served basis on the day they become available. Dogs become available about a week after they enter the shelter, to allow original owners time to reclaim them.

Little Robert's parents worried they wouldn't be able to get the popular pup. So Lucas hatched a plan: He would get to the shelter very early — a little after midnight — on Feb. 7.

But as he put his son to bed the night before, he wondered if that would be early enough. So he left their Spotsylvania County home early, and reached the parking lot at 11 p.m. He stayed in his car until the shelter opened at 8 a.m.

Such devotion isn't unheard of in local shelters with first-come, first-served policies.

"If we have a froufrou dog, one that everyone wants, it actually happens quite often," said Donna Shepherd, front desk clerk with the Spotsylvania Animal Shelter.

Smaller dogs tend to be more popular, said Mike Null, animal control officer for Stafford County. Many local residents live



PHOTO: AP/HILARY SWIFT

Robert Lucas III, 5, plays with his dog, Gibbs, in his Spotsylvania, Virginia, home. Lucas received the dog for his birthday. His father, Robert Lucas Jr., waited in his car for nine hours outside the Spotsylvania Animal Shelter to be the first in line to adopt Gibbs.

in apartments or townhomes, where there is a weight limit for dogs, he said.

But he's had hopeful adoptees line up for dogs of all sizes. "It's not uncommon for us to open the gate at 6:30 or 7 in the morning and see someone waiting," Null said.

And for Lucas, the long wait ended in triumph. He was the first one on the scene and got to bring Gibbs back home, where young Robert waited to greet his new furry friend.

Gibbs and Robert met like old friends, and immediately started playing together, Lucas said. The family kept the dog's name, which they assume is a nod to the television show "NCIS" and its main character named Gibbs.

Robert's toddler sister is also enamored of Gibbs, but the youngest family member — an infant sister — can't seem to figure out what the fuss is all about.

But there's no doubting her older brother's affection for the pup. Nearly a month after Gibbs joined the family, Robert is still devoted to his new sidekick.

It's a puppy love that was worth a stiff neck and a few hours in a car, Lucas said.

"I don't regret one second of it," Lucas said. "From the time my son wakes up to the time he goes to bed, he's talking about the dog. He's very excited to have him, and he's his new best friend. They are inseparable."



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In her re-election campaign, Justice Ann Walsh Bradley calls for throwing politics out of court

By Louis Weisberg
Staff writer

Judicial positions are nominally non-partisan, but any illusion that's the case evaporated long ago. There's no better illustration than the efforts of right-wing Republicans to oust two-term incumbent Justice Ann Walsh Bradley on April 7. Her loss would give conservatives a 5-2 advantage on the Wisconsin Supreme Court.

Bradley's opponent — Rock County Circuit Judge James Daley — denies he has any ideological bias, but he's sent out tweets using the hashtag #tcot, which stands for "top conservatives on Twitter." He admits that the Republican Party helped circulate his nominating papers and he's appeared at GOP gatherings throughout the state, promoting his conservative agenda and asking for help.

Daley told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* that he's attended those events simply to speak with voters who are most likely to share his philosophy. He called Bradley an "activist judge," a criticism that Republicans in the state frequently aim at judges who've issued opinions against Gov. Scott Walker's agenda, including his union-busting Act 10 and his law requiring voters to show photo ID at the polls (see page 16).

In a conversation with *WiG*, Bradley



PHOTO: COURTESY

Justice Ann Walsh Bradley.

blasted Daley for being co-opted by the Republican Party and for having Republican operatives on his campaign staff. She said her campaign did not accept help from the Democratic Party to circulate her nominating papers and that her campaign would not accept contributions from political parties or attorneys and litigants with pending cases.

In fact, Bradley said that maintaining judicial independence is the centerpiece of her retention bid. It's not only unethical for partisanship and campaign donations to influence application of the law, she said,

but it also erodes the public's perception of a fair justice system.

Knowing that conservatives would probably spend massive amounts of money on advertising and TV commercials that misrepresent her record, Bradley thought long and hard about seeking a third term on the bench.

"I know what is coming in the last few days or weeks of the campaign," she said.

But it's that knowledge that ultimately determined her decision to run. "I think it's time to stop this influx of partisanship in the judiciary," she said. "My vision of a judiciary is different from what we've seen in the recent past."

According to Bradley, Wisconsin ranks No. 2 in the nation for special interest advertising in judicial races — behind only Pennsylvania.

"It's not this way in other states, and it doesn't have to be this way in Wisconsin," she said.

But, for now, partisanship dominates. Major corporate money, including third-party donations from such lobbying groups as Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce and the Koch brothers-backed Wisconsin Club for Growth are expected to flow into the campaign of Bradley's opponent. Together the two groups spent an estimated \$8.3 million for "issue ads" helping to elect conservative Justices Annette Ziegler, Michael Gableman, David Prosser and Patience Roggensack, according to wiconsinwatch.org. That amount dwarfs the \$3.2 million spent by those same justices on their own campaigns.

The Wisconsin Center for Investigative Journalism and The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Endorsements

Vote for Bradley and against changing rules of selecting chief justice

WiG endorses Justice Ann Walsh Bradley for retention and urges voters to reject the referendum that calls for changing the way that the Wisconsin Supreme Court's chief justice is selected.

Bradley's experience and principled stands in many controversial cases, including recusing herself from cases in which there's any hint of conflict of interest, should earn her a third term.

The Republican-dominated Wisconsin Legislature in January passed a constitutional amendment that would change how state Supreme Court justices pick their leader, adopting a new method that would give them the advantage. Voters on April 7 will be asked to decide the proposed constitutional amendment.

This represents the unseemly infusion of yet more politics into the state's highest court. In 2009, Wisconsinites voted overwhelmingly to re-elect Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson to a 10-year term, knowing that she would remain chief justice. The amendment would negate the result of that election.

The Wisconsin Constitution states that the justice with the most seniority becomes chief justice. But the court's conservative majority wants to get rid of Abrahamson, who has ruled several times against Gov. Scott Walker's administration. The Republican-authored amendment would allow the justices themselves rather than seniority to determine the court's chief, allowing the conservative majority to oust Abrahamson.

Bradley urges voters to reject the amendment.

"To change the constitution because you don't like the style of a certain justice would be a terrible mistake," Bradley said. "The constitution is a sacred document. It defines who we are as a people and what we stand for as a state. To use it as a tool for political payback is a big mistake."

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8	5	2	5	4	6	5	9
1	3	5	8	5	7	4	6
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Bill to ban microbeads advances

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The Wisconsin Senate on March 17 advanced legislation aimed at protecting the Great Lakes by scrubbing out personal care products containing microbeads.

The bill — introduced by Republican state Sens. Rob Cowles and Mary Czaja — passed by unanimous voice vote in the Senate, and, as *WiG* went to press, was awaiting consideration in the Assembly.

The measure would stop the manufacture and stocking for sale of personal care products that contain microbeads, tiny plastic bits found in body scrubs and toothpastes that get rinsed down the drain, wash through water treatment systems and reach Wisconsin waters.

One bottle of facial scrub with microbeads can contain more than 300,000 plastic particles. These particles do not quickly break down. Instead, they contaminate water and can be ingested by fish and other wildlife.

Clean Wisconsin, an environmental advocacy group, says the chemicals in the plastic or soaked up by the microbeads can cause much greater concentrations of chemicals in animals higher up the food chain.

"It's imperative that we do all we can to protect our waters and reduce the use of unnecessary microbeads," said Tyson Cook, Clean Wisconsin director of science and research.



PHOTO: PIXABAY.COM

Microbeads, plastic particles found in some personal care products, are polluting the Great Lakes, causing health problems for wildlife and posing health risks to humans.

He praised bipartisan support for the bill.

Other proponents include the Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters, which issued a statement encouraging members to contact lawmakers in support of the bill. The league's action notice warned that microbeads "absorb pollutants such as DDT and PCBs, posing a risk to fish communities and human health when they are ingested."

If the bill becomes law, the manufacture of personal care products containing the plastic particles would be prohibited in 2018. A year later, the state would ban the sale or distribution of such products.

Wisconsin would join Illinois, New Jersey and several other states that are currently considering banning the beads. Many of the largest personal care companies have already agreed to phase out their use.

High court lets voter ID stand

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

The U.S. Supreme Court on March 23 said it will not hear a challenge to Wisconsin's voter photo ID law advanced by the Republican leadership.

However, the law will not be in effect for the April election because absentee balloting and early voting already are underway.

State officials announced they would delay the implementation of the law shortly after the American Civil Liberties Union filed an emergency motion seeking to put a hold on the measure.

Wisconsin Attorney General Brad Schimel, in a news statement, said, "Our legal team did an outstanding job defending Wisconsin law, from the trial court to the U.S. Supreme Court. Absentee ballots are already in the hands of voters, therefore, the law cannot be implemented for the April 7 election. The voter law will be in place for future elections — this decision is final."

Earlier that day, the ACLU asked a federal appeals court to block the state from applying provisions of the law in the spring election. The request came after the Supreme Court declined to review a lower court ruling that upheld the law.

A federal trial court struck down the voter ID law in April 2014, but the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned the decision and upheld the law. Because voting was underway for the November midterm election and the opponents of the law were preparing to appeal, the justices put a hold on the measure. State officials, at the time, fought unsuccessfully to implement voting restrictions for the governor's contest and other races.

This time around, state officials agreed to a delay.

Dale Ho, director of the ACLU's Voting Rights Project, said, "We're pleased the state has agreed with the ACLU's position that imposing a new restriction on voters in the midst of an election is a recipe for disaster. For now, the voters of Wisconsin will be able to cast their ballots free from the burdens placed on them by this law."

But Ho and many others said enforcement of the law will prohibit some voters from casting ballots in other elections. "We are evaluating our next steps in the fight

for the right of all Americans to vote free from unnecessary barriers," Ho said.

The ACLU, in its challenge to the law, argued that the law violates the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause and Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act.

Republican Gov. Scott Walker said in a statement it was "great news for Wisconsin voters" that the Supreme Court declined to hear the challenge.

"As we've said, this is a common sense reform that protects the integrity of our voting process, making it easy to vote and hard to cheat," Walker said.

The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has been at the forefront of the campaign against the measure. Executive director Andrea Kaminski said the challenge was of national importance.

"More and more states are passing strict voter ID laws, and we have all heard the stories of good citizens who have run into problems because they don't possess an acceptable, government-issued ID," Kaminski said. "The problem with our elections is that not enough people vote in them. The last thing we need is laws that erect barriers for people who have been good voters for decades."

Voter ID laws exist in 30 states. An estimated 21 million people — predominantly low-income, racial and ethnic minorities and the elderly — lack government cards needed to vote. In Wisconsin, an estimated 300,000 voters lack the IDs.

"The Supreme Court's decision is a huge step backward for our democracy," said Penda D. Hair, co-director Advancement Project, which has been involved in the legal challenge to the law. "The 300,000 registered Wisconsin voters who lack the limited forms of photo ID needed to vote in Wisconsin — disproportionately African Americans and Latinos — deserve to have their voices heard in our political process. The values enshrined in our Constitution, and protected in the Voting Rights Act, are undermined when burdensome laws like photo ID requirements make the ballot box inaccessible to any eligible voters. Our elections should always be free, fair and accessible to all citizens. Under Wisconsin's restrictive photo ID law, they simply are not."

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Wisconsinites sue over rail expansion for crude oil

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Days after the fiery derailment of an oil train near Galena, Illinois, nine Wisconsin citizens went to court to challenge an expansion of a rail system for oil trains in their community.

The train had just passed through Wisconsin before the derailment.

Their focus was on the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources' decision to permit the filling of wetlands and the construction of a bridge by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway.

A Wisconsin Democracy Campaign report issued in mid-March stated that BNSF executives, mostly from outside Wisconsin, contributed \$15,570 to Republican Gov. Scott Walker from 2010 to October 2014. During that period, Walker received more than \$128,000 from the railroad industry.

The BNSF project would expand rail lines carrying crude oil through the Upper Mississippi River Basin.

Citizens, represented by Midwest Environmental Advocates, challenged the permitting for the rail expansion, arguing the DNR's environmental analysis failed to comply with the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act. Plaintiffs are seeking a reversal of the permit.

One of them, Ralph Knudson, was thinking about the Galena derailment the day his group went to court.

"Today's rail traffic is much riskier than a few years ago," he said. "The marsh project being considered is one of a series of projects intended to facilitate even more traffic flow. An environmental impact statement would compel a thorough look at all aspects of construction and operation of rail lines for opportunities to minimize risk and protect the marsh environment and public assets."

Wisconsin law requires state agencies to consider environmental impacts when making decisions, including issuing permits.

But the DNR has changed its regulations and how it complies with the Wisconsin Environmental Policy Act. Among the changes was the elimination of the environmental assessment process that was used to document reviews and decisions regarding whether to prepare an environmental impact statement.

"Thorough disclosure and consideration of the full range of environmental impacts makes for better-informed DNR decisions and provides critical information to the public and other decision-makers about the impacts of a project," said Midwest Environmental Advocates staff attorney Sarah Williams.

The citizens, in their complaint, said the DNR, with its permitting program, didn't complete an adequate environmental analysis and failed to involve citizens in the La Crosse area with concerns about:

- Noise, vibrations and air pollution with increased train traffic.
- Environmental impact of filling another

wetland in the La Crosse River Marsh, already reduced by half its size from previous development.

- The environmental impact of the construction and operation of a second track on the Mississippi River adjacent to and downstream from the marsh.

- Environmental harm and public safety in the event of a derailment.

- The proximity of a bald eagle nest — 600 feet — from railroad tracks.

Following the explosive derailment of at least three trains in as many weeks over the winter, citizens in other regions of the country are raising similar concerns about the rapid rise in the number of oil trains in the United States.

Witnesses from miles away saw the fireball that erupted after the BNSF Railway freight train derailed near Galena in early March. The fire burned for more than a day. Twenty-one of the train's freight cars left the tracks and five ruptured, catching fire.

The train derailed in a heavily wooded, hilly area near a Mississippi River tributary. Firefighters used a bike path to reach the site, but pulled back because of the intensity of the flames.

The derailed cars were newer and supposedly safer models, and this fact led to heightened calls for local, state and federal authorities to do more to protect people and the environment.

"As we've seen in West Virginia and Ontario, these oil trains pose a massive danger to people, wildlife and our environment, whether its trains passing through heavily populated areas or some of our pristine landscapes," said Jared Margolis of the Center for Biological Diversity, a national environmental advocacy group. Margolis is the author of the recently released report *Runaway Risks*.

In his analysis, he reported that an estimated 25 million people in the United States live within the 1-mile evacuation zone for oil train derailments. He also reported:

- Oil trains routinely pass within a quarter-mile of 3,600 miles of streams and more than 73,000 square miles of lakes, wetlands and reservoirs.

- Oil trains pass through 34 national wildlife refuges and pass within a quarter-mile of critical habitat for 57 threatened or endangered species.

- Oil train traffic has increased from about 10,000 cars in 2008 to 400,000 cars in 2014.

- Oil trains are expected to haul 40 times more oil in 2015 than in 2005.

- More than 1.1 million barrels of crude oil spilled from oil trains in 2013.

In the Midwest, oil trains transport about 72 percent of the 1 million barrels of crude produced in the North Dakota Bakken fields.

Margolis' report said BNSF moves as many as 27 oil trains a week through Cook County, Illinois. And up to 15 oil trains a day pass through the Twin Cities, Minnesota.

"Almost all of these oil trains pass

through Minnesota into Wisconsin, traveling along the Mississippi River before turning east, often to East Coast oil refineries," Margolis wrote. "Data show that 30 to 48 dedicated oil trains per week carry Bakken crude into Wisconsin from Minnesota. Three to five of these cross southern Wisconsin on the Canadian Pacific railroad, passing through downtown Milwaukee and turning south along the heavily populated Lake Michigan coast. The rest travel on the Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad along the east bank of the Mississippi River, through the Upper Mississippi National Wildlife Refuge."

The report contains a series of recommendations, including:

- Banning outdated tank cars.
- Amending regulations to require oil-spill response plans for areas where oil trains operate.
- Limiting the length of trains to 30 cars and 4,000 tons.
- Establishing speed limits — less than 20 mph — for oil trains traveling through population centers or within a quarter mile of environmentally sensitive areas.

Still, Margolis said, "the reality is there's no way to safely transport the highly volatile crude from the Bakken oil field in North Dakota or the heavy crudes from the Alberta tar sands. Instead, these extreme fossil fuels should be left in the ground."



PHOTO: AP/TELEGRAPH HERALD/MIKE BURLEY

Smoke rises from the scene of a train derailment March 5 near Galena, Illinois. A BNSF Railway freight train loaded with crude oil derailed in a rural area where the Galena River meets the Mississippi.



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Wisconsin LGBT
Chamber of Commerce

EDITORIAL

Walker budget wastes \$250,000 on attempt to hold up wind energy

There's a proposed item in Gov. Scott Walker's budget that would waste \$250,000 to have the Public Service Commission, which is dominated by his appointees, study the health effects of wind turbines. His transparent intention is to continue stalling on development of this renewable energy source, which is opposed by the real-estate sector and producers of dirty energy, including Koch Industries and Exxon Mobil. Those industries have bestowed Walker with beaucoup bucks and, as he's proven time and again, he's not about to let the state do anything counter to their interests on his watch — not even for the best interests of Wisconsinites.

If wind energy did indeed present a health hazard for humans, the world would be well aware of it by now. Wind energy is the second fastest-growing source of renewable energy in the world — behind solar. Wind has contributed to increasing energy independence and job growth throughout Europe and Asia over the past decade. It's also led to falling energy costs in nations such as Germany, where 31 percent of energy during the first half of last year came from wind, solar and hydro.

Neighboring Iowa generated 27.4 of its electricity from wind in 2013. The state continues to expand its wind energy program, with no reports of health problems that we could find.

But there's even stronger evidence that wind energy is harmless, and Walker is well aware of it. Five years ago, 13 Wisconsinites from all sectors were appointed to the state's Wind Siting Council. The council reviewed more than 50 scientific studies and found no evidence to support the contention of Walker and his shills that wind turbines are hazardous to human health. The only studies used by the council were those that had appeared in peer-reviewed scientific journals. The findings of the Wind Siting Council,

presented to the Legislature in October 2014, should have marked the end of the story for wind energy deniers.

The \$250,000 Walker wants to spend to duplicate a conclusive study on a topic that has long since been settled elsewhere could be used in many other productive ways. The Wisconsin League of Conservation Voters suggests that the money could go to programs that contribute to conservation, clean energy, or monitoring the pollution and contamination that we know are caused by the forms of energy that Walker favors.

The absurdity of Walker throwing away taxpayer money to hold up the production of clean energy due to public health concerns is laughable. Walker has never met a polluter he didn't like. His environmental policies are extremely hazardous to public safety, including the relaxation of regulations for polluters, construction of the nation's largest tar sand crude pipeline, which flows under every major waterway in the state, and revamping the permitting process to make it easier for operators of open pit mines to get approval without public input — just for starters.

This is not a partisan issue. Renewable energy is essential to keeping Wisconsin in the game, and the hypocrisy Walker shows toward it should offend every citizen who expects our leaders to do what's best for us over the interests of their benefactors.

Of course, the Public Service Commission, which is dominated by Walker appointees, might just come up with findings that conveniently counter all the scholarly studies on the subject. We hope that Republicans and Democrats alike recognize this sham for what it is and lead the state forward on renewable wind energy.

Since Walker flip-flopped on ethanol to win Iowa votes, maybe our neighbor's embrace of wind energy will influence him to shift gears on that power source as well.

WiG's WEB PICKS



Some of our favorite recent pictorials from cyberspace



ON THE RECORD



“I’m embarrassed for them. For them to address a letter to the ayatollah, who they claim is our mortal enemy and their basic argument to them is, ‘Don’t deal with our president because you can’t trust him to follow through on an agreement,’ that’s close to unprecedented.”

— PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA telling *VICE News* how he feels about the 47 GOP senators who signed a letter to Iran about international negotiations aimed at halting that country’s nuclear program. The Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iran’s supreme leader, branded the letter as proof of U.S. “deceit” and “backstabbing.”

“I discovered that my style does not fit with the creative direction of the show and now it’s time to move on.”

— KATHY GRIFFIN announcing that she’s leaving E! Network’s *The Fashion Police*.

“I remember the time I got married, someone said, ‘Well, would it be controversial if you got married while you were still in Congress?’ And the answer was, yes it was. A lot of my colleagues were mad that they didn’t get invited. So our reality is that. On the other side, I think the fundamental issue, and it does go back to a Clinton campaign statement, ‘It’s the economy, stupid.’”

— Former Rep. BARNEY FRANK speaking with Chuck Todd on NBC’s *Meet the Press* about his new memoir *Frank*.

“If my first term is anything like college, I won’t make it through four years.”

— GOV. SCOTT WALKER sharing a joke at his own expense during the Gridiron Club and Foundation’s annual dinner in Washington, D.C.

“What happens when you give a teenager \$200 million? You get a bunch of has-beens calling you a lesbian for two hours.”

— JUSTIN BIEBER responding after hours of serving as the butt of jokes during the taping of his Comedy Central roast.

“(The aim of Common Core’s creators was to) attract every one of your children to become as homosexual as they possibly can. I really hate to bring you that news, but you need to know.”

— Florida state Rep. CHARLES VAN ZANT, a Republican, speaking at the “Operation Education Conference” in Orlando, where he warned that officials implementing Common Core are “promoting as hard as they can any youth that is interested in the LGBT agenda.”

“There is probably still a subculture at the DNR, for lack of a better word, that is green.”

— BILL WILLIAMS, president of Gogebic Tacornite, complaining to the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* about a lingering cadre of environmentalists still working at the state’s Department of Natural Resources. Williams announced his company had dropped its plans to build an open pit iron mine in the northern part of the state due to environmental concerns.



‘Fairness Doctrine’ a thing of the past

Opinion

JAMAKAYA

My mother asked me recently why “bullies” are allowed to broadcast on radio and TV. “Why are they allowed to badmouth people and shout down people who don’t agree with them? Isn’t there a law?”

Like many media consumers of a certain age, mom was recalling the kinder, gentler time of the Federal Communications Commission regulation known as the “Fairness Doctrine.”

The Fairness Doctrine was developed in the early years of radio and TV. Because there were a finite number of broadcast frequencies, licensed stations were deemed “public trustees.” In exchange for their use of public airwaves, stations had the obligation to seek out and reflect a variety of views, not just those of their owners. Broadcasters were required to use airtime to explore matters of public interest and to allow

opposing views to be aired.

(This FCC regulation did not require “equal time” for all views. It is federal law that required broadcasters to provide equal time in their public affairs and news programming for candidates running for elective office.)

Like my mom, I remember the good old days when newscasters would make an editorial comment on behalf of their station. Whatever the opinion, it was prudently phrased and calmly delivered. It was followed with the sober statement, “We will allow responsible parties with opposing views to respond to this editorial,” and they dutifully aired opposing views.

Some broadcasters didn’t like the regulation, but in the case of *Red Lion Broadcasting v. FCC* (1969), the Supreme Court came down on the side of viewers with this astonishing ruling:

“A license permits broadcasting, but the licensee has no constitutional right to be the one to hold the license or monopolize a fre-

quency to the exclusion of his fellow citizens. There is nothing in the First Amendment which prevents the government from requiring a licensee to share his frequency with others. ... It is the right of the viewers and listeners, not the right of the broadcasters, which is paramount.”

Many factors shifted sentiment and led to the demise of the Fairness Doctrine. Foremost was the election of Ronald Reagan, whose administration championed deregulation. Reagan’s chairman of the FCC, Mark Fowler, who had been a broadcast industry lawyer, criticized the idea of broadcasters as public trustees. He called them vital “marketplace participants” and famously remarked that TV was “just another appliance — it’s a toaster with pictures.”

Broadcasters had formed a powerful lobby — the National Association of Broadcasters. The association argued that the Fairness Doctrine actually chilled freedom of speech. Fear of

demands for response time and license challenges, they said, prevented many stations from addressing public issues.

The rise of cable and satellite media and the proliferation of hundreds of channels of programming became the most effective argument against the Fairness Doctrine. With so many program options and diverse points of view, why did we need a federal regulation on fairness?

The Fairness Doctrine was repealed in 1987 and all attempts to revive it have failed. Its repeal unleashed a new era of uninhibited speech, but discussion is often unfair, biased and shrill in the extreme.

Repeal has contributed to the corrosion of civility and to a dangerous Balkanization of the U.S. into fierce, intractable political factions who watch separate programs and do not listen to each other.

Abolition of the Fairness Doctrine has not served the country well.

Stop playing politics with women’s health

Opinion

DR. DOUG LAUBE

As a practicing obstetrician/gynecologist for 40 years, I have dedicated my life to making women and families healthier. This commitment makes it all the more disheartening and disturbing to see Gov. Scott Walker commit to signing a ban on abortion that will put women’s health and safety at risk.

Abortion bans are opposed by the medical community, including the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Medical Association, because they interfere with patient/physician trust and they prohibit women from making private, personal medical decision — even women facing medically complex

pregnancies or those whose pregnancy will not survive.

Throughout my career, I’ve provided health care for thousands of women and families and have delivered thousands of babies. Unfortunately, not every pregnancy ends the way a family hopes. Miscarriage, pregnancy complications that threaten a woman’s health and life and fetal anomalies not compatible with life do occur. In these very difficult instances, a woman should have access to all medical options, including safe pregnancy termination.

Only women and doctors — not politicians — should have authority to make these deeply personal medical decisions.

Unlike politicians, who are often working in their best interest, I am trained and obligated to act on behalf of my patients’ best interests. The argument for abortion bans is not based

on sound science and is an attempt to prescribe how physicians should care for their patients. Abortion after 20 weeks of pregnancy is rare, but when it occurs, it’s often the kind of situation where a woman and her doctor need every medical option available.

Despite political efforts to restrict access, abortion remains a legal medical procedure — and it is safe because it is legal. Abortion is subject to rigorous safety standards and research is constantly evolving best practices and regulation at the local, state and national levels. Physicians who provide abortion services adhere to strict medical standards based on recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Preventive Services Task Force and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

But politicians in Wisconsin keep intruding into our

doctors’ offices. They make laws that ignore sound science, best practices and the recommendations of doctors like me.

Walker’s vow to take away women’s access to safe and legal abortion in difficult medical situations is dangerous. It would interfere with my ability to provide medical care in the best interest of my patients. It won’t make abortion go away, it will just make it dangerous.

As a physician, I must speak up to provide the expertise that lawmakers lack. I urge other medical professionals to join me in illuminating the facts before the Legislature overreaches even further into our field.

Dr. Doug Laube is former chair of the UW Medical School Obstetrics Department, former chair of Physicians for Reproductive Health and former president of American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.

NATIONAL BRIEFS



PHOTO: AP

REAL REFORM: Denise Eger was installed on March 16 as the first openly gay president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the rabbinical arm of Reform Judaism. "It really shows an arc of LGBT civil rights," Eger told The AP in a phone interview ahead of the convention where she took office. "I smile a lot — with a smile of incredulousness."

UTAH GOV. SIGNS LGBT RIGHTS LAW

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert earlier this month signed into law an anti-discrimination measure that has the support of the Mormon Church.

Hundreds of people packed the capitol rotunda and the staircase behind the governor to witness the public signing ceremony. The crowd roared when Herbert held up a freshly inked copy of the bill.

Herbert's signature was the final step for the proposal, which flew through the Legislature after the endorsement of the Utah-based Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Many Utah lawmakers and the Republican governor are members of the church.

The law protects lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people from discrimination in housing and employment — a step activists have been pushing for years — while also creating exemptions for religious organizations and protecting religious speech in the workplace.

"I have no doubt that the eyes of the nation are upon us," Herbert said, calling lawmakers' attempts to strike a balance between religious freedom and LGBT equality a "historic occasion."

The governor's decision to sign the bill before the legislative session had ended was rare, demonstrating the importance state officials have given a bill they believe could serve as a model for other states grappling with how to reconcile gay rights and religious rights.

His stately introduction was followed by more straightforward comments from one of the bill's sponsors, Republican Sen. Steve Urquhart, who strode to the podium wearing red pants and exclaimed, "How cool is this?"

Urquhart went on to say that religious liberty and LGBT equality are not mutually exclusive but both "pillars in the pantheon of freedom."

IN OTHER NATIONAL NEWS ...

MASS COMMUNICATIONS SPYING:

The American Civil Liberties Union sued in mid-March on behalf of a broad group of organizations challenging the National Security Agency's mass interception and searching of Americans' international Internet communications, including emails, web-browsing content and search-engine queries. The plaintiffs include Wikimedia Foundation, the conservative Rutherford Institute, The Nation magazine, Amnesty International USA, PEN American Center, Human Rights Watch, the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, Global Fund for Women, and Washington Office on Latin America.

FROZEN ASSETS: The AFL-CIO federation and its affiliated unions froze all political action committee contributions to federal candidates to conserve

resources for the legislative battle over the debate concerning the Trans-Pacific Partnership. The union said it would fight any trade agreement that failed to prioritize the needs of working families and advance shared prosperity.

• **DRONED OUT:** The New Hampshire Fish and Game Commission unanimously voted to ban unmanned aerial vehicles — drones — and smart rifles for hunting wildlife and the use of live-action game cameras to locate wildlife for hunting purposes.

• **TEXAS TREATMENT:** Democratic state Rep. Marisa Marquez introduced a medical marijuana bill in Texas. The measure would allow for dispensaries, growers and manufacturers to provide whole plant medical marijuana for patients.

• **NEW NUMBERS:** The Human Rights Campaign on March 16 released polling data showing that 67 percent of likely voters support federal legislation banning bias based on gender identity and sexual orientation and two-thirds of LGBT Americans have experienced discrimination.

• **EARLY ENDORSEMENT:** As of *WiG* press time, Hillary Rodham Clinton was not a 2016 candidate for president. Still, on March 16 she won an endorsement from Equality California, which announced its support for the former secretary of state and claimed to be the first "major" LGBT group to do so.

• **PARADE PROGRESS:** Boston's St. Patrick's Day parade made history on March 15 as two gay and lesbian groups marched after decades of opposition and a case that went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Two days later, an LGBT group also marched in the New York City St. Patrick's Day parade.

• **FAIR FOR FAST FOOD:** A federal judge recently declined to issue an injunction against Seattle's \$15 minimum wage, ruling against the claim that the law is unfair to McDonald's, Subway and other companies.

CRUISING FOR THE WHITE HOUSE:

U.S. Sen. Ted Cruz announced he will run for president, becoming the first Republican officially to declare his candidacy. Like Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, Cruz has considerable appeal among the Republican Party's base of conservative voters and religious fundamentalists. Both candidates are also gaffe prone. Cruz recently sent out a tweet urging Congress to repeal the law forcing schools to adhere to Common Core standards. No such law has ever existed. In a recent Associated Press interview, Cruz said he wants to counter the "caricatures" of the far right as "stupid," "evil" or "crazy."

— Lisa Neff

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WALKER WATCH



PHOTO: AP/CLIFF OWEN

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker runs onstage to address the Conservative Political Action Conference in National Harbor, Maryland, in February.

WALKER COMMUNICATIONS AIDE QUILTS AFTER A DAY

After drawing criticism from the head of the Iowa Republican Party for questioning the state's early role in the presidential nominating process, an aide to Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's national political operation resigned. She'd been on the job for a day.

Veteran Republican strategist Liz Mair told The Associated Press that she was leaving due to the distraction she created by a series of Twitter posts about Iowa's presidential caucuses. A former consultant to ex-Texas Gov. Rick Perry, Mair was tapped to lead Walker's online communication efforts.

"The tone of some of my tweets concerning Iowa was at odds with that which Gov. Walker has always encouraged in political discourse," Mair said in a statement announcing her immediate resignation. "I wish Gov. Walker and his team all the best."

Mair had been the latest political operative hired to join Walker's growing political operation as he ramps up for a 2016 presidential bid. While Wisconsin lawmakers are mired in budget negotiations intensified by a \$2.3 billion budget shortfall Walker created, he appears to be spending most of his time traveling to early states in the presidential nominating process.

In January, Mair took to Twitter to complain about an event in the state hosted by Iowa Congressman Steve King, a favorite of the GOP's far-right flank.

"In other news, I see Iowa is once again embarrassing itself, and the GOP, this morning. Thanks, guys," Mair wrote and later added, "The sooner we remove Iowa's front-running status, the better off American politics and policy will be."

IN OTHER WALKER NEWS...

• **CAMPAIGN OVER CAMPUS:** Walker's sons plan to skip college in the fall to campaign for their dad, who is organizing for 2016. Walker, who did not finish

college, announced his 19- and 20-year-old sons plan to ditch school while campaigning in New Hampshire. "They twisted our arms to figure out a way to maybe take part of a semester off next year, next fall, to come to New Hampshire, to come around the country and talk to young people like themselves," Walker said.

• **EASY WALKER:** The governor, after speaking at a tourism conference in the early primary state, said he hopes to cross New Hampshire on his Harley. East to west, the state is about 65 miles wide.

• **JIBJAB:** Republican presidential hopefuls George Pataki and Lindsey Graham, on the circuit in New Hampshire, poked fun at Walker and others making obvious plans to seek the nomination. Graham, referring to Walker's attacks on public and private employee unions, said at a forum, "Any Democrats here? You better be glad Scott Walker's not here, because he would beat you up."

• **TAXING BUDGET:** An analysis by the nonpartisan Legislative Fiscal Bureau determined that Walker's state budget would raise taxes and fees by \$48 million. The report also showed that Walker proposals to bolster tax collection would bring in nearly \$125 million in additional revenue over the next two years.

• **NO APPEAL:** The Wisconsin Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal filed by a former aide to Walker when he was Milwaukee county executive. Kelly Rindfleisch appealed her conviction for misconduct in office, but the Supreme Court declined to take it. Rindfleisch was one of six people convicted as a result of a now-concluded John Doe investigation focusing on activities in Walker's county executive office.

— WiG reports

REGIONAL BRIEFS

WISCONSIN IN TOP TIER OF STATES LOSING THEIR MIDDLE CLASS

The middle class is shrinking in every state in America, and Wisconsin is in the top tier of those where the middle class has experienced the most severe erosion, according to a state-by-state analysis on the Pew Charitable Trusts' Stateline blog.

In 2000, 54.6 percent of Wisconsin households belonged to the middle class, which is defined as those earning between 67 percent and 200 percent of a state's median income. By 2013, less than half — 48.9 percent — of Wisconsin households were defined as middle class.

The blog showed that median income dropped in most states during the same years. In Wisconsin, inflation-adjusted income fell from \$60,344 in 2000 to \$51,467 in 2013.

In addition to Wisconsin, Ohio, North Dakota, Nevada and New Mexico experience the largest declines in middle-class households over the 13-year span. Wyoming, Idaho, Alaska and Hawaii suffered the least declines.

The analysis also showed that an increasing percentage of households are paying at least 30 percent of their total income on housing. In Wisconsin, 24 percent of households spent at last 30 percent of their income on housing in 2000, but by 2013 the rate had grown to 31 percent.

UW-MADISON RESEARCHER CHANGES MONKEY STUDY

A mental health researcher at the University of Wisconsin-Madison won't take newborn monkeys away from their mothers as part of an upcoming study.

Dr. Ned Kalin told the *Wisconsin State Journal* that complaints from animal rights groups weren't behind the change in the study. Rather, he says other research found anxiety isn't increased when newborn monkeys are separated from their mothers.

More than 383,000 people had signed an online petition asking that the study be canceled. The study plans to put monkeys through stress tests and euthanize them after a year to study their brains.



IN OTHER REGIONAL NEWS ...

• **STILL LAGGING:** Wisconsin has fallen into a tie for 38th place in private-sector job growth over the past year, trailing the neighboring states of Minnesota, Illinois, Michigan and Iowa. According to the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, the state's private-sector job growth rate is at 1.16 percent — half the national rate of 2.3 percent.

• **UNDER THE BUS:** The Koch-backed

effort to halt Milwaukee's proposed streetcar project never left the station. Hoping to kill the project, foes mounted a drive to get at least 31,000 signatures calling for a voter referendum on any project costing \$20 million or more. But they fell 6,000 votes short.

• **VAPED OUT:** The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, American Lung Association and American Heart Association filed objections

to proposed Wisconsin legislation that would prohibit local governments from including electronic cigarettes in smoke-free air ordinances. The groups said marketing of the cigarettes has outpaced science-based research on the products.

• **DISCUSSING DISABILITY:** Hundreds of disability advocates went to the state Capitol on March 18 to lobby lawmakers on policy issues and oppose dramatic changes to state disabilities programs proposed by Gov. Scott Walker.

• **ICE ARRESTS:** Wisconsin's immigrant rights group Voces de la Frontera reported that local law enforcement agencies and federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents detained at least 40 people in Wisconsin and more than 2,000 people in the United States during the first week of March. The exercise was called "Operation Cross-Check." "ICE is a rogue agency that continues to criminalize millions of working-class people and traumatize families and communities to meet an arbitrary detention quota," said Voces executive director Christine Neumann-Ortiz.

• **BUDGET UNBALANCE:** The League of Women Voters of Wisconsin has weighed in on Scott Walker's proposed state budget, arguing that the budget "repeatedly recommends a weakening of the checks and balances which protect citizens from political swings in government" and that many budget provisions don't deal with fiscal matters.

• **MENDING FENCES:** Putting election-year hostilities behind them, gay rights advocates said they emerged from a meeting with Illinois Gov. Bruce Rauner with a pledge that the Republican will strictly enforce anti-discrimination laws and hopes that he'll also support their top legislative priority: a ban on gay conversion therapy for minors. Representatives of Equality Illinois and other advocacy groups met with Rauner on March 20.

— from WiG and AP reports



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COMMUNITY BULLETINS



PHOTO: NYC MAYORAL PHOTOGRAPHY OFFICE

DE BLASIO ON DECK: New York Mayor Bill de Blasio is set to rally Wisconsin Democrats as they look ahead to the 2016 elections. The Democratic Party of Wisconsin announced that de Blasio is scheduled to be the keynote speaker at the party's Founders Day gala. It will be in Milwaukee on April 25.

CANDIDATES ANNOUNCE FOR STATE DEMOCRATIC PARTY CHAIR

Martha Laning earlier this month announced her candidacy for chairperson of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. Laning is a community leader, businesswoman and former candidate for Wisconsin's 9th Senate District. She's been endorsed by state Sen. Kathleen Vinehout, who's often mentioned as a prospective gubernatorial candidate.

Also running for the position is Jason Rae, who has served on the boards of numerous progressive organizations and as chair of the Milwaukee County Human Rights Commission. Currently executive director of the Milwaukee LGBT Chamber of Commerce, Rae was chair of the Democratic Party of Wisconsin's Platform & Resolutions Committee for four years.

Other announced candidates are Jeff Smith and Joe Wineke.

MORE COMMUNITY BULLETINS ...

• **GREEN CAMPAIGN:** Conservation Lobby Day is set for April 14, with citizen lobbyists gathering at Monona Terrace in Madison to register. For more, go to milwaukeeenvironmentalconsortium.org.

• **BUILDING COMMUNITY:** All Hands Boatworks, which held a meeting in Milwaukee earlier in March at Keep Greater Milwaukee Beautiful, is making plans for a youth regatta, a youth boatbuilders camp and other projects. For more, visit All Hands Boatworks on Facebook.

• **JUSTICE AND DISPARITY:** The International Socialist Organization, with co-sponsorship by Young, Gifted and Black, the UW Comparative Studies Department and the UW LGBT Campus Center, hosted transgender activist CeCe McDonald at the UW-Madison campus on March 19. McDonald talked about prison reform, racial profiling, racial dis-

parities and transgender rights.

• **FAIR NOTICE:** The Fair Wisconsin board of directors announced the appointment of Megin McDonnell as interim executive director. She succeeds Katie Belanger and has been serving Fair as external relations director since 2011. For more, go to fairwisconsin.com.

• **HIGH-TECH DRIVER'S ED:** The Wisconsin Department of Transportation has created an e-version of *The Motorists' Handbook* that explains the rules of the road and offers safe driving recommendations for operating cars or light trucks. "The eBook option for tablets makes this version especially convenient to study and prepare for the knowledge test that all applicants must pass to get a driver license," says Debbie Kraemer, supervisor of the Bureau of Driver Services. The handbook is available at wisconsin.dmv.gov.

• **RUMMAGE WITH A CAUSE:** The Milwaukee/NARI Foundation, Inc., the educational and charitable arm of the Milwaukee/NARI Home Improvement Council, Inc., will host its 10th annual "Home Improvement Rummage Sale" in the parking lot of Milwaukee Millwork, 11712 W. Dixon St., Milwaukee on May 1, 8 a.m.-4 p.m. The sale supports efforts to reduce materials from landfills while also assisting the foundation's efforts to provide financial and educational support to students pursuing a career in the home improvement and remodeling industry. Leftover merchandise will be donated to Habitat for Humanity.

— WiG reports

Send notices to Lisa Neff at lmneff@wisconsin-gazette.com

➤ out on the town *March 26 - April 9*

A curated calendar of upcoming events

'BEAUTY IN BLOOM' *March 26-29*

The Milwaukee Art Museum's main galleries may be closed for renovation, but the museum hasn't cancelled one of its most beloved events. Instead of *Art in Bloom*, its annual pairing of works from the permanent collection with elaborate floral displays, the museum will present *Beauty in Bloom* — same concept, but this time the plants are partnered up with ensembles from the special exhibit *Inspiring Beauty*, a 50-year retrospective of the Ebony Fashion Fair. You can get beautified at the event too, thanks to a variety of makeover and style upgrade stations for women and men alike. At 700 N. Art Museum Drive. Admission is \$14 adults, \$12 students/seniors/military and free for members, teachers and kids under 12. Call 414-224-3200 or visit mam.org for more information.



PHOTO: MILWAUKEE ART MUSEUM



PHOTO: KMP ARTISTS

'DELICIOUSLY QUEER' *March 27 to April 10*

A week before this issue hit newsstands, *Deliciously Queer* didn't exist. Madison LGBT theater Stage Q and the daredevil artists of Delicious Ensemble Theatre have teamed up for two pieces inspired by compelling elements of the queer experience ("Coming Out" and "Commitment"), both of which will be conceived, written and rehearsed within a seven-day period. They'll then be performed throughout the series' three-week run, along with the All Queer Variety Show, an hour-long event featuring multiple acts from members of Madison's queer community. At the Bartell Theatre, 113 E. Mifflin St. Tickets are \$15 for both *Deliciously Queer* shows, \$10 for the variety show, and \$20 for combo tickets to both. Visit bartelltheatre.org or call 608-661-9696 for more details.

'IN THINKING OF AMERICA'

2 p.m. March 29

The Civil War ended 150 years ago, a time so distant from the 21st century it's difficult to imagine. Traveling singer Robert Trentham offers a glimpse into that past in the variety artist tradition of the 1860s. His show compiles classic songs from the period — "Dixie's Land" or "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," for example — and presents them alongside letters, speeches and other social commentary from the 1860s. At the South Milwaukee Performing Arts Center, 901 15th Ave. Tickets range from \$10 to \$25 and can be purchased at southmilwaukeepac.org or 414-766-5049.



PHOTO: RACINE ART MUSEUM

SIXTH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL PEEPS ART EXHIBITION *March 27 to April 12*

We know they're both tasty and of questionable nutritional content, but marshmallowy Easter Peeps as an artistic medium? That's right — at the Racine Art Museum, you can view the sixth year of an international competition that challenges artists of all artists to create artworks that feature the sweet treat. The best part is, unlike the taste of the Peeps themselves, you never quite know what you're going to get. At 441 Main St., Racine. Admission is \$5, \$3 for seniors and kids ages 12 to 18 and free for members. Visit ramart.org or call 262-638-8300.

AN EVENING WITH MOLLY RINGWALD

8 p.m. March 27

Turns out Brat Pack member Molly Ringwald's been holding out on us. The star of *Pretty in Pink* and other '80s classics has focused her career on acting, but she's got a killer voice too — one that's finally on display in her jazz debut: *Except Sometimes*. The LP marks the continuation of a family tradition (her father, Bob Ringwald, is a jazz pianist himself) and an expansion of her showbiz abilities. She'll perform a cabaret show built around the album at the Overture Center, one night only. At 201 State St., Madison. Tickets are \$35 to \$50 and can be ordered at overturecenter.org or 608-258-4141.

➤ out on the town

'CINDERELLA'

March 28 and March 29

The Madison Ballet is going back to the ball — with its fourth production of Prokofiev's *Cinderella* since artistic director W. Earle Smith first choreographed the ballet in 2005. The show has only improved with age, though, as the company's grown into this glittering production with wicked stepsisters, a charming prince, a children's corps of young dancers and, of course, a fleet-of-foot Cinderella to lead them all. At Overture Center, 201 State St. Tickets range from \$14 to \$60 and can be purchased at 608-278-7990 or overturecenter.org.



PHOTO: ANDREW WEEKS

MARIA BAMFORD

8 p.m. April 1

One of the best alternative comedians still a big break away from being a household name, Maria Bamford's snagged the April Fools Day slot at Turner Hall. And she's put in the work to deserve it. Between a big role as DeBrie on the Netflix season of *Arrested Development* and a number of webseries that have made her a cult success, her particular breed of self-deprecating vignette comedy is more refined than ever before. At Turner Hall Ballroom, 1040 N. Fourth St., Milwaukee. Tickets are \$23 and can be purchased at pabsttheater.org or 414-286-3205.



PHOTO: NATALIE BRASINGTON

'THE SHAPE OF THINGS' 7:30 p.m. April 2-11

In this complex Neil LaBute drama, nerdy college student Adam finds himself drawn into a relationship with Evelyn, an eccentric artist he meets at the local museum. It seems like a meet-cute, until Evelyn starts prompting Adam to change himself in ways that startle his friends and ultimately shake him to the core. It's the latest venture from All In Productions, which made its debut on Milwaukee stages earlier this year with a well-received production of *The Last Five Years*. At Villa Terrace Art Museum, 2220 N. Terrace Ave., Milwaukee. Tickets are \$15 and can be ordered at shapeofthings.brownpapertickets.com.

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A curated calendar of upcoming events *March 26 - April 9*



PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

'ODYSSEY' April 1-12

One of the oldest epics in the history of literature gets a new staging at Off the Wall Theatre. Dale Gutzman, in partnership with classics scholar John Angelos, has crafted a fast-paced, intimate adaptation of Odysseus' journey back to Ithaca after twenty years of war and travel that brings Off the Wall actors new and old together to answer two central questions: "What makes a hero, and does becoming a hero destroy the man?" At 127 E. Wells St., Milwaukee. Tickets are \$25 and can be ordered at 414-484-8874 or offthewalltheatre.com.



PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

DE WAART CONDUCTS RACHMANINOFF

8 p.m. April 3-4

The composer Sergei Rachmaninoff may have composed his final work on Long Island, but his *Symphonic Dances* are full of nostalgic references back to Mother Russia, including folk songs and religious melodies. Edo de Waart and the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra will pay tribute to him in turn, with a program that puts his Dances in the place of honor they deserve. Also on the program are two contemporaneous works: Samuel Barber's brief Second Essay for Orchestra and Dmitri Shostakovich's Violin Concerto No. 1, to be performed with guest violinist Nadja Salerno-Sonnenberg. At the Marcus Center, 929 N. Water St. Tickets range from \$25 to \$105 and can be purchased at 414-291-7605 or mso.org.



PHOTO: JOSH GREN

ELSEWHERE IN WIGOUT:

'Rep Lab': The most significant anniversary for the Milwaukee Rep's intern company this year is the big Five-0, but the Rep is also celebrating five years of this short play festival that puts the Rep's trainees center stage. April 10-13. See page 30.

'Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike': Forward Theater stages this 2013 Tony-winning play by Christopher Durang, which takes Chekhovian characters and plots, tosses them into a blender and smashes them all together into a witty, contemporary comedy. April 9-26. See page 33.

Wisconsin Film Festival: The heart of this eight-day spring festival is their "Wisconsin's Own" series that screens films by everyone from students to Orson Welles, but there's 150 diverse films in total to choose from. April 9-16. See page 36.

'MSO a capella': The MSO kicks out the actual orchestra for this a cappella concert dedicated to the organization's outstanding symphony chorus. March 28 to 29. See page 39.

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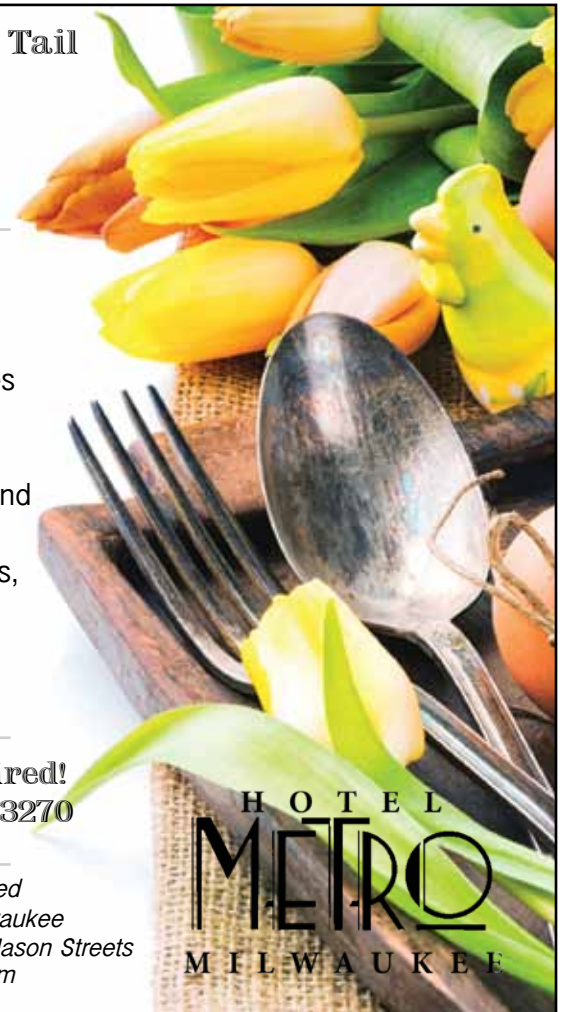
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DisH it Out!

Madison's reluctant chef Jonny Hunter captures the culinary spotlight with Underground Food Collective

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Jonny Hunter moved to Madison 18 years ago in search of intellectual freedom and an environment that embraced a love of learning. After he found all that, he found something else: an opportunity to establish an alternative model for fine dining that has propelled him into the culinary spotlight.

Hunter is the co-owner of Madison's Underground Food Collective, a multifaceted enterprise with catering, meat processing and fine-dining components. He serves as the chef at the restaurant, Forequarter, a recent venture that has been named one of the country's top 50 new restaurants by *Bon Appétit* magazine. And on Feb. 18, the 35-year-old was revealed to be one of four Wisconsinites on the shortlist for a prestigious honor: the James Beard Award for best chef in the Midwest.

Hunter was joined on the list by fellow Madison chef Dan Fox of The Heritage Tavern and Milwaukee chefs Justin Carlyle of Ardent and David Swanson of Braise. Hunter wasn't ultimately selected in the final round, though Carlyle earned one of five slots.

Hunter's response to the nomination — "It's great to be recognized individually for what we do, but it really is the people I work with who are doing this every day. The job they do is more important than

what I do" — is so modest it's tempting to assume he's a native Midwesterner. But he was raised in Tyler, Texas, where he was brought up in a strict Christian household. It was that repressive environment that Madison marked an escape from, when Hunter moved in 1998.

After a year of random jobs, he registered for classes at UW-Madison, majoring in English with a certificate in integrated liberal studies and eventually earning a master's degree in public affairs from the university.

The building blocks of the Underground Food Collective came in between. In 2001, Hunter and a group of friends took over Catacombs Coffeehouse, a Christian coffee shop located in the basement of Pres House, the historic Presbyterian church on the campus's Library Mall. The group served students \$2.50 vegetarian lunches and promoted a communal atmosphere.

"Community was the most important thing here," says Hunter, who before running Catacombs had worked in a variety of Madison restaurant kitchens and food carts. "I learned a lot about the role food plays in a community and how to cook for that community using vegetables and produce grown by people I came to know and respect.

"I never really call myself chef," Hunter adds. "When we were working at Cata-

combs it was all about collaboration, being kind to each other, and for the experience itself to be good."

The Catacombs years colored how Hunter looks at life and his chosen profession. In 2005, the reluctant chef and his Catacombs companions set their sights on applying their approach to food service outside of the religious environment of Pres House.

"Since Catacombs was in a basement space, we named our food collective 'Underground' in homage to that experience," he said. "We started to work with nonprofits to bring in food as part of their activities."

The Underground Food Collective immediately set off in a unique direction, launching a series of pop-up dinners — not only in

Madison, but also in Chicago and New York City. Hunter says the group would create its menu first, then rent out a restaurant space to execute the meal.

"People embraced the concept as a way for us to pursue culinary careers without taking on full-time obligations," Hunter says. "We just wanted the opportunity to cook for people and do something creative and fun."

The success of the dinners led to the formation of Underground Catering, which added structure and opportunity to the pop-up concept and set the collective on its current trajectory. The enterprise, the first of several owned by Hunter, his brother Ben Hunter and business partner Melinda

UNDERGROUND next page



PHOTO: COURTESY

Chef Jonny Hunter got his start running Catacombs, a communal restaurant kitchen, and has since built Underground Food Collective into an unexpectedly successful venture.

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PHOTOS: COURTESY **Underground Food Collective** started by hosting pop-up dinners, and they're still a vital part of the group's ethos. A recent dinner in New York City featured scallop crudo (upper left), beef tartar with dried onion and fried chips (above), and tilefish with roasted parsnip and microgreens (left).

UNDERGROUND from prior page

Trudeau, involved the same organic and local produce with which the collective had been working, while adding locally raised meats.

It was the first in a string of additions, some more successful than others. The collective's first attempt at a restaurant, the Underground Kitchen, opened in 2010 and closed nine months later after a fire (the space is now occupied by Heritage Tavern). More successful was Underground Meats, a wholesale meat processing facility opened in 2012 that offers charcuterie, sausages and salami, and Underground Butcher, a retail meat store that offers fresh cuts from humanely raised animals.

Hunter's culinary talents have shone brightest at the collective's permanent home, Forequarter Restaurant, also established in 2012. "Forequarter is a tiny restaurant, but the food there is really driven

by the creative process and is very typical of where we are in Wisconsin and that we have fresh vegetables available for only a limited time each year," Hunter says. "We're limited in many ways, but those limitations help us to make something unique."

Hunter says the restaurant isn't themed beyond that description, although root vegetables are prominent in menu items and many dishes are made using fermentation processes borrowed from Asian cuisine. It's a process that lends a unique character to such dishes as a salad of pickled trout with smoked trout roe, celeriac mayonnaise and shaved vegetables (\$14) or fried mushrooms with black garlic, black radishes and caramelized shallot vinaigrette (\$8), two of Hunter's favorite menu items.

The collective will expand sometime in 2015, when Hunter opens his next restaurant, Middlewest, at 809 Williamson St., next door to Underground Butcher. He says the restaurant will be larger than Forequarter, with a focus on Wisconsin culture, but resists getting any more specific than that, except to say it'll retain a commitment to sustainable foods.

"I think that we run a different kind of kitchen than a lot of other restaurants. The structure has changed from the early days, but the principles stay the same," Hunter says. "The team that works there is responsible for the food coming out. The menu is not an expression of a single individual, but the expression of the team."

Hunter's expression of the collective ethos is one embraced by many Madison consumers. And the more well-known his name becomes, the fewer the limits on how far the Underground Food Collective can spread its influence and further its cause.

IF YOU GO

Forequarter Restaurant: 708 ¼ E. Johnson St., 608-609-4717.
Underground Meats: 931 E. Main St., 608-251-6171.
Underground Butcher: 811 Williamson St., 608-338-3421.
For more details, visit undergroundfoodcollective.org.

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By J.M. Hirsch

AP food editor

For most of us, salads are mainly unplanned affairs. Which is why the idea of salad cookbooks can seem kind of silly.

Salad assembly generally is a pathetic — and pathetically easy — process that involves grabbing whatever greens haven't wilted at the back of the refrigerator, piling on whatever other vegetables are handy — and if we're feeling indulgent maybe some leftover protein and cheese — and calling it good. Follow a recipe? Not likely.

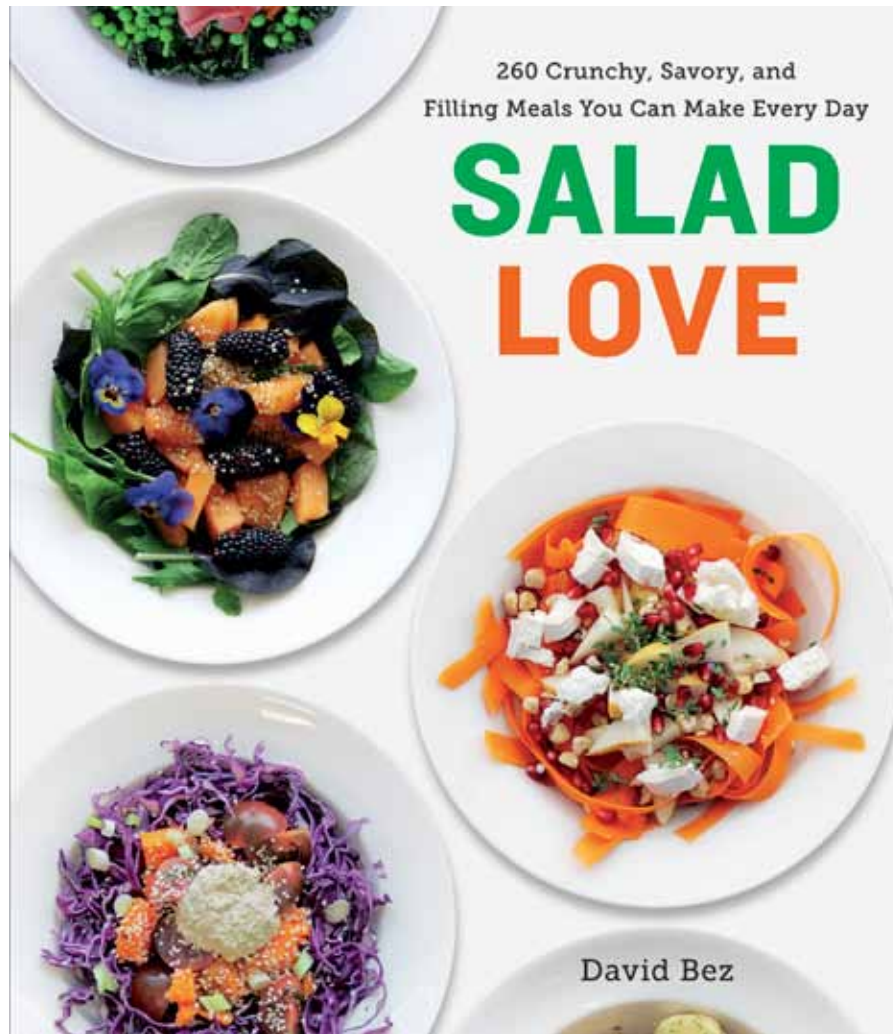
So I was surprised to be so smitten with *Salad Love*, a new cookbook by London salad blogger (three words not often strung together) David Bez. The book is based on his blog, *Salad Pride*, which he started in 2010 after challenging himself to create and consume a new salad every day for a year. The blog is a lovely source for salad inspiration, but the book is even lovelier.

Its main strength: *Salad Love* takes a counterintuitive approach to being a cookbook. There are no recipes, at least not in the traditional sense.

Rather, the book packs in 260 salad and dressing ideas, collections of ingredients Bez suggests work well together. Each ingredient set is accompanied by a photo (by Bez), as well as suggestions for making each salad vegan or omnivorous, as appropriate. But the rest is left to the reader. And the message clearly is that improv is good.

It's a flip book approach to salad making, and it works. The ideas — all of which take 20 minutes or less to assemble — are creative without being outlandish, spanning a toss of broiled squid, avocado, edamame and chili to kale with blackberries and raspberries dressed with an almond vinaigrette. The book also is divided into seasons, a nice play for a meal many people think of only during warmer months.

This is a salad book, and salads aren't all that sexy. So this book is likely to fly under a lot of radars. But if you're a salad eater looking for easy inspiration, it's well worth checking out.



PECORINO CHEESE, CROUTONS AND BLUEBERRIES SALAD

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup romaine lettuce
- 1/2 cup pecorino cheese
- 2 spring onions
- Handful of whole grain croutons
- Handful of dried blueberries

Dressing

- Salt and pepper
- Balsamic vinegar
- Extra virgin olive oil

Recipe courtesy David Bez/*Salad Pride*

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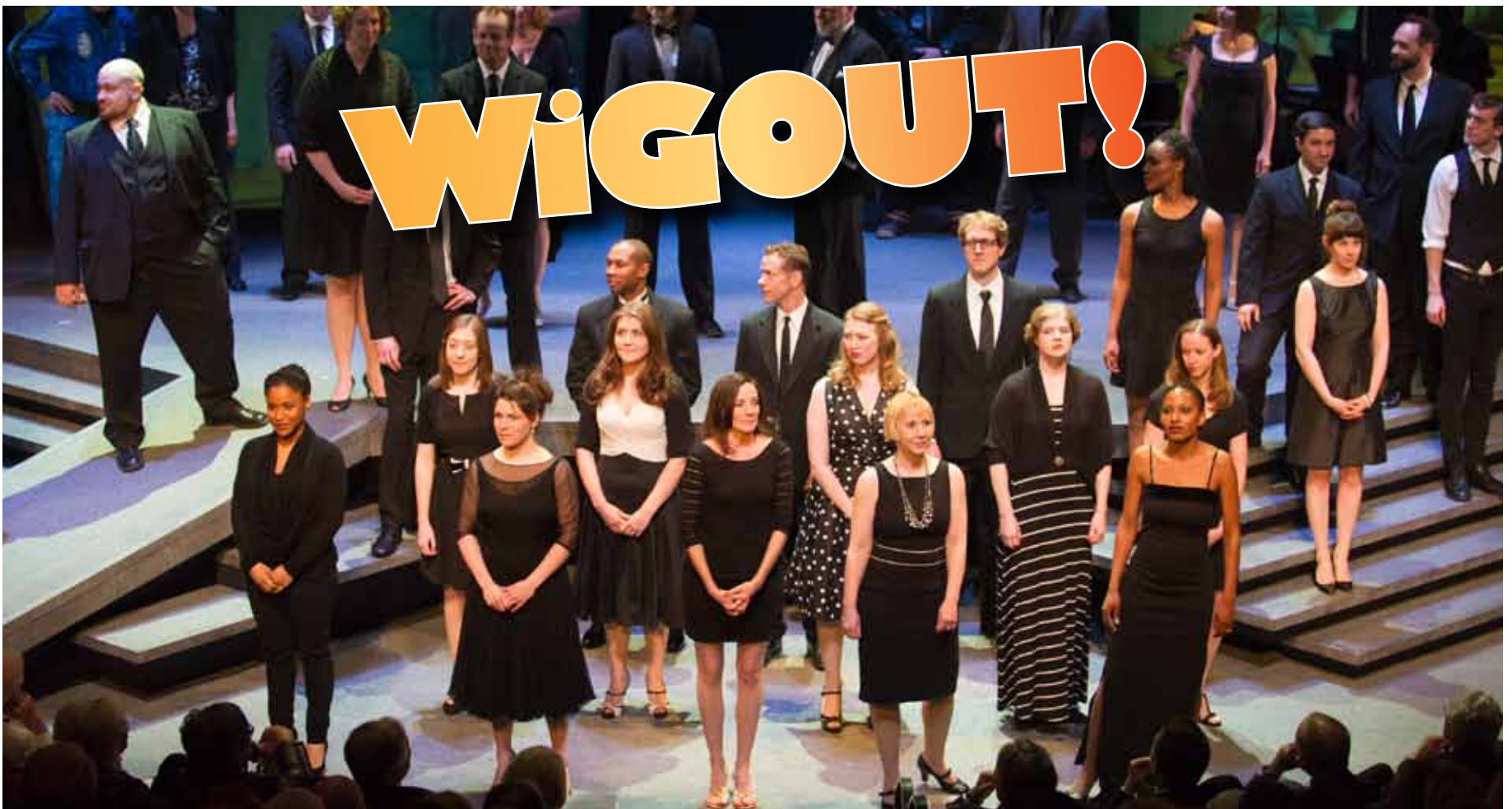


PHOTO: COURTESY MILWAUKEE REP

Alumni from prior years of the Rep internship program gather at the company's 2014 gala. Interns are a vital element of each season — and increasingly, regional theaters nationwide.

The rep behind the Rep

At 50, the theater's internship has evolved into one of the nation's best

By Matthew Reddin

Staff writer

There's a saying around the Milwaukee Rep that "the company is built on the backs of interns." That sentiment might come off as a joke if the people saying it weren't so appreciative, or acutely aware that it's true.

For the past 50 years, the Rep's intern program has been a vital part of the theater, recruiting developing actors, directors, technicians and designers to support the established artists in the public eye. Originally just a way to solve the need for understudies and ensemble members, as well as resident company members, the program has blossomed. It's now considered one of the top programs for actors and directors in the country — although few outside the theater community even know it exists.

Rep interns have done more for Milwaukee than just support a single season, because they have a tendency to return or stick around. The Rep's entire top level of artistic staff (except, humorously, artistic director Mark Clements himself) are alumni of the intern program. Many of the city's most beloved actors have come to Milwaukee for the Rep internship and wound up

either making their careers here or opening theater companies of their own.

But on a broader scale, the Rep's 50 years of interns have built a nationwide network of theater artists devoted to hard work in the pursuit of their craft, be that in regional theater or on Broadway, and the program's reputation of continued success has allowed the Rep to cultivate successive generations of artists, according to Brent Hazelton, the Rep's associate artistic director and a former intern company director.

"If we're not — as a regional theater — working with training programs to advance the careers of emerging professional actors, then it's just not going to happen," he says.

A DAY IN THE LIFE

The essence of a Rep internship has remained structurally the same for the past 50 years. According to current intern company director JC Clementz (a directing intern in the 2011-12 season), each of the 10 to 15 acting and directing interns hired each year are assigned to the season's plays based on where they best can be used and learn from the Rep's staff and guest artists as the season progresses.

"I like to equate it to a residency, where doctors in their final years (of training) spend anywhere from a year to five years studying with specialists," Clementz says. "These emerging artists and directors come here and they get the chance to study and participate — become fellows — with the professional artists who are working here."

Acting interns are expected to serve as understudies on at least one production at any given moment, and may fill ensemble parts and occasionally principal roles as well. Directors serve as assistant directors on those productions. And that's it — a focus that Hazelton says distinguishes the Rep's program from many others.

"They don't sort screws, we're not hanging lights, they don't clean the bathrooms or work in the box office," he says. "It allows us to get a really high caliber of artists in here."

That doesn't mean they don't work hard. If anything, an intern's day is longer than that of an average actor or director. Week-day rehearsals run six to eight hours, starting between 10 a.m. and noon and ending between 6 p.m. and 8 p.m., and interns are expected to be present for much of that time, unless they aren't on call for a scene. But they're also required to attend three-hour understudy rehearsals before or after, and when acting interns are cast as ensemble members or principals, they may have to perform in a show after their regular rehearsal. To make things more complicated, interns may be rehearsing more than one show at a time, alternating between the two from day to day.

When not physically in the Rep's complex, interns are provided with housing on the East Side by the company — a big step implemented in the '00s that has helped the company attract talented actors and directors who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford coming to town.

The modern definition of "intern" suggests the Rep's interns are relative youngsters. But while some are fresh out of bachelor's degree programs, Hazelton says the company pursues interns of all ages. It's part of an overall commitment to searching for a diverse intern class.

"Our job is to serve what's going on down there (on stage), and you can't do that with a group of 22-year-old white kids. You need age diversity, you need racial diversity," Hazelton explains.

The exact benefits of the program differ for actors and directors, but alumni of both disciplines say they're grateful for the opportunity to work closely with professionals who understand their craft and are willing to share what they know.

"I think there are very few things more valuable than watching intimately and taking on the choices of top professional actors who have been working at their craft for years and years and years," says Deborah Staples, a Rep intern in the 1990-91 season who later became a Rep resident company member and a staple of Wisconsin's theater community.

"What separates one actor from another is the choices that they make," she says. "A

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lot of young actors seem to not even know that there are choices to be made.”

For current intern Vallea Woodbury, who has several years’ experience under her belt already, it was feedback from other artists that benefited her the most. “Because of my position in the intern ensemble, I was able to walk up to someone and say, ‘Hey, am I doing what you need, and is there something you think I should be doing different?’”

The directing internship is no different, according to Leda Hoffmann, the Rep’s literary coordinator and a directing intern in the 2010-11 season. In that year, she got to work with four directors: Aaron Posner on *My Name is Asher Lev*, Joe Hanreddy on *A Christmas Carol*, J.R. Sullivan on *The 39 Steps* and artistic director Clements on *Death of a Salesman*. Now, every time she walks into a rehearsal room, she says, she has memories of how all four handled the same sort of situation, which she can adapt and steal to fit any given moment.

FIFTY YEARS OF INTERNS

While the fundamental function of the intern company has stayed constant over the past five decades, some of the details have changed as the company has evolved and improved. While Clementz says there’s

scarce material in the Rep’s archives about the earliest days of the program, he and the artistic team do know it began at the behest of Mary John, the founding managing director of the company in 1954, when it was still known as the Fred Miller Theatre. When the company changed its name in 1964, the intern program developed as a training program designed for pre-professional, non-Equity actors who could support the resident company.

By all accounts, it stayed much the same for the next few decades, growing in reputation as the years passed. By the time Staples applied to be an intern in the 1990-91 season, she says the Rep’s program had become one of the best in the country and her top pick when she applied to programs.

As good as the Rep’s internship program was then, it was about to start on the path to a big upgrade. Artistic director John Dillon stepped down shortly after Staples’ time as an intern, and his replacement Joe Hanreddy decided in the mid-’90s to commit to expanding the program. Hazelton says one of the chief architects of that expansion was Sandy Ernst, who served as the intern company director for several years before he took over the program in 2003. Ernst was one of the first people to take a direct leadership role over the interns, and she

The Rep’s interns were largely pulled from schools and communities in Wisconsin and the Midwest, with regional diversity usually coming from graduate students required to have internships. The result, Hazelton says, was the intern company tended to consist of white 20-somethings financially able to move to Milwaukee for an unpaid apprentice-



PHOTO: MICHAEL BROSILOW



PHOTO: JAY WESTHAUSER

While the intern company has regionally diversified, local actors can make a name for themselves too. Jonathan Wainwright (right, above), Molly Rhode (left) and Marti Gobel (below) are three examples of the many local artists who’ve turned an internship year into further success.



PHOTO: JAY WESTHAUSER



PHOTO: MARK AVERY

Deborah Staples was an intern when she received a small role in *Inherit the Wind* in 1991 (highlighted above). By the time she starred in *How the World Began* in 2013 (right), she had been working as a resident actor at the Rep for almost 20 years.



PHOTO: MICHAEL BROSILOW

was tasked with actively recruiting new interns each year.

The program needed that sort of shakeup because Staples, a California transplant, was the exception, not the rule.

ship.

“It didn’t make for the great-est group,” he says. “Not only do you put a group of people the same age and the same experience in the room and they all kill each other ... but it just didn’t serve the theater very well.”

Hazelton was in the last cohort to work pro bono, in the 1999-2000 season. The next year, the Rep began providing interns with both housing and a stipend, and Hazelton says the company immediately saw an uptick in older and out-of-state actors. When he took on Ernst’s role, Hazelton made her network even bigger, tripling the number of relationships with schools nationwide in an effort to expand the company’s racial and ethnic diversity.

He also expanded the number of professional opportunities for interns outside of the Rep. Interns now have a number of audition opportunities built into their year, including an annual Chicago showcase at the end of the year, that expose them to artists from other cities. “The goal is not for

interns to leave here with a job,” Hazelton says. “The goal is for interns to leave with a really strong set of personal connections, so that in that first year when they’re out on their own ... (they) actually have a group of artistic directors and producers that they can connect with.”

So far, it’s working. Since 2003, about 90 percent of the intern company’s alumni are still working in theater, a number Clementz says is almost unheard of. Just at the Rep, as many as 10 percent of the roles in an average season go to former interns.

Clementz took over the program in 2013 and has continued to build on Hazelton’s success. He now travels to universities throughout the fall and winter, seeing nearly

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THE REP'S SHORT PLAY SERIES CELEBRATES ITS FIFTH YEAR

While it's one of the newest additions to the Rep interns' duties, the annual Rep Lab short play festival has been delighting audiences since its debut in 2011. Now in its fifth year, the festival provides acting, directing and design interns an opportunity to show what they've learned in a season.

This year's installment features seven plays, two written by former Rep interns (James Fletcher and Patrick Holland), as well as a devised work featuring the full company by directing interns Hannah Greene and Philip Muehe. We've provided the Rep's synopses of each, but remember — half the fun of Rep Lab is getting surprised by something you never knew you'd love.

Rep Lab runs April 10-13 at the Milwaukee Rep's Steimke Studio, 108 E. Wells St. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at 414-224-9490 or milwaukeerep.com. — Matthew Reddin

Every Show You've Ever Seen by Amelia Roper; directed by Leda Hoffmann

Commissioned by Actors Theatre of Louisville, this tribute to theater calls upon the collective memory of artists and audiences alike and it begs us to consider our experience of theater as something greater than a single moment.

Tape by José Rivera; directed by Hannah Greene

Prolific playwright/Oscar nominee José Rivera (*The Motorcycle Diaries*) ponders the consequences of a man's lifetime of lies.

The Latest News from the Primordial Ooze by Rich Orloff; directed by Leda Hoffmann

A primordial creature reveals to his girlfriend that his fins are really fingers. What's worse, he can breathe air! In this punny short produced in 2012 by Milwaukee's Pink Banana Theatre Co., Barry considers taking one small step for an amphibian, and one giant leap for amphibian-kind.

People Are Dancing book and lyrics by Sarah Hammond; music by Benny Gamberman; directed by Philip Muehe

This 10-minute musical by Sarah Hammond, whose *Hum of the Arctic* appeared

in Rep Lab 2013, showcases two strangers who meet on a plane to Venice, fall in love and eat gelato three times a day. On their last night together, Jim wants to make a clean break, but Rebecca reminds him that they still have time. They are, after all, in Venice. And in Venice, people are dancing.

Give Until It Hurts by James Fletcher; directed by JC Clementz

Local actor James Fletcher takes non-profit fundraising to the extreme. Two goons hired by NPR bust in on Robert at dinner and guilt him into giving at gunpoint.

hysterical by Steve Yockey; directed by Philip Muehe

From Yockey's short-play cycle *very still & hard to see*, this "play that tastes like black licorice" catches Elizabeth in the throes of a Jägermeister-fueled breakdown. Repeating a cycle of love, loss, and alcohol abuse, she hallucinates an unusual and somewhat unsympathetic companion.

The Cowboy by Patrick Holland; directed by Hannah Greene

In this thrilling play, The Cowboy muses on his role in the deaths of three women: Linda, Kim and Amanda. But are their flirtations with him their only connection?

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400 in-person auditions by the end of February. Promising students get reminders to apply, joining the 250-odd applications that come in during the spring. By then, the Rep's season is set, so he filters through those applications for actors and directors suited for the scheduled shows and makes offers to the best candidates.

There's a big difference between the interns Clementz hires now and the ones Hazelton hired 10 years ago, though — and it all has to do with Mark Clements.

A PROGRAM EVOLVES

The big shift in quality for the intern company came around 2004. At that point, Hazelton says, Hanreddy was able to select shows for the season with the intern company in mind, knowing there would be an acceptable baseline of talent. "It stopped being about 'making do with whatever I'm given' and more about 'I can do this play now because we'll have interns who can handle the responsibilities,'" Hazelton says.

But Clements' arrival in 2010 brought changes to the Rep, and the aftershocks would change the purpose and composition of the intern company too. Clements brought an increased focus on musical theater to the company, staging an annual musical in the Quadracci Powerhouse and emphasizing Stackner Cabaret shows that feature multi-talented actor/singer/instrumentalists. A few years later, in 2012, Clements dissolved the resident acting company, rolling its remaining members into a new team of associate artists that also includes directors, writers, musicians and designers.

The first change only altered the type of interns Hazelton, and later Clementz, would need to recruit. Under Hanreddy, the Rep had been a text-based program, where the goal was to find good actors who could speak well and deliver captivating performances. On top of that, interns must now have experience in singing, dancing or playing instruments, further narrowing the pool and raising the talent bar.

The second — eliminating the resident

company — has forced a new evolutionary direction altogether. "In the early '00s," Hazelton says, "that was going to be our way to diversify the resident acting company: to bring people in through the intern program, keep them around for a few years in an apprentice capacity, and move them into the company that way."

Without that resident company, the emphasis is on diversity of education — learning from every artist, local and otherwise, who passes through the theater, at the expense of those deeper relationships former interns could build with residents.

"One of the values and advantages of the program has always been the ability to be mentored by professional artists. And that mentorship still exists, but it's a different sort of mentorship," Hazelton says.

Even five years after Clements' arrival, there may still be changes on the horizon. For several years, the artistic team has been debating the pros and cons of transforming the internship into an accredited grad program. And while their program's focused nature helps them beat out most of the competition, many less-targeted programs have begun offering incentives such as health insurance, which the Rep currently isn't able to.

One thing won't change: the company's commitment to teach a good old-fashioned Midwestern work ethic. It's the single attribute of the program every veteran points out, and the one the artistic team thinks might be the most important.

"If I had not worked my ass off as an intern," Clementz says, "Brent would not have come to me and said, 'Hey, we're looking to hire someone in the literary office; are you interested?' ... You have to work hard enough and put yourself in a position where (people) will want to hire you for the work you do."

It's a lesson he learned from his teachers as a Rep intern. It's one he teaches to his interns now that he's running the program. And, if history is any indication, it's one they'll teach the next generation.

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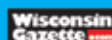


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Christopher Durang blends Chekhov's style with autobiography in 'Vanya & Sonia & Masha & Spike'



PHOTO: COURTESY

Christopher Durang's play *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* will conclude Forward Theater's 2014-15 season.

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Playwright Christopher Durang's most famous work, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, may be strongly influenced by the plays of 19th-century Russian writer Anton Chekhov. But it's the contemporary elements he's woven in, including quasi-autobiographical details pulled from his life and that of friends like Yale Drama School classmate Sigourney Weaver, that gives its characters the energy, vitality and pathos needed to rise above stereotypes and give the play its lasting comedic appeal.

Winner of the 2013 Tony Award for best play, Durang's classic/contemporary mashup will conclude Forward Theater's 2014-15 season, running April 9-26 at the Overture Center.

"What I love in all (Durang's) plays is that these are really human characters with beating hearts, and the comedy comes out of their circumstances, not from them being cartoons," says Forward's artistic director Jennifer Uphoff Gray, who is directing the production. "The play treats them with a profound amount of compassion, which is a lovely tonal layer on top of the comedy."

The play's references to Chekhov are deliberate and overt. Vanya, Sonia and Masha's names are taken from Chekhovian canon, as is the name of an additional character, Nina. The play also blends comedy with semi-tragic situations in a way similar to Chekhov works like *The Seagull* and *The Cherry Orchard*.

But Durang himself says *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* is not merely a parody of Chekhov, nor does one need to know the Russian writer's plays to appreciate this contemporary one.

"I do like Chekhov's plays and got to read them in my 20s and 30s," says Durang. Now 66, Durang left New York City several years ago and moved to rural Bucks County, Pennsylvania, with his now-husband John Augustine. The play is set in that same county and reflects an urban/rural tension.

"A lot of Chekhov's characters are unhappy with their lives and regret the things they didn't do, and those who live in the country seem to be unhappier than those who live in the city," Durang says. "I thought, 'What if I wrote a play that incorporated the themes of Chekhov and set the play in modern day?'"

Durang's question became the genesis of *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, and drives its successful comedic trajectory.

The story is set at the home of Vanya (James Ridge) and Sonia (Sarah Day), siblings who live together in Bucks County. Unemployed, they have spent most of their adult lives caring for their now-dead parents, literature professors who loved Chekhov and named their children after Chekhovian characters. They currently survive thanks to their movie star sister Masha (Julie Swenson) covering their living expenses.

The pair's static environment ruptures when Masha returns home with her latest fling, boy toy Spike (Travis Knight). Sonia's insecurities and Masha's competitive nature spark a series of arguments which Vanya must try to mediate, all while Spike flounders about the house distracting the trio with his muscular, often scantily clad body. It quickly becomes clear that Masha is intent on selling the family home, which would leave Vanya and Sonia destitute.

Durang says the play's characters share some similarities to his own life, but it's their differences that helped him maintain a necessary distance while writing the work. "I realized that I was the age now of Vanya in the play and I am very much that character," Durang says. "But it's more of a what-if scenario. I feel very lucky that I was able to pursue a career in theater after college, but the Vanya character is what I think I would be if I didn't get to follow my choices."

The play is largely motivated by jealousy and sibling rivalry, another what-if scenario for Durang, an only child who nevertheless had to play peacemaker between warring parents.

"The characters had to take care of parents who had Alzheimer's disease for 15 years. I didn't have that because my

mother died of cancer at age 30," Durang says. "Before that my parents fought all the time. My father had a drinking problem and I constantly had to be the peacemaker."

Vanya's sisters have ties to reality too. Durang says he created Sonia as a composite of several women he's known, and the narcissistic Masha is inspired by Weaver — or rather, by a similarly self-involved character she played in college.

"I'm not saying that any part of Masha is based on Sigourney Weaver," Durang says, "but I thought she would have fun playing the role, and I was lucky to get her."

The Tony Award-winning Broadway production, which featured Weaver as Masha, also starred David Hyde Pierce and Kristine Nielsen as Masha's siblings and Billy Magnussen as Spike.

Durang says the characters in the play must deal with feeling left behind as times change, and the struggles people face in their attempt to coexist and come to terms with their gains and losses. But he rejects the opinion of *The New York Times* drama critic Ben Brantley, who described *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* as "a sunny new play about gloomy people."

"'Gloomy people' might describe Chekhov, but there is something much more energetic about my characters," Durang says. "I think the characters in my play are likeable and you sort of root for them. 'Gloomy' doesn't suggest energy, and my characters are full of energy."

The play's energy certainly helped drive the nominations and awards the work has received. In addition to his Tony, Durang has also received a Drama Desk Award, New York Drama Critics Circle Award, and many more.

Best of all, the play pleases its creator, who may be the toughest critic of all.

"I am very lucky with this play," Durang says. "It was a nice surprise."

ON STAGE

Forward Theater's production of *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike* runs April 9-26 at the Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State St., Madison. For tickets, call 608-258-4141 or visit forwardtheater.com.

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BROADWAY AT THE MARCUS CENTER

Natalie Portman embraces Paris, motherhood and the chance to sit in the director's chair

By Jan Janssen

The Interview Feed

The past year has been an interesting adventure for Natalie Portman. Following her marriage to long-time boyfriend Benjamin Millepied, director of the ballet department of the Paris Opera, the Oscar-winning actress moved to Paris last year with the couple's 3-year-old son. She's been soaking up French culture and adapting to her new world as wife, mother and Parisienne.

"I think it was destiny that brought me to live in France," Portman says. "My father named me Natalie as an homage to a song by (legendary French singer) Gilbert Bécaud. I shot my first film with French director Luc Besson. And now I'm living in Paris with my French husband and our son and immersing myself in the language and culture. It's very inspiring to live in Paris, I feel very lucky."

At 33, Portman is looking to expand her film horizons by taking on more varied projects and testing herself like never before. One of her most interesting new roles is in *Knight of Cups*, Terence Malick's latest avant-garde film starring Christian Bale as a Hollywood screenwriter experiencing an existential meltdown in the cesspool of L.A. Portman is his love interest.

At its world premiere last month at the Berlin International Film Festival, aka the Berlinale, *Knight of Cups* met with the kind of controversy that greets every Terence Malick film. Though some critics complained about its lack of depth, others hailed it as a stunning visual and emotional journey. Critics seemed to agree that Bale and Portman deliver fascinating and compelling performances — a mix of improvisation and planning that's typical of Malick's free-form filmmaking technique, on display in such films as *To The Wonder* and *The Tree of Life*.

Meanwhile, Portman, who won an Oscar for her performance in 2011's *Black Swan*, also is drawing considerable attention as "Miss Dior" in a huge new international campaign for the luxury goods company. In the daring commercial for l'eau de Dior, directed by Anton Corbijn (*A Most Wanted Man*), Natalie plays a "Miss Dior" bride who decides to choose freedom over matrimony by running away from her own wedding to the tune of Janis Joplin's "Piece of My Heart."

Set amid the seaside beauty of the French Riviera in the fabled Hotel du Cap Eden Roc in Cap Ferrat, the spectacularly shot film features Portman jumping out of her heels and shedding her couture wedding gown to reveal a little black dress underneath.

In addition to *Knight of Cups*, Portman served as executive producer of the feature-length documentary *The Seventh Fire*, about a Native-American gang leader,



PHOTO: DIOR

Natalie Portman's latest acting role is in Terence Malick's upcoming film *Knight of Cups*. She's also taken her first foray into directing.

which also made its world premiere at the Berlinale. Portman is currently editing the first feature film she has directed, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, which is based on the memoir by noted Israeli author Amos Oz.

For our interview, Portman wore a fabulous white and black Dior dress with black heels. Her hair was darker and longer than we've seen of late, and combed back.

What can you tell us about working with Anton Corbijn on your Miss Dior commercial? Anton is such an exciting director to work with and is one of the boldest directors whose visual sense is extraordinary. This film is much more physical than any of the other (commercials) I've done for Dior and it felt like we were doing an action film in a way. But the beauty of it is what also really stands out.

Does Miss Dior offer a positive image for women? The idea of Miss Dior was to portray this free-spirited young woman who is both independent and anxious to indulge her passions. I hope as a woman that I can also embrace in my life that same kind of spirit and passion and that was a major reason that I wanted to be part of this campaign. The campaign is celebration of being true to yourself and not being limited by things other people try to impose on you. There's a message of personal freedom and expression and it's basically saying, "Be yourself."

Your new film, *Knight of Cups*, is also shot in a very avant-garde way. How was working with legendary director Terence Malick? It was really inspiring. He doesn't do things in a conventional way and that's inspiring. He makes you realize how many things in life are conventions, and he taps into magic because of the way he is able to escape rules and pre-established ways of thinking and making a movie.

I've been a fan of Terry's for my whole life. *Days of Heaven* is my favorite film ever. He makes really incredible, impactful films, both visually and emotionally. Working with him was also a very intense experience because it was the first film I made after the birth of my son and it was a beautiful way to get back to work.

Were most of your scenes improvised? Much of it was, but it was based on extensive notes and suggestions about the dialogue. Terry would give us a lot of different possibilities and choices in terms of the dialogue and what lines we would find most comfortable saying. There was quite a lot of discussion beforehand. It's a very interesting way of creating a film and it gives you a lot of freedom to be able to develop your character and experiment with your own approach to acting. ... Terry wants you to interpret rather than execute what he is asking you to do and that not only puts you at ease as an actor but it also pushes you to discover and use your own

inspiration and ideas while you're playing your character.

What kind of atmosphere was there on the set? I wasn't there as long as Christian, but we both had a lot of fun on the set, and we really enjoyed being able to work in a way that upsets all the conventions and usual techniques of filmmaking. It's very liberating.

You've recently finished directing your first film, *A Tale of Love and Darkness*. Did working with Terence Malick influence your approach? I felt very, very lucky to have worked with Terry right before I directed for the first time. He reminded me that the rules of filmmaking are not necessary and the way we do things, the rituals we have, aren't necessary and that you can find your own way and allow the mistakes and welcome the problems. Working with Terry was a gift in that sense. He opens your mind and your eyes to what you can accomplish in the way you tell a story that goes beyond the dialogue and how you can create the atmosphere that is going to envelop audiences when they watch the film.

Do you feel that your life has changed a lot since moving to Paris? It's so interesting to plunge into another culture and experience a different way of living. The

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city is so rich in terms of the architecture, the bookshops you find at every corner, the way everyone dresses so well. No Parisian ever walks around in shorts and even the children look very chic (laughs).

How is your French coming along? It's improved a lot and I've been taking lessons and studying as often as I can. I feel I'm getting to the point where I'm slowly becoming more comfortable speaking French and being fluent in the language. I'm hoping that one day I will be able to work in a French film and do the role in French. I would really love to be able to do that, and I'm very motivated to get to that level.

Do you feel that becoming a mother has changed your perspective on different things about how you see your life? There's a sense of greater responsibility and maturity that you develop very quickly. You know you're beginning a new chapter in your life and it's wonderful to watch your child grow and learn every day. I love being a mother, and this a very happy time in my life.

I also have a lot more confidence overall and that's been why I decided to direct my first feature that we made in Israel last year. It's been a big step for me and I felt honored to tell the story based on the early years in the life of Amos Oz, who is a very respected Israeli writer and journalist and



PHOTO: REUTERS

Natalie Portman at the 2015 Oscars.

who is a major advocate of a two-state solution. It's not a political film but it's a story I hope will bring understanding and promote dialogue which we need to establish peace.

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by Margaret Raether | **APRIL 16 - MAY 3**

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Wisconsin Film Festival unreels a week of flicks

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

Movie buff Jim Healy's life is governed by a single credo: There are no new films or old films, only films that he haven't yet seen.

The sentiment aptly describes the Wisconsin Film Festival, Madison's annual cinematic blowout that this year will unspool some 160 films of varying lengths for a growing body of rabid film fans.

Healy has been the festival's head of programming for about four years, and started as the first programming director of the UW-Madison Cinematheque, the longstanding on-campus film program. He's deeply steeped in the cinematic arts — before coming to Madison, he worked at Chicago's International Film Festival and spent time as an assistant curator at the George Easton House film archive, and he says he watches 650 films a year, only about 150 of those repeat viewings. At the Wisconsin Film Festival, in its 17th year, he and his fellow programmers will be featuring what he says is one of the best film lineups in several years.

"We try and show the best possible films from around the world that otherwise might not be available to Madison audiences," says Healy. "We're looking for film artistry and craftsmanship that provide greater insight into the human experience."

Multiple themes emerge throughout the 2015 festival's short films and full-length features. There are internationally known documentaries and a "Wisconsin's Own" section, which honors the work of local filmmakers and those with Badger State roots. There are titles from the new German cinema, as well as a handful of films from emerging French women directors.

This year's lineup also features an homage to Orson Welles, one of filmmaking's first great auteurs. Welles was born 100 years ago this May in Kenosha, and spent part of his childhood in Madison.

The biggest Welles picture in the bunch is 1966's *Chimes at Midnight*, which depicts Shakespeare's character Falstaff in a mashup of the Bard's three *Henriad* plays, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Richard II*, and is rarely screened due to ongoing legal battles. The festival will also show the documentary *Magician: The Astonishing Life and Work of Orson Welles*, romantic drama *Crack in the Mirror* and even *Too Much Johnson*, Welles' first film, which was made in 1938 and has been lost and unseen for more than 70 years. (A silver nitrate print was discovered in Italy in 2013 and preserved by the George Eastman House.)

Healy urges fans to look for new films

FESTIVAL next page



PHOTO: COURTESY WISCONSIN FILM FESTIVAL

Chimes at Midnight, which blends several Shakespeare plays into a single tale of Falstaff (Welles himself, left), is rarely screened due to disputes over who owns the film's rights.



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FESTIVAL from prior page

from countries or done in styles the viewers may not have seen before, and there are certainly a great many of those. Some films are presented in partnership with each other for added effect. *Gunman's Walk*, a 1958 western that makes innovative use of CinemaScope and features '50s teen heartthrob Tab Hunter, is paired with *Tab Hunter Confidential*, a 2015 documentary that examines the decline of Hunter's career after the public discovered he was gay. Hunter himself provides some of the candid narration.

Healy admires many films on the program but, when pressed, identified three must-see features:

La Sapienza (2014) is a joint French/Italian production, which celebrates art, architecture and human relationships in a very unusual way, Healy says. In the film, a childless French couple encounter teen

siblings while visiting Italy. The younger girl is subject to fainting spells, so the elder woman stays to watch over her while her husband takes the brother, an aspiring architect, to see the great buildings of Rome.

"It's a little bit off the traditional narrative path," Healy explains. "It's almost rigorously straightforward in the way it tells the story of artistic and spiritual renewal by an architect who has reached a rut in his life."

The Great Man (*La Grand Homme*) (2014), a French film that's part of the French women director's series, is deeply moving and very compelling, Healy says. Its main characters are a pair of French legionnaires, one of whom saves the other's life, and the savior's son, whose status in the country is jeopardized when his father chooses not to leave him again and return to war.

"This strikes me as one of the most

urgent contemporary films about undocumented immigrants and friendship and parents raising children and international issues," Healy says. "The film's great strength is that you're not quite sure where the story is taking you, and that's best left unsaid because of all the surprises in the film."

White God (2014) is a Hungarian film that reimagines *Lassie Come Home* as a canine revenge movie, says Healy.

"This is another unpredictable film that begins like a coming-of-age story and

ends as a violent revenge fantasy told from the viewpoint of a dog," Healy says. "With its great use of sound, imagery and filmmaking technique, it's a film of surprises that successfully changes its tone halfway through.

"It's one of the best and most entertaining movies I've seen in the last year," he adds.

And for someone who sees as many films as Healy does, that's saying a lot.



PHOTO: COURTESY WISCONSIN FILM FESTIVAL

***La Sapienza* celebrates art, architecture and human relationships via the story of its four lead characters, a French couple on holiday and two Italian siblings.**

WISCONSIN FILM FESTIVAL: BY THE NUMBERS

Now in its 17th year, the Wisconsin Film Festival attracts a very strong following locally, as well as from around the state and the Midwest. We've crunched some of the festival's more important numbers so you can appreciate its magnitude. For a full schedule, visit wifilmfest.org.

Dates: April 9-16, 2015

Number of films: 160 films of varying lengths shown in 107 programs, many of which repeat twice.

Number of venues: Eight screens in six different venues, including three screens at Sundance Cinema. The venues are:

- UW Cinematheque, Rm. 4070, Vilas Hall, 621 University Ave.
- UW Chazen Museum of Art, Auditorium, 750 University Ave.
- UW Union South, The Marquee, 1308 Dayton St.
- Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Overture Center, 201 State St.
- Capitol Theater, Overture Center, 201 State St.
- Sundance Cinema, Hilldale Shopping Center, 730 N. Midvale Blvd.

Ticket prices: A festival pass is \$300; individual showings are \$10 each, \$8 for students, seniors, UW affiliates and military. All venues are general admission, but festival pass holders get priority seating.

Total attendees: Arrive early for each showing to be guaranteed a seat. Past festivals have attracted upwards of 30,000 people annually.



PHOTO: COURTESY WISCONSIN FILM FESTIVAL

The Hungarian film *White God* features an abrupt tonal shift partway through its coming-of-age tale, becoming a violent revenge fantasy.

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Green Bay's orchestra says farewell after a century of symphonies

By Julie Steinbach

Contributing writer

The Green Bay Symphony Orchestra is one of Wisconsin's longest standing regional orchestras, founded in 1913. In its heyday, GBSO members commuted from across the state and as far away as Chicago to rehearse and perform. Even now, performing at UW-Green Bay's Weidner Center, the orchestra is a professional company with a dedicated youth symphony orchestra program, filling a vital role in its community.

On April 11, it will perform what may be its final concert. Facing a climate of declining ticket sales and "donor fatigue" — with former beneficiaries who have financially supported the organization throwing in the towel — the organization announced last year that 2014-15 would be the orchestra's final season.

It's a plight that Richard Tremarelo, a substitute musician in the GBSO since 2000 and high-ranking member of Milwaukee's chapter of the American Federation of Musicians Union, says is not unique to the company. Orchestras much like the GBSO are in financial danger across the nation.

"The one thing that really stands out is

that the musicians were blindsided by the shut down," says Tremarelo. "There are groups that are doing very well, they've figured out a way to do well in these hard times, but the board of the GBSO had trouble finding that recipe for success."

The challenge for performing arts entities, he says, is in finding a fundraising base that can supplement ticket sales. That community of benefactors must be united by a common goal: to see the performing arts securely seated in an immovable position within the community, one in which the option of closure is not even on the table.

For many years, the GBSO's role has not only been to serve as a cultural cornerstone for Green Bay. Its youth orchestra program, founded in 1967, benefits almost 200 young artists in the region, all of whom would have been silenced by the orchestra's shutdown.

The farewell concert both highlights that initiative and references the school that will ensure it does not vanish even if the orchestra does. The concert, *Passing The Baton: A Tribute to the Next Generation*, will feature guest artists from the history of the youth program and represent the transfer of stewardship from the GBSO to St. Norbert Col-



PHOTO: COURTESY RICHARD TREMARELLO

The GBSO began more than 100 years ago as a community orchestra, but has been professionally staffed with part-time artists (like the hornist) for about 20 years.

lege, which will launch a continuation of the program next year.

Keeping the youth orchestra program intact despite the shutdown of its parent orchestra is of utmost importance in the GBSO's final days, Tremarelo says.

"During one of our final three rehearsals prior to the concert," he says, "the group of youth orchestra musicians will sit in with us in a kind of apprenticeship. ... It is a unique opportunity for them to sit side by side with professionals who are as excited about the music as they are."

The concert will be divided into two halves. The first will feature the GBSO, supporting three alumni of its youth program: classical and country music violinist Sarah Larson, Milwaukee-area harpist Matthew Agen and oboist Matt Lengas. The full youth orchestra will join the GBSO for the second half, playing Shostakovich's Fifth Symphony.

For the GBSO members, the task of resurrecting their program will take center stage after the concert. Tremarelo says there are talks already in the works about a partner-

ship with Madison's Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra, which would allow the orchestra to stay intact under new management.

"It will be a big change," says Tremarelo. "The players will have to start all over with fundraising. There may not be a concert until next Christmas. That said, I'm impressed by how the musicians organized to keep playing and I have high hopes that this will work and the orchestra will be reborn for the future."

Additionally, an offer has been made to match any price put on the GBSO's library of repertoire. The collection of music will likely be kept at UW-Green Bay.

ON STAGE

The Green Bay Symphony Orchestra's farewell concert, *Passing the Baton*, will take place April 11 at 7:30 p.m., at the Weidner Center, 2420 Nicolet Drive, Green Bay. Tickets range from \$14 to \$49, and can be purchased at 920-435-3465 or greenbaysymphony.org.

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Nearly 40 years strong, the Milwaukee Symphony Chorus sings its own tune

By Kirstin Roble
Contributing writer

Since 1976, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra Chorus has been a valued partner to its orchestra, performing alongside it whenever needed. On March 28 and March 29, the stage is their own. In *MSO a cappella*, the chorus will perform a series of vocal works without the usual orchestral accompaniment.

"This is not the first time we've done a concert like this," said chorus director Lee Erickson in a recent phone interview. But, he adds, the last such installment was five years ago, making the upcoming concert something of a special occasion.

The concert features several pieces appropriate for the upcoming Easter season. Featured composers include Orlando Gibbons, Samuel Barber, Camille Saint-Saëns and Olivier Messien. The exciting program includes Paul Mueller's "Ubi Caritas," which was famously performed at the 2011 royal wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton.

Margaret Hawkins established the chorus as we know it in 1976. Prior to that time, it was composed of four Milwaukee area ensembles that would come together when needed to form a large choral ensemble. Combining the choirs often proved difficult, due to conflicting rehearsal and performance schedules. Hawkins was tasked with forming a permanent chorus that could meet the MSO's needs.

The response was overwhelming. Between 180 and 200 singers sang with the ensemble in its earliest years. When Erickson joined the group in 1978 as an assistant conductor, the chorus was rehearsing in two locations, each on different nights. As an assistant, he helped Hawkins lead the two rehearsals.

Erickson's leadership and dedication to the group did not go unnoticed, and his role expanded as years passed. When Hawkins was diagnosed with cancer in 1990, it was he who stepped up to fulfill many of her leadership responsibilities, and after she died in 1993, Erickson eventually became the company's director.

Today the chorus is a vibrant, active ensemble of about 140 singers. They span a wide variety of Milwaukee-area residents, from professional musicians to lawyers to teachers to retirees to students. A professional core group of singers aid Erickson in leading the rehearsals.

"We have a very energetic, hard-working group in this chorus," Erickson says proudly. "All of our singers are volunteers, but they put a great effort into each piece. They are a very disciplined and flexible group. Our chorus rises to provide a top-level choral ensemble for the MSO. It is



PHOTO: COURTESY

Lee Erickson has been involved with the MSO Chorus for most of its near-40 years, and has served as its director since 1993.

because of them that we exist, and we are grateful for that."

Erickson is not alone in running the chorus. Tim Benson is his regular assistant and Diane Kachelmaier serves as the rehearsal pianist. Rounding out the leadership roles is Nicolas Sluss-Rodinov, who is the production assistant and chorus manager.

During the season, from early September to late spring, the chorus rehearses on Monday evenings. Auditions are held a few times throughout the year.

Along with the a cappella songs, the upcoming program will feature works performed with area organists Christopher Berry and Thomas Koester.

The concert is especially near and dear to many choristers' hearts, as it is being dedicated to Mary Peterson, a longtime chorus member and financial supporter who recently died.

ON STAGE

The Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra Chorus will perform March 28 at 8 p.m. and March 29 at 2 p.m., at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist, 812 N. Jackson St. Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at 414-291-7605 or visit mso.org.

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'Crossroads of Civilization': Ancient artifacts get a modern presentation at Milwaukee Public Museum

By Kat Murrell

Contributing writer

There is no doubt that the Middle East is a pivotal, mutable place. We hear about current events in Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and other countries in the region daily.

This combination of contemporary importance and rich history makes the new permanent exhibition at the Milwaukee Public Museum all the more significant. The first MPM-produced, permanent exhibition in over ten years, *Crossroads of Civilization* is designed to give insights on politics, economics, religion, and daily life in the ancient Mediterranean through integration of old and new museum technology.

Carter Lupton, curator of ancient history, is a pivotal figure behind this exhibition, along with the numerous designers and artists involved in its creation. He says the alliterative themes of construction, communion, community, communication, commerce, and conflict provide a framework that draws together artifacts like vases, oil lamps, and sculptures, plus interactive elements like maps and diagrams.

The use of technology was especially important as a way to connect with contemporary audiences. The museum includes familiar pieces, such as the diorama of the Temple of Ramesses III at Medinet Habu.

The constructed model of a pylon temple shows workers on scaffolding adding decoration to a courtyard of monumental pillars and sculptures, while additional figures on the ground scurry in the course of construction. The model places us outside the temple while an accompanying digital display brings us inside to witness the wonder of ancient architecture in the most 21st century of ways.

One of the most impressive displays is a touchscreen timeline, stretched long upon an entry wall like an art history textbook come to life. Chronological developments in the ancient civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, Greece and Rome are highlighted with pictures and information.

While *Crossroads of Civilization* is permanent, its information is not, due to recent archeological tragedies that have prompted changes. Lupton says ISIS' recent destruction of pre-Islamic sites throughout Iraq has prompted changes to the Assyrian section of the timeline, recognizing that certain temples and monasteries have been lost in March 2015.

What's especially interesting about the museum's timeline is it's only the latest use of innovative design in its history. One early and significant example comes from a late-19th-century taxidermist named Carl Ake-



PHOTO: MILWAUKEE PUBLIC MUSEUM

Created by MPM artist Craig Yanek in 2014, this chariot is an exact replica of one found in King Tutankhamun's tomb. Yanek also created the forensic reconstruction of the king.

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ley. Lupton says Akeley would later become famous among museum aficionados for his work in New York and Chicago, but he got his start in Milwaukee, back when the museum opened in the 1880s.

Akeley's breakout installation came in 1890, when he placed a taxidermied muskrat in a three-dimensional display with a painted background, bringing the scenario to life. It's a practice Lupton says the museum has continued ever since.

"We've always done more to make the environments immersive, whether they're dioramas or walk-through environments like the Streets of Old Milwaukee or the European Village or the Rainforest," Lupton says.

Padi-Heru and Djed-Hor, two mummies who rank among the most ancient of the museum's holdings, have also found new life in this exhibition. They were acquired in 1887 and have been the subject of special study by Lupton. New sculptural reconstructions give an idea of what these men looked like, in addition to information gleaned from hieroglyphics and artifacts.

Padi-Heru lived around 250 BCE and was part of the temple system in his profession as a priest. His job entailed caring for a cult statue by ensuring fresh food offerings and garments were supplied daily. "They were sort of the valets for the upkeep of these statues," Lupton explains.

Djed-Hor's background is a little less certain. He may have been involved with the process of mummification as a profession, but while many details of his life are unclear, his medical profile yielded some astonishing information. A CAT scan in 2011

revealed a gaping circular hole in his cranium. "This is something we did not know when we first CAT scanned him in 1986 because the quality of scans then was not three-dimensional; you could not recreate three-dimensional images from those, they were just individual slices," says Lupton. "I think what we did is that we got one slice that was below that opening and one that was above it. So we pieced it all together."

Another focal point from *Crossroads of Civilization* that similarly makes use of archaeological research and modern craft is the life-size representation of Egyptian king Tutankhamun in a chariot drawn by two white Arabian horses. Museum artist Craig Yanek took on the task of producing a figure that, based on latest research, shows the likeness of the famous pharaoh in a chariot replicating examples found in his tomb.

The museum's detailed attention to the connections that cross civilizations and time becomes a way to understand our own commonalities with our ancestors, Lupton says. "The objects are things people made, and we learn from them what interested people, what was important to people, what they were good at. But you have to go beyond the object to the people who worked with that object, who made that object, conceived of it and created it.

"To me that is what archaeology is really about. It's about people, it's not about things."

Crossroads of Civilization is an ongoing exhibition free with regular admission at the Milwaukee Public Museum, 800 W. Wells St. Visit mpm.edu for more information.

'Justified Art!' strikes an all-too-relevant chord

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

The *Justified Art!* exhibit now on display at Madison's Overture Center is perhaps too timely. One of its most gripping works, Nafis White's "Can I Get a Witness?," consists of a bright neon sign with the same words, near a list of people killed by police: Trayvon Martin; Eric Garner; Michael Brown.

At the top of the list is Tony Robinson, the biracial Madison teen shot and killed earlier this month by Madison police officer Matt Kenny.

White's installation, originally created in 2014 and adapted with the artist's permission to include Robinson's name, brings a startling immediacy to *Justified Art!* The exhibition was mounted in response to the Rev. Alex Gee's 2013 *Capital Times* essay "Justified Anger," which addressed how Wisconsin's most liberal city has failed its African-American community.

The juried show, curated by Simone Doing and Max Puchalsky, invites artists to express their personal experiences with racial discrimination and leans toward presenting artists who are local to the Madison area and/or people of color.

Some of the pieces are artistically sophisticated; others more literal and down-to-earth. But whether they be photography, painting, sculpture or mixed media, the works on display speak pointedly to the issues first raised in Gee's essay.

Among the most obvious in its intent is Franklynn Peterson's "Invisible Child," a 1967 black-and-white photo of a group of white preteen boys playing and mugging for the camera in a gritty, graffitied urban streetscape. Nearby, a black boy about the same age looks on, a mix of fear and longing in his eyes.

Molly Krochalk's "Broken Justice" takes a more expressive position. The off-white ceramic piece resembles a torn and tattered team jacket with the word "Justice" across the front. A zipper, partially pulled down, divides the word in half.

The show's largest and most interesting work is "El Hielo; I.C.E." by Fidencio Martinez, an artist from Mexico pursuing an advanced art degree in Iowa.

"El Hielo," comprised of acrylics, ink, paper and pins, is a mixed-media work that crawls up the wall like a spray of ragged, battle-torn filigree dressed in black, off-white, gray and mildew-green colors. The swirl of monochromatic texture rises into a cresting wave, the silhouettes of two life-size figures emerging from it and tending to it.

The other works explore similar themes, but Tony Robinson's name in simple black type topping a list of dozens of names and locations stretching back to 1964 speaks most profoundly to the show's theme and intentions.

Justified Art! runs at Overture Center, 201 State St., Madison, through May 31. The gallery will hold a reception on May 1 during Gallery Night.



PHOTO: COURTESY

Nafis White's "Can I Get a Witness?" features a list of victims of police violence. In the installation at *justified Art!*, recent victim Tony Robinson's name has been added.

ART GAZE - MADISON

'WATERWAYS'

James Watrous Gallery, Overture Center
201 State St.

Upstairs from *Justified Art!*, three Wisconsin artists explore the essential nature of water, providing an expressive view of waves, ripples and still waters. Madison artist John Miller, an avid boater known for his watery landscapes, has developed a visual lexicon of water's movements that is both calligraphic and intensely realistic. Milwaukeean Marsha McDonald, a painter, photographer and filmmaker, takes a more contemplative approach to her aquatic studies. And Madisonian Sarah FitzSimons makes quilts, drawings, objects, installation art and short films that investigate how water shapes the land. *Through May 10.*

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The color and vibrancy of the Caribbean's largest island nation is corralled and examined in this photography exhibit that explores the way the medium and the island have changed over the past two decades. The eight contemporary Cuban photographers featured demonstrate the technological, philosophical and aesthetic evolution that has gripped the nation's culture. Modern Cuban photography creates an imaginary space of aesthetic openness — *apertura* in Spanish — against and in concert with a falsely stagnant political reality in fact undergoing its own dramatic changes. *Through June 21.*

— Mike Muckian

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Experimental rockers Foxygen launch farewell tour

By Maddy Hughes

Contributing writer

Before 2011, Foxygen was just two kids from California who hadn't made it big yet. That year, producer Richard Swift discovered them and started a chain of events that turned Jonathan Rado and Sam France into two of the hottest new experimental rock artists in indie music.

The band has released three studio albums since, including 2014's *...And Star Power*, and gained a reputation for both crazy stage antics and backstage feuding. Earlier this month, they surprised fans by announcing that their summer tour, which will take them through Milwaukee on April 7, will also be their last, making the Turner Hall show bigger than ever.

I spoke to France about that farewell tour, as well as *...And Star Power* itself and the pressures of fame.

You just announced this upcoming tour will be Foxygen's last. Can you tell me what factors contributed to that decision, and how you feel about it? Well, you know, it's just time to move on. We'll continue to do projects but that incarnation is dead.

Your latest album, *...And Star Power*, is pretty wildly eclectic. Can you list all the instruments and other sources of sound on it? We recorded it all onto reel-

to-reel tape machines. I used a handheld tape recorder to record normal sounds in my life, from family and friends and whatever. I actually played the trumpet on this album, little bit of drums, piano, and guitar but Rado plays most of the instruments and I do most of the vocals. We had a lot of people come in and record little things; that was a big part of it.

Given its complexity, how would you describe *...And Star Power* in your own words? I would classify it as easy listening punk, maybe post-normcore drug music. The concept was that it was almost a different band, kinda like (Bowie with) *Ziggy Stardust and the Spiders from Mars*. Almost a different entity, so we wouldn't be scared to do whatever we wanted.

I've read elsewhere that you took on alter egos to tackle certain songs on the album. What were they and how did they help craft your music? I created this guy named "Star Power Man"; he's basically a maniac who's been driven insane by paranoid illusions of alien abductions. He came out more in my live performances, when I was being very destructive on stage and hurting myself on accident. But I'm changing out of that persona now because it was getting out of control.

Aside from your personal musical



PHOTO: CARA ROBBINS

Jonathan Rado (front) and Sam France (in mirror) will end their collaboration as the experimental rock band Foxygen later this year, after a summer farewell tour.

influences, are there any notable influences on this last album? Definitely Iggy Pop and the Stooges. I wasn't writing the music with him in mind but that influence explains the screaming toward the end of the album. Also Harmony Korine movies, they're really experimental films from the '90s.

You already went on a tour for this album from last summer through the fall. Will this tour be much of the same, or have you changed your set in any way? It'll be different, with a lot more theatrical stuff with props, things you haven't seen from us before. (And) we're covering the cities we didn't get to last time, so it'll be all different venues.

Are there common features of a musical career not often addressed by the media that you think have a strong impact on a band's success? For example, is there anything that would convince you and Jonathan to keep making music? Well I do want to make it clear that we're not going to stop making music. But I think that with music journalism and criticism, people are critiquing the relevance to the industry. The focus is so on pop music, and that's cool, but music critics rarely critique albums as a piece of art. There's a lot of self-consciousness there, they rate everything on whether it's relevant to mainstream culture.

This last record did well, but you think it would occur to people that we're just theater kids pretending to be a band. There are a lot of mistakes on this record, and people just criticized it on this very basic level, like for playing instruments poorly.

You'd think it'd be obvious to them that we're doing that on purpose.

Your second studio album was received very well. What was that level of success like for you, and was it all you expected it to be? I think we knew it would be successful, which is why we made it. We wanted to make something anyone could enjoy. But we weren't ready for all that tabloid type of stuff. People just expect you to go on stage and play the songs very nicely and to go home after that, but as theater kids I don't think people were ready for the stuff that we pulled. It surprised us that we were so talked about for things other than our music, but honestly it's been fun to be part of a band that was talked about so much. I'm pretty happy with how it all went.

What were the highlights of Foxygen's history for you? And what do you consider to be the trademarks of the band, besides all your music? Probably being able to wear crazy clothes, and making videos with our friend Grant Singer, which I always wanted to do.

Any other plans ahead for you? All I can say is that I'm working on a lot of hip-hop stuff and rapping, but maybe that's gonna be a new alter ego.

ON STAGE

Foxygen will perform at 8 p.m. on April 7 at Turner Hall Ballroom, 1040 N. Fourth St., Milwaukee. Tickets are \$15 and can be purchased at 414-286-3663 or pabsttheater.org.

JEROME KITZKE: WINTER COUNT AND HOWL POETRY IN MUSIC. MUSIC IN POETRY.

Fri., April 10 | 7:30 PM

Milwaukee native Kitzke's music performed by The Winter Count String Quartet: Eric Segnitz, Margot Schwartz, Olga Tuzhilkov, Adrien Zitoun, plus Carl Storniolo. Antiwar work with texts from Aeschylus to Harold Pinter. Kitzke will read Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*, *Footnote to Howl* and poems by Milwaukee poets Susan Firer and James Hazard.



Photo by Aleksandr Karjaka

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The Sets List



BIG DATA

7:30 p.m. April 1 at the Rave, 2401 W. Wisconsin Ave., Milwaukee. \$15. therave.com.

Admittedly, Big Data is not big yet. Which is weird, because the electronic music project had one of last summer's most underrated jams (the disco-influenced, sinister "Dangerous") and the producer behind it, Alan Wilkis, is turning big monumental things, like NSA surveillance and our growing reliance on technology, into stuff you can dance to. But with its new album 2.0 finally out, Big Data should be moving beyond the Internet underground soon.



CLEAN BANDIT

9 p.m. April 4 at the Majestic Theatre, 115 King St., Madison. \$20, \$22 day of show. majesticmadison.com.

It's too bad "Mozart's House" wasn't the single that actually put Clean Bandit on the map, because it's the track that perhaps best hints at the British act's fusion of classical and electronic music. Instead, we got "Rather Be," a more-than-worthy, infectious alternative. Clean Bandit won't perform with any of the guest artists featured heavily on their album, but reports from elsewhere across the country suggest that doesn't make their live shows any less exuberant.



BELLE AND SEBASTIAN

8 p.m. April 4 at Overture Center, 201 State St., Madison. \$39. overturecenter.org.

Almost 20 years into their musical career, Belle and Sebastian still have more than a few tricks up their sleeve. The indie pop band has never quite regained the luster of their earliest albums, the super-underground *Tigermilk* and their name-making smash *If You're Feeling Sinister*. Yet their latest effort, *Girls in Peacetime Want to Dance*, shows that the band still has more to offer, turning in a work that ventures onto the dance floor more brazenly than any album before. Come for the Europop take on Sylvia Plath, stay for the indie music veterans still making waves. Honeyblood opens.

CACTUS CLUB COMEDY & MUSIC SHOW

9:30 p.m. April 3 at the Cactus Club, 2496 S. Wentworth Ave., Milwaukee. \$7. cactusclub.dostuff.info.

Don't force yourself to choose between a comedian and a rock band. Get both at the Cactus Club's latest combination show, featuring a stacked slate of stand-up artists and two sets by the evening's featured artists. This time around, the artist-in-residence is indie rock act Twin Brother, hot off its Turner Hall debut last month, performing with seven local comics.

BLEACHERS

8 p.m. March 31 at the Majestic Theatre, 115 King St., Madison. \$26. majesticmadison.com.

His fun. bandmate Nate Ruess has the radio's ear right now, but Jack Antonoff has the retro '80s sound on lockdown with his side project Bleachers. Accidentally crafting the tracks for his debut *Strange Desire* in his spare time on the road, Antonoff taps into the nostalgia of his childhood, evoking a modern day John Hughes-soundtrack sound that still resonates 25 years later. The best part is all that '80s angst is happening in the here and now, so until fun. gets back together it's all yours for the taking. Joy-wave and Night Terrors of 1927 open.



Music reviews

MADONNA :: 'REBEL HEART'

Unlike her recent tumble at the UK's Brit Awards, *Rebel Heart* is Madonna's most sure-footed musical statement in 15 years. Lead track "Living For Love" sets the tone, with house beats reminiscent of "Express Yourself." Then producer Diplo tears the bottom out of the mix to make sure we know it's 2015. The project sounds looser and less obsessively produced than *MDNA* and *Hard Candy*. There is a welcome warmth in "Ghosttown" and Madonna practically sounds like an everyday human while detailing the pressures of being a public figure on "Joan of Arc" — though she also compares her own bodily fluids to the sacred on "Holy Water." Just when it looked like Madonna's time had passed, she proves she's still an artist well worth hearing.



VAN MORRISON :: DUETS: REWORKING THE CATALOGUE

At 69, Van Morrison is truly a towering figure in rock history. Critics still are trying to figure out his legendary, complex 1968 album *Astral Weeks*, and his approachable follow-up *Moon Dance* continues to delight jazz, rock and folk fans alike. *Duets: Reworking the Catalogue* is more like the latter. While most of the songs are unfamiliar tracks from past albums, the production is warm and soothing, putting a clear focus on the vocals of Van Morrison and his duet partners. Among the best pairings are a gorgeous reading of "Wild Honey" from 1980's *Common One*, with soul-pop singer Joss Stone, and a gutsy, soulful recreation of "These Are the Days" from 1989's *Avalon Sunset*, with R&B legend Natalie Cole.



TWIN SHADOW :: ECLIPSE

Singer George Lewis Jr., aka Twin Shadow, has no particular genre. Born in the Dominican Republic and raised in Florida, his influences are as disparate as classic punk and new jack swing. *Eclipse* is his major label debut after recording for legendary UK indie label 4AD, but this isn't your typical American Top 40 fare. Those looking for a contemporary, polished take on synth-soaked late-'80s/early-'90s electropop should definitely check out Twin Shadow. Songs like "I'm Ready" and "Flatliners" will pull you into their dense textures and just might have you singing along.



MODEST MOUSE :: STRANGERS TO OURSELVES

Flashback to 2007: Modest Mouse is sitting at the top of the alt-rock heap after topping the charts with *We Were Dead Before The Ship Even Sank*. Present day: The band's been effectively silent for eight years, English guitar legend Johnny Marr of The Smiths fame has left the band after a three-year stint, and lead vocalist and songwriter Isaac Brock is the last one steering the ship. *Strangers To Ourselves* is a solid effort, particularly on songs like lead single "Lampshades On Fire" and the Talking Heads-style new wave funk of "The Ground Walks, with Time In a Box," but after such a long hiatus, the album can't quite match the high expectations. Welcome back Modest Mouse, but please don't make us wait so long next time.



— Bill Lamb

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ACROSS

1. Penniless
6. Hervey the dentist, e.g.
9. "___ in the face"
13. *Experts say sea level does it as planet warms
14. "New" prefix
15. *Geography class prop
16. Tiny island
17. Contend
18. Kind of space
19. *Environmental science
21. *Green car
23. R&R spot
24. Give the cold shoulder
25. College entrance exam
28. Of a particular kind
30. Long John Silver had this
35. *Deforestation is big issue in this country
37. Brazils or filberts, e.g.
39. Upholstery choice
40. Van Gogh's famous flower
41. "___-and-true"
43. Dissolute man in fashionable society
44. Bordered
46. Common hosiery shade
47. Concludes
48. Looked lecherously
50. Like a sharp eye
52. "O say can you ___"
53. Prejudice
55. X
57. *Type of bug?
60. Guards and keeps order
64. ___-Goldwyn-Mayer

65. "Ostrich" of Australia
67. Cafe offering
68. Actor's reward
69. Hanks or Cruise
70. Relating to ohms
71. Light gray
72. *Clean Air Act org.
73. Required things

DOWN

1. French hors d'oeuvre staple
2. Reduced Instruction Set Computer
3. Northern European capital
4. Hull appendage, pl.
5. Impedes by estoppel
6. Green-eyed monster
7. South Pacific welcome
8. Warm down-slope wind of the Alps
9. Talk like a drunk
10. "Laughing on the inside" in text message
11. In the sack
12. p in mpg
15. Chunk of raw meat
20. Like hunger strike victim
22. Uh-huh
24. Performer's gimmicks
25. *Oil crisis
26. Eagle's nest
27. Father, Son and Holy Ghost, e.g.
29. "Kiss Me, Kiss Me, Kiss Me" band, The ___
31. **An Inconvenient Truth" author

32. Some have a mane
33. Dodge
34. These in U.S. are often Canadian
36. *Breaking Bad* victim
38. Dried-up
42. Because of
45. Credit card user
49. ___ *Hard* movie
51. *Earth Day founder
54. Mountain ridge
56. Specialty
57. It's more, to some
58. A strong desire
59. Cafeteria carrier
60. Wild feline
61. Dog call
62. Children's author Blyton
63. Abbreviated seconds
64. Extinct flightless bird
66. Janitor's tool

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LEA DOLAN STRONCEK, SEVEN SEEDS

FARM: As a farmer I'm opposed to Rep. Lee Nerison's coming "ag-gag" bill. For the uninitiated, "ag-gag" bills make it a crime to videotape on farms. These bills have sprouted up across the country as more and more factory farm investigations have surfaced, many revealing workers viciously hurting animals. In fact, there have recently been two investigations into Wisconsin mega-dairy farms that found horrific abuses. ... If you've got nothing to hide, then open your doors. That's why at Seven Seeds Farm, my six-generation old farm, we have pictures of the animals on our website for everyone to see, because we're proud of how we raise them. ... The solution to their problem isn't to ban cameras on farms; the answer is to give the animals a better life.

RENEE BENELL: An undercover investigation into Andrus dairy farm in Wisconsin sparked public outrage after it exposed employees beating cows, chopping off their tails and dragging them by their necks. In response, Great Lakes Cheese has now adopted a comprehensive animal welfare policy that will require farms to provide pain relief, a sanitary environment and proper veterinary care. ... Because of brave whistleblowers, we have been able to enact changes in the cruel, hidden world of factory farming. However, Rep. Lee Nerison is now considering an "ag-gag" bill that would criminalize whistleblowers and hide what's going on inside farms. How can such an antiquated idea persist amid all this progress? Great Lakes Cheese's response is a huge step forward in improving the lives of animals for the future while Nerison's pushes us 10 steps back.

CYNTHIA SAMELS: Why would Rep. Nerison propose legislation that would punish those who go beyond the walls and gated properties to expose this type of illegal activity? Money. According to Wisconsin's Democracy Campaign, Nerison has received thousands in campaign contributions from industrial agriculture companies and organizations, like the Wisconsin Farm Bureau, that don't want their reputation compromised. ... People want and deserve to know that the food on their plates came from humanely treated, healthy animals. Rep. Nerison's intent to protect animal abusers instead of the animals is, in itself, a transparent indication of his ongoing relationship with and need of financial backing from Big Ag. His intent is unethical, it serves his own interests and those of the agriculture industry, and does not represent the will of the people of Wisconsin.

ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS



PHOTO: FOX

'GLEE' ENDS SIX-YEAR RUN

The *Glee* series finale delivered glorious news that William McKinley High School is being turned into an arts school and that Will Schuester, who started its glee club way back in 2009, will become its principal. Oh, and New Directions won the national championship.

But *Glee* always had that underlying message — with a song in your heart, dreams do come true — and that was how the Fox song-and-dance show concluded its six-season run on March 20.

Oh, sure, there were some unexpected nightmares, too. Looking ahead five years, faculty mean girl Sue Sylvester was seen winning a second term as vice president in the Jeb Bush administration and announced to Geraldo Rivera that she planned to seek the presidency in 2024.

On a brighter note, in 2020, Rachel will

be a surrogate mom for gay couple Kurt and Blaine. She'll also be a Tony winner: "Being a part of something special does not make you special," she said while accepting her award. "Something is special because you are a part of it."

LIZA BACK IN REHAB

Liza Minnelli has checked herself into rehab and is making "excellent progress," her representative says.

Minnelli spokesman Scott Gorenstein said, "Minnelli has valiantly battled substance abuse over the years and whenever she has needed to seek treatment she has done so. She is currently making excellent progress at an undisclosed facility."

In September, the legendary entertainer underwent back surgery to help heal an injury that prevented her from performing most of the year or attending the funeral of

Joan Rivers in New York.

The 69-year-old entertainer, who has had alcohol and drug addictions, is one of the few artists to win an Oscar, a Tony, an Emmy and a (non-competing) Grammy. Perhaps her greatest role was as cabaret singer Sally Bowles in the film version of *Cabaret*.

Minnelli's mother Judy Garland also battled addictions before dying of an overdose in 1969. Garland's death is said to have helped spark the Stonewall riots in New York's Greenwich Village, which inspired the modern LGBT civil rights movement.

KERRY WASHINGTON, ROLAND EMMERICH AMONG GLAAD HONOREES

Actress Kerry Washington, director Roland Emmerich, the film *The Imitation Game* and TV shows *Transparent* and *How to Get Away With Murder* have received stamps of approval from GLAAD, a leading advocacy group for LGBT presence in the media. The group celebrated some of its latest GLAAD Media Award honorees at a Beverly Hills ceremony March 21.

GLAAD president and CEO Sarah Kate Ellis said *Scandal* star Washington was chosen because, "She's done quite a bit for the LGBT community and she's a phenomenal spokeswoman for us. And she's got our back. And she always has."

The German Emmerich is perhaps best

known for producing and directing the 1996 blockbuster *Independence Day*, as well as the 1998 remake of *Godzilla* and 2004's *The Day After Tomorrow*. Now openly gay, Emmerich said he long kept his homosexuality private because he didn't want to be limited to making only films with gay stories, as had happened with other directors in Germany.

Emmerich's gay-themed historical drama *Stonewall* will be released later this year. And Emmerich said *Independence Day 2*, due next year, will feature an openly gay character.

More GLAAD awards will be handed out at a ceremony in New York on May 9.

J. COLE SHINES AT SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST

J. Cole helped close the annual South by Southwest festival with a top-notch performance that proved he's not just one of rap's best performers, but music in general. Cole was a crowd favorite at ACL Live at the Moody Theater in Austin, Texas, performing popular hits like "Work Out," "Can't Get Enough" and "Crooked Smile."

The Grammy-nominated performer, who was mentored by Jay Z and is signed to his Roc Nation management company, has launched his own label called Dreamville. Cole's signees, Bas, Cozz and Omen, also performed.

—The Associated Press

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