

Pride 2015



4 Nationwide Pride

WiG gives you the skinny on Pride festivities around the nation and the world.

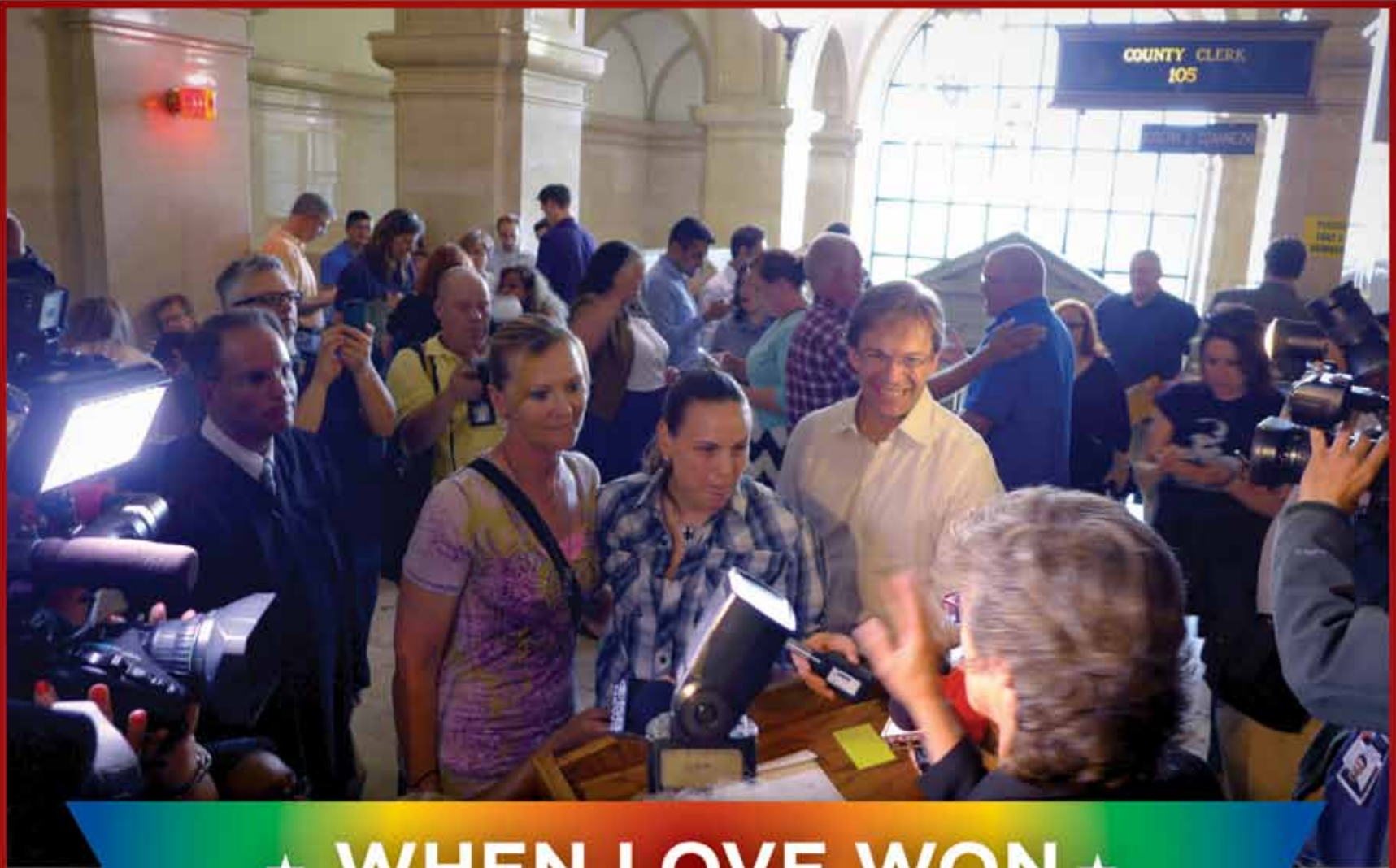
28 Singer Tom Goss, a native of Kenosha, loves coming home to visit. This year's visit includes a headlining performance at PrideFest Milwaukee.



34 Jennifer Morales' debut novel *Meet Me Halfway* has Milwaukee written all over it.



40 Madison's FIVE nightclub is saved by donations from patrons & fans all over the country who didn't want to lose another iconic gay club that has been a home away from home to so many over the years.



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a sunless garden when the flowers are dead.***

- Oscar Wilde

While I've enjoyed all my time in Wisconsin, this last year has been my favorite. As we celebrate our victories we can't lose sight of the work ahead of us. I am as committed as ever to working for an inclusive society where every person and family is respected.

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LGBT communities celebrate Pride nationwide

Compiled By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

When he was a kid, Philippe Rodriguez knew the first sun-kissed days of June meant school vacation was just ahead.

But since he came out four years ago, sun and June mean Pride for Rodriguez, who is looking forward to three days of entertainment and education, community and culture at PrideFest, which takes place June 5-7 on Milwaukee's lakefront at Henry Maier Festival Park aka the Summerfest Grounds aka Pride Park.

"The first time I went to Pride, it was life-changing for me," said Rodriguez, 23, of Milwaukee. "I thought I was out before my first Pride. But I was wrong. I came all the way out at Pride."

And last year, Rodriguez witnessed a milestone for Milwaukee's LGBT community during the first night of PrideFest, when the news broke that a federal judge had overturned the state's ban on same-sex marriage and that Milwaukee and Dane counties were issuing marriage licenses.

"I have friends who say Pride is passé," he said. "But every year I go and I feel such Pride in me and my people that I could cry." Pride is so not passé.

Just glance at the LGBT Pride calendar.

Pride is celebrated in thousands of cities around the world, from Adelaide, Australia, to Zurich, Switzerland.

LGBT communities in hundreds of U.S. cities observe Pride, from Albuquerque, New Mexico, to Salisbury, North Carolina.

"Our parade is one of the largest in all of New Mexico," proud Pride celebrant Sandi Gray said of the Albuquerque festivities that take place on June 13.

Salisbury's celebration takes place over a week in June, with *Sordid* playwright, director and stand-up guy Del Shores headlining.

"We welcome people from all over the state, all over the South, for Pride," said Pride celebrant Lenny Durham. "It's the most important event of the year for the community."

Many Pride celebrations take place in June, keeping a tradition that dates to the first Pride march, held in 1970 in New York City one year after the rioting at the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village. But for various reasons — high heat and humidity in the South, for one — Pride gets celebrated throughout the year.

Take a look ...

JUNE

= Through June 7: Buffalo Pride Fest, Buffalo, New York; Pride Texas, El Paso; Gay Days, Orlando, Florida; Capital Pride, Washington, D.C.

= June 4: Utah Pride, Salt Lake City

= June 5-7: Kansas Diversity, Kansas City, Kansas; PrideFest Milwaukee (parade June 7)

= June 5-13: Indy Pride, Indianapolis

= June 5-14: Boston Pride, Boston

= June 6: Alaska Pride Festival; Anchorage; Honolulu Pride; Sacramento Pride; Puerto Rico Pride, San Juan

= June 6-7: Motor City Pride, Detroit; Hudson Valley Pride, Kingston, New York

= June 6-14: Pittsburgh Pride, Pittsburgh

= June 7: Central Alabama Pride, Birmingham; Conway Pride, Conway, Arkansas; Queens LGBT Pride, Queens, New York

= June 10-14: Key West Pride, Key West, Florida

= June 11-14: Boqueron Pride, Boqueron, Puerto Rico

= June 12-20: Heartland Pride, Omaha, Nebraska

= June 12-13: Kalamazoo Pride, Michigan

= June 12-14: Capital Pride, Des Moines, Iowa; Los Angeles Pride, West Hollywood, California

= June 13: Albuquerque Pride, New Mexico; Albany Capital Pride, New York; Baton Rouge Pride, Louisiana; Brooklyn Pride; Long Island Pride, Huntington, New York; SMC Pride, San Mateo, California; Outspokane, Spokane, Washington



PHOTO: COURTESY

Performers on the Pride circuit in 2015 include Ke\$ha, Ariana Grande and Pussy Riot, above.

= June 13-14: Pride Northwest, Portland, Oregon

= June 14: Philly Pride, Philadelphia

= June 15-21: Oklahoma City Pride, Oklahoma

= June 19-20: Boise Pride, Idaho; Arizona Gay Days, Scottsdale; Wilton Manors Pride, Wilton Manors, Florida

= June 19-21: Stonewall Columbus Pride, Ohio; New Orleans Pride; Capital Pride, Olympia, Washington

= June 20: Rhode Island Pride, Providence; Salisbury Pride, Salisbury, North Carolina; Central New York Pride, Syracuse

= June 20-21: Denver Pridefest

= June 21-28: Gay Pride Houston; New York City Pride; Chicago Pride (parade June 28)

= June 21: Rocket City Pride, Huntsville, Alabama

= June 22: Central Oregon Pride, Bend, Oregon

= June 26-27: Augusta Pride, Georgia; Nashville Pride, Tennessee; Hampton Roads Pride, Norfolk, Virginia



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PHOTO: AP/ NOAH BERGER

A scene from the 2012 Pride parade in San Francisco, which is one of the nation's most colorful.



PHOTO: COURTESY

In addition to its annual Pride parade, New York City hosts Dance on the Pier on June 28. The event is the city's largest LGBT fundraiser. Headlining the event this year is Ariana Grande, above.



- = June 27: Cincinnati Pride; Cleveland Pride; NWA Pride, Fayetteville, Arkansas; Northern Arizona Pride, Flagstaff; Lexington Pride, Kentucky; St. Pete Pride, St. Petersburg, Florida; Santa Fe Pride, New Mexico
- = June 27-28: Twin Cities Pride, Minneapolis; Pride St. Louis; San Francisco Pride; Seattle Pride

JULY

- = July 4: Pride San Antonio, Texas
- = July 10-18: Tacoma Pride, Washington
- = July 11: Pride Alive, Green Bay
- = July 12-13: Bellingham Pride, Washington
- = July 18-19: San Diego Pride
- = July 18: Kenosha Pride March
- = July 18-29: Colorado Springs Pride, Colorado
- = July 20: Kitsap Pride, Bremerton, Washington
- = July 24: Deming Pride, New Mexico
- = July 25: Reno Pride, Nevada
- = July 25-26: Baltimore Pride

AUGUST

- = Aug. 1: Delaware Pride, Dover; OC Pride, Santa Ana, California
- = Aug. 1-9: Charleston Pride, South Carolina
- = Aug. 2: West Street Beach Pride, Laguna Beach
- = Aug. 5-9: Wyoming Equality Rendezvous, Cheyenne
- = Aug. 8: Eugene/Springfield Pride Festival, Oregon
- = Aug. 9: Madison Pride Parade
- = Aug. 15-16: Charlotte Pride, North Carolina

- = Aug. 15-21: Carnival, Provincetown, Massachusetts
- = Aug. 22-23: Toledo Pride, Ohio
- = Aug. 22-30: Austin Pride, Texas
- = Aug. 30: Silicon Valley Pride, San Jose, California

SEPTEMBER

- = Sept. 8-14: Las Vegas Pride
- = Sept. 11-13: Oregon Coast Pride, Lincoln City, Oregon
- = Sept. 12: South Bay Pride, Chula Vista, California; Virginia Gay Pride, Richmond; Savannah Pride, Georgia; Worcester Pride, Massachusetts
- = Sept. 12-13: Roanoke Pride, Virginia
- = Sept. 13: Pride Vermont, Burlington; Oakland Pride, California
- = Sept. 19-20: Wichita Pride, Kansas
- = Sept. 20: Dallas Pride
- = Sept. 24-27: Sedona Pride, Arizona
- = Sept. 26: North Carolina Pride, Durham; Space Coast Pride, Melbourne, Florida; Mid-South Pride, Memphis, Tennessee

OCTOBER

- = Oct. 3: Northern Virginia Pride, Canterville; Ocala Pride Festival, Florida
- = Oct. 3-4: Fort Worth Pride, Texas; Jacksonville Pride, Florida
- = Oct. 4: Long Beach Pride, Little Rock
- = Oct. 9-11: Pridefest South Florida, Fort Lauderdale
- = Oct. 10: North County Pride, Oceanside, California; Orlando Pride; Oswego Pride, New York
- = Oct. 10-11: Atlanta Pride

- = Oct. 16-17: Winston-Salem Pride, North Carolina
 - = Oct. 17: World Interpride 2015, Las Vegas; Tucson Pride, Arizona; San Gabriel Valley Pride, Pasadena, California
- NOVEMBER**
- = Nov. 6-8: Palm Springs Pride, California



Gilbert Baker, also known as the "Gay Betsy Ross," designed the rainbow flag, or Pride Flag, in San Francisco in 1978. The flag is the most prominent symbol of lesbian and gay pride. Two colors have since been dropped from Baker's original version. The colors represent sexuality, life, healing, the Sun, nature, art, harmony, and the spirit.



COLLECTIVO
14 KNOCKOUT LOCATIONS

LGBT Pride celebrations around the globe

JUNE

- = June 5-14: Edmonton Pride, Canada; Pride Winnipeg, Canada
- = June 6: Aarhus Pride, Denmark
- = June 6: Cyprus Pride, Cyprus
- = June 6-15: Pride Scotia, Edinburgh, Scotland
- = June 7: Bali Pride, Bali, Indonesia
- = June 8-13: Your Pride, Zagreb, Croatia
- = June 12: Tel Aviv Gay Pride, Israel
- = June 12-21: Shanghai Pride, China
- = June 13: Athens Pride, Greece; Gloucestershire Pride, U.K.; Warsaw Pride, Poland
- = June 13-14: Blackpool Gay Pride, U.K.
- = June 19-20: Zurich Pride, Switzerland
- = June 19-28: Pride Toronto, Canada; Oslo Pride, Norway
- = June 20: Vienna Pride, Austria
- = June 22-28: Milano Pride, Milan, Italy
- = June 25: Paris Gay Pride March, France
- = June 25-July 1: Helsinki Gay Pride, Finland



PHOTO: COURTESY

A scene from Tel Aviv Gay Pride, the only LGBT parade held in the Middle East.

- = June 26-28: Barcelona Pride, Spain
- = June 27: Dublin Pride, Ireland; London Pride, U.K.
- = June 28: Mexico City Pride, Mexico
- = June 28-July 5: Victoria Pride, Canada

JULY

- = July 1-5: Gay Pride Madrid, Spain
- = July 6: GayMat, Luxembourg
- = July 16-26: Halifax Pride, Canada

- = July 24-Aug. 2: Hamburg Gay Pride, Germany
- = July 24-Aug. 1: Belfast Gay Pride, U.K.
- = July 27-Aug. 1: Stockholm Gay Pride, Sweden

AUGUST

- = Aug. 2: Vancouver Gay Pride, Canada
- = Aug. 8-9: Antwerp Pride, Belgium
- = Aug. 10-16: Prague Pride, Czech Republic
- = Aug. 11-15: Gay Pride Copenhagen, Denmark
- = Aug. 28-Sept. 7: Calgary Pride, Canada

IN THE FALL

- = September: Quebec City Pride, Canada
- = October: Taiwan LGBT Pride, Taipei, Taiwan
- = November: Adelaide Pride March, Australia; Marcha Del Orgullo, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Hong Kong Pride; Gay Pride Brazil, Rio de Janeiro



PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Brazilian actress Karina Bacchi celebrating LGBT Pride Parade, with go-go boys in Sao Paulo.



PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

A scene from Taiwan LGBT Pride, Taipei, Taiwan.

Out and overnight: Visitor's Pride guide to Milwaukee

Compiled by Lisa Neff

Staff writer

Time is short, but you still have a day to convince your best bud from Atlanta or your gal pal from Dallas to catch a plane and come to Milwaukee, where LGBT Pride is celebrated in a big way.



PHOTO: VISIT MILWAUKEE

Downtown Milwaukee at night.

You still have a day or two to encourage your lesbian moms to drive over from Madison or your transgender niece from Chicago to celebrate at Milwaukee's PrideFest on the lakefront.

For when your guests arrive, or to help nudge their travel, *WiG* looked to the experts at Visit Milwaukee for answers to questions you might get:

What are the three things Pride celebrants need to know about the Summerfest grounds, where the weekend festivities take place?

1. This is the only Pride festival in North America with permanent festival grounds, including 623 full-service restrooms (PrideFest has an inclusive restroom policy and this year will feature several clearly marked gender-neutral restrooms).
2. The grounds span 75 acres — wear shoes that are comfortable to walk in.
3. It's cooler by the lake! Breezes off the lake can be chilly, so plan your outfit accordingly.

The city is famous for beer. So, why do the wine coolers at PrideFest stand out?
Because they are delicious!

Outside of PrideFest, where are Pride celebrants most likely to see rainbow flags flying?

In Walker's Point. Second Street in Walker's Point is the route for the Milwaukee Pride Parade.

Milwaukee's most historic LGBT destination is:

This is It! opened in 1968 and is the oldest continually operating gay bar in the state.

For those leaving the festival who still have some daylight, three must-visit neighborhoods for Pride celebrants are:

1. Walker's Point
2. Historic Third Ward
3. East Side

For those leaving the festival when the twilight has passed, three must-visit spots for Pride celebrants are:

1. La Cage, 801 S. Second St.
2. Fluid, 819 S. Second St.
3. Hybrid, 707 E. Brady St.

No car? What's a good way to get to the Summerfest grounds from the airport:

Uber, or take Amtrak to the Intermodal Station. From there, you can either walk to the grounds or take a downtown festival shuttle.

No stay in Milwaukee, no matter how brief, is complete without:

A brewery tour.



PHOTO: VISIT MILWAUKEE

Along the lakefront and near MAM.



Records of same-sex relationships have been found in nearly every culture throughout history with varying degrees of acceptance.

— Boswell, John. 1994. "Same Sex Unions in Pre-Modern Europe." New York, NY: Vintage Books





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Gary Hollander is stepping down, moving forward

By Louis Weisberg
Staff writer

When Gary Hollander launched Diverse & Resilient, the world was a different place for LGBT people. The drug cocktails that have turned HIV/AIDS into a manageable disease were not available. Same-sex marriage was a utopian fantasy. Transgender people were all but invisible.

The year was 1995, and the agency, which works to eliminate health disparities between LGBT people and their heterosexual counterparts, was unlike any that had existed before or since, Hollander says. As he prepares to move on in July and turn over the organization to Gerry Coon, who was selected to replace him as CEO after a national search, Hollander looks back over the past 20 years and says, "We've succeeded in some ways that are far beyond my expectations and in other ways we've just scratched the surface."

At the time of D&R's founding, Hollander remembers, many young people didn't know what it meant to be gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. They were having same-sex experiences, but they were unaware that a social identity and community existed for people like them.

Hollander "had a problem with that," as he is fond of saying. He believed the shame and isolation felt by LGBT people who felt adrift without a sense of community helped account for their relatively higher rates of alcohol and drug abuse, smoking, depression, risky sexual behavior and suicide.

But Hollander's hunch was not enough. In the agency's infancy, the most difficult challenge Hollander had to overcome was the lack of data about the size of Wisconsin's LGBT population and proof that health disparities existed. Without that kind of information, obtaining grants from agencies like the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was all but impossible.

From 1999 to 2007, he and colleagues fought to have one question included on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey in Wisconsin. The survey is administered every two years to students in public schools.

The question was, "Do you have sex with males, females, both or neither?"

"It was a big political brouhaha to make it happen," Hollander recalls, "but we finally got the question included in 2007."

Armed with empirical data that showed unhealthy behavior and health risks according to sexual orientation, Hollander was able to demonstrate not only that disparities existed but to what extent. D&R went on to develop interventions with measurable outcomes so that it could try strategies to address disparities and then evaluate their effectiveness.

In addition to making it possible to measure disparities, inclusion in the survey normalized talking about LGBT youth. Hollander says getting the question inserted in the survey was his single greatest accomplishment, the one that made the rest possible.

"Now I can go to a school and say, '360 of your students are LGBT and 120 of them have considered committing suicide,'" Hollander says. Facts like that shake up administrators and get them working on the problem.

In 2011, the survey was updated to ask, "Which of the following best describes you — heterosexual (straight), gay or lesbian, not sure." Youth health advocates are still struggling to add "transgender" to the list.

DEPTH AND CLARITY

Anne Summers, CEO of The Brico Fund, has known Hollander since they both worked at Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin. As a grant funder of D&R, she's had the opportunity to evaluate Hollander's work up close.

"Gary's programming and outcome goals were always very clear and very intentional," she says. "He always had a very strong plan and the strategy to get there. The stories that would be told through the grant-writing process were real stories and there was always a budget that was articulate and really made sense."

"Gary always very capably demonstrated the depth and quality of the organization's work in the context of the grants and proposals. There's a really strong commitment to quality and attention to detail. He's passionate, caring, clear and firm — and willing to defend his perspective. He's very committed."

For example, the organization took over a condom-distribution program that was only handing out 5,000 to 6,000 condoms per year to teens and increased that number to 216,000. "Condoms were available and teens knew where to

get them," Hollander says.

But he discovered that condoms "weren't necessarily accessible in places where (young people) could afford them or in places where they weren't afraid they'd be shamed" by taking them. That insight, gained by targeted local surveys, led to strategies that demonstrably improved condom use. That's an example of the sort of "evidence-based" programs for which Hollander is known.

D&R also created and promoted smoking-cessation and addiction programs targeting the LGBT community. In 2005, the group launched Safe Schools, Safe Communities, a program to make schools safer for LGBT students.

Over the years, Hollander has trained doctors, teachers and corporations in LGBT sensitivity and health issues. He was instrumental in developing the health and wellness area of PrideFest.

One of the programs of which Hollander is proudest is the Acceptance Journey campaign, which seeks to "normalize" LGBT people and break through the fear of talking about homosexuality in communities of color. The campaign involves billboards, hand-out cards and ads on the sides of buses featuring real people's stories about their love for LGBT family members, friends and mentors. According to research conducted by D&R, it's working, whittling away at the stigmatizing and ostracizing of LGBT people that lies at the heart of health disparities. Acceptance Journeys has become a model for similar programs in other cities.

Despite all of the successes of D&R, though, shocking disparities continue to exist in Wisconsin. For instance, the HIV rate in Milwaukee among 15- to 29-year-old African American men who have sex with other men is worse than it was at the height of the AIDS epidemic in the 1990s. Four out of 10 gay and bisexual black male Milwaukeeans in that age group are positive, a problem Hollander attributes largely to racism and sexism.

PAST AS PROLOGUE

Although he's stepping down as CEO and president of D&R, Hollander does not plan to rest on his laurels. Sipping a cup of coffee at Colectivo on the Lake one recent afternoon, he was full of vigor and looking forward to the next chapter of his life with the enthusiasm



PHOTO: DIVERSE & RESILIENT

Gary Hollander, who founded Diverse & Resilient in 1973, is stepping down as president and CEO in July.

of a newly minted college grad.

Though Hollander is still finessing the details, he plans to continue working on many of the issues that he's addressed throughout his life.

Hollander is working with the YWCA "to do some bigger things on racism." He's also working with Adler University in Chicago and Vancouver to evaluate their "footprint in the community and how to make that meaningful."

In addition, he's working with After School Matters in Chicago.

One thing that's definitely off the table is another 9-5 job, he says.

Hollander's professional transition comes at a time of personal transition, as he grieves the loss of his husband Paul Mandracchia last December. The two had been together for 31 years and, during the last handful of those years, Mandracchia had been steadily declining from the ravages of multiple sclerosis.

"I've never been as sad as I've been in the last several months, but I am happy," says Hollander, tears quivering in his blue eyes. "I wanted nothing more than to love someone like him and nothing more than to be loved by someone like him. It didn't make any difference how we (did) that. We could have done it skiing. But we had MS. We had to do it with MS. And we could do nothing but put on our seat belts and have a ride."

"I'm really looking forward to his

next encore," Summer says. "What he's going to do next in Milwaukee for us, for the community — I'm looking forward to knowing what that is."

HEALTH DISPARITIES

According to healthy-people.gov, social stigma, discrimination and denial of civil rights contribute to significant health disparities between LGBT and heterosexual people.

LGBT youth are two to three times more likely to attempt suicide. LGBT youth are more likely to be homeless.

Lesbians are less likely to get preventive services for cancer.

Gay men are at higher risk of HIV and other STDs, especially among communities of color.

Lesbians and bisexual females are more likely to be overweight or obese.

Transgender individuals have a high prevalence of HIV/STDs, victimization, mental health issues and suicide and are less likely to have health insurance than heterosexual or LGBT individuals.

LGBT populations have the highest rates of tobacco, alcohol and other drug use.



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Preserving pride *National LGBT Museum to open by 2019*

By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

For the past seven years, Tim Gold has collected more than 5,000 artifacts documenting the LGBT civil rights movement and the lives of LGBT people — enough items to fill a museum.

And that's just what he and supporters of the National LGBT Museum plan.

Gold began thinking about an LGBT museum while working for the National Postal Museum and reading about James Smithson, for whom the Smithsonian Institution is named.

In 2008, Gold co-founded the museum, which is dedicated to sharing the heritage of LGBT people. He is co-chair of the museum board and he and husband Mitchell Gold of Mitchell Gold + Bob Williams make up the founder's circle.

Earlier this spring, the board announced the selection of New York City as the site for the museum.

The board also announced long-time LGBT civil rights advocate Kevin Jennings agreed to serve as co-chair. Jennings, an educator, activist and author, has been involved in promoting, teaching and preserving LGBT history for decades. He founded the organization now known as the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network and established the first gay-straight alliance. He also worked with LGBT leaders to recognize LGBT History Month in October.

"A New York City resident, a historian by training and a long-time leader in the LGBT movement, Kevin is the perfect partner to help lead the effort to establish this museum in New York City," said Gold.

Jennings said, "Tim and the board have done significant work in envisioning what a national LGBT museum might look like and I am excited to join them in helping turn that vision into a reality."

WiG recently asked Jennings about the board's plans to open the museum in New York City, where 46 years ago this month, the modern gay civil rights movement began with the raid and the

riots at the fabled Stonewall Inn.

What went into selecting the site? The ideal site is a city with a deep LGBT history, supportive community and political leadership and a strong tourism sector. New York has all three and we're excited to be moving ahead with that as our home.

The goal is to open the museum for the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall riots in 2019? This will be such a momentous occasion and to have a museum open to commemorate it would be a dream come true. It would be a critical time to reflect on how far we have come and also on the work that remains to be done.

What needs to happen for you to achieve the 2019 goal? Museums come down to three things: collections, space and money. Tim has built a wonderful collection of over 5,000 artifacts which, when combined with the fact that there are numerous other collections from which we hope to borrow, means we've cleared that hurdle. The next hurdle is finding the right space, which, in New York City's highly competitive real estate market, will not be easy.

Once we have the space, we then need the money to design and build the exhibition.

So you are you at work collecting for the museum? Yes, we hope people will reach out to us if they have items they think may be of interest.

What will it cost to open the doors? Are you looking for major donors? We will need both public funding and are already discussing this with elected officials who are supportive of the project, as well as individual and corporate support to build the museum.

What are the museum's most important artifacts or materials at this point? Among the cool things we already have are the military uniform of Frank Kameny, who organized the first picket of the White House for LGBT rights in 1965; a walking stick that belonged to Bayard Rustin, the openly gay African-American civil rights leader who organized the 1963 March on Washington where Martin Luther King gave the "I have a dream" speech; and



A gay rights demonstration in 1976 at the National Democratic Convention in New York City.

PHOTO: LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

a T-shirt from the nation's first gay-straight alliance, founded in Massachusetts in 1988.

Kevin, the first time I wrote about gay history was back in the early to mid-1990s. I was reporting in St. Louis and writing about you, Rodney Wilson and others working to establish Gay History Month, gay-straight alliances and GLSEN. You've been involved in this work for so long. Why is it so important? The black nationalist leader Marcus Garvey once said, "A people without a history is like a tree without roots." To understand oneself as part of a historical tradition gives one a sense of place and belonging in the world, one all too often denied to LGBT people and especially LGBT youth, who learn next-to-nothing of our history while in school. Our museum intends to fill that void.

LGBT archives exist in a number of cities, including Milwaukee. Do you expect the museum will work with these institutions and organizations to bring their collections to New York for exhibition? Or do you see the museum providing traveling exhibits? I think both. In addition to the National Museum of African-American History and Culture opening in Washington, D.C., next year, there are multiple museums dedicated to the African-American

civil rights movement — in Atlanta, Memphis, Birmingham, Jackson, Mississippi, and Greensboro, North Carolina, just to name a few. There's no reason we can't have local museums that speak to local stories in addition to a national museum.

Exploring your website, I came across this description of the museum: "The museum recognizes and presents the stories of the LGBT communities as a part of — not apart from — the American experience, where the intersections of diverse cultures, shared by diverse people, define us as individuals and as a nation." Talk about this more, this idea of telling our story as a part of the American experience. The LGBT story is an amazing American story of diverse people coming together to fight for their rights and claim their rightful place in society. We think this is a story that should inspire people of all backgrounds who are eager to share it.

Imagine it is 2020 and the museum has been open for a year. The big issue of same-sex marriage was settled five years earlier, in June 2015. What's taking place at the museum? What will people find when they walk through the doors? My hope is they will find exhibits that will



PHOTO: ARCUS FOUNDATION

Kevin Jennings is the co-chair of the National LGBT Museum's board of directors. Jennings also is the executive director of the Arcus Foundation, a philanthropic organization focused on social justice and conservation. The Arcus Foundation was an early supporter of the museum.

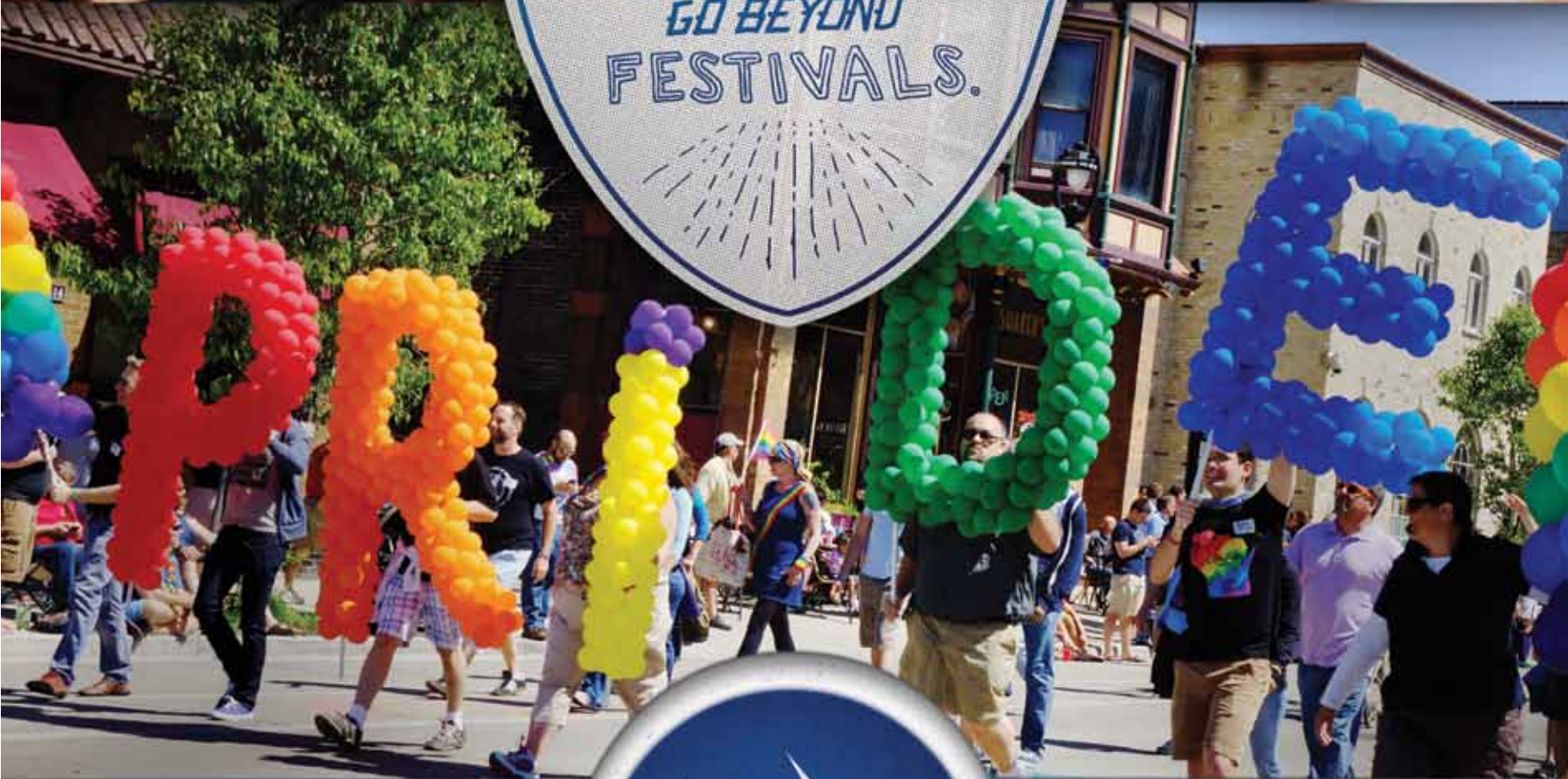
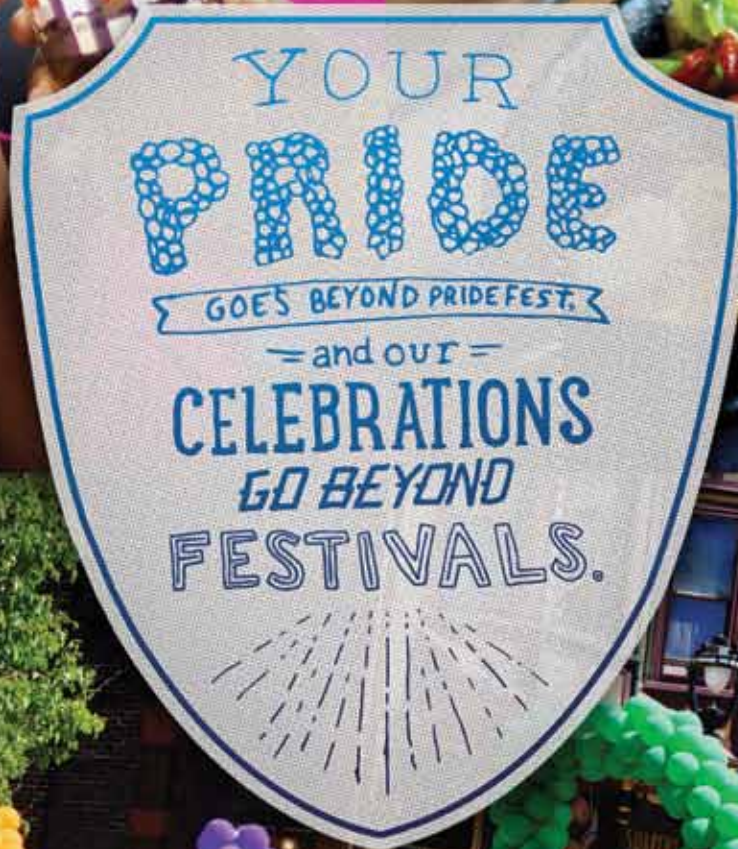
challenge them to think about both how we have made the progress we have made so far, as well as the work that still remains to be done, exhibits that imbue them with a sense of pride in their heritage and a belief that every person has the power to make a difference.

On the Web ...

Learn more about the pending National LGBT Museum at nationallgbtmuseum.org.



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Transitioning

A Milwaukee transgender woman shares details of her facial reconstruction

By Larry Zamba

Contributing writer

"In 1967, when I was 12, I told my parents that I thought I was a girl. Well, they sent me to a shrink who said it was 'just a phase,'" says Briana Fleury.

The shrink was wrong. Fleury went on to become the first employee to transition from male to female at MillerCoors. Now 60 years old, she lives in Milwaukee.

But finally embracing her womanhood was the culmination of a long personal journey.

"As I grew into an adult, I was acting my life rather than living it," Briana recalls. "I found myself competing against other men to be more masculine. I was an indoor paintball champ, worked on cars and I would shoot guns. I still do actually."

For years Briana figured she was a cross-dresser. Then, acting on the recommendations of friends, she consulted with Mark L. Zukowski, an Illinois plastic surgeon, and "discovered I'm actually a woman."

Zukowski is an Illinois board-certified surgeon and a fellow at the American College of Surgeons. Working from his location in Wilmette, Illinois, Dr. Zukowski specializes in face and body feminization surgery.

Achieving the desired results requires a series of procedures that can range from four hours to ten hours each. Using endoscopic techniques, a doctor uses a miniaturized camera to chart the internal course, thus avoiding the sensory and sinus problems associated with older, more invasive techniques.

For male-to-female transitions, surgeries include sculpting the jaw and cheek as well as cheek implants. Reducing the patient's

brow ridge is critical. In some cases, the patient's nose is reshaped and the scalp advanced downward. The upper lip is often shortened and the lips are plumped.

A tracheal shave that reduced the Adam's apple is critical.

After the face has been resculpted, the second series of surgeries begins. These often include breast implants, a Brazilian butt lift and lipo-sculpting the body into an hourglass shape.

Zukowski's transformation of Fleury began in 2006.

"It began with Benjamin's Standards of Care," Zukowski says. The standards, developed in 1979, are a series of non-binding patient protocols for those who have gender dysphoria. Fleury had to live as a woman for at least a year, including going to work every day dressed as a woman. Her entire body underwent electrolysis and she was given female hormones. With the estrogen, she lost muscular mass and feminine curves began to appear.

"The people at Miller could tell I was transitioning, and they didn't quite know how to handle it," Fleury says. "I think they couldn't comprehend how it is to question your gender. People who used to be my friends would no longer talk to me, and they would move away from me when I entered the room. Emotionally it was devastating."

After the requisite year, Fleury underwent her first surgery. "When I woke up from the anesthesia, I felt like I was run over by a truck," she says. "I could not see my results until the bandages were removed a few days later. When the swelling subsided, the results were astounding!"

"When I went back to work, the women

were the worst to me," Fleury continues.

"HR at work said they had to treat me with respect. However, it backfired because respect can't be dictated. They took out their anger on me because they had to earn respect in the work place and I didn't. And I when I was given my own bathroom that really upset them.

"I was shunned at work for the longest time. Eventually a co-worker, a black man, came over and started talking to me. Obviously he understood the emotional toll that being treated like a second class citizen takes on a person. He broke the ice, (and) eventually everyone else came around."

Fleury says she spent over \$100,000 in total for therapy, hormones, surgeries and associated treatments, but she considers that money "the best investment that I ever made."

She advises, "The most important part is to get the facial feminization done. It's more critical than getting the genitals corrected, because the face is the part everyone sees."

A graduate of Northwestern Medical School, Zukowski began his residency in 1985 in general surgery but decided in 1988 to specialize in plastic surgery.

For six years he served as a plastic surgeon in the U.S. Navy, which allowed him to pay back medical school debt. The position also allowed him to sharpen his plastic surgery skills.

"As a Naval plastic surgeon, working with

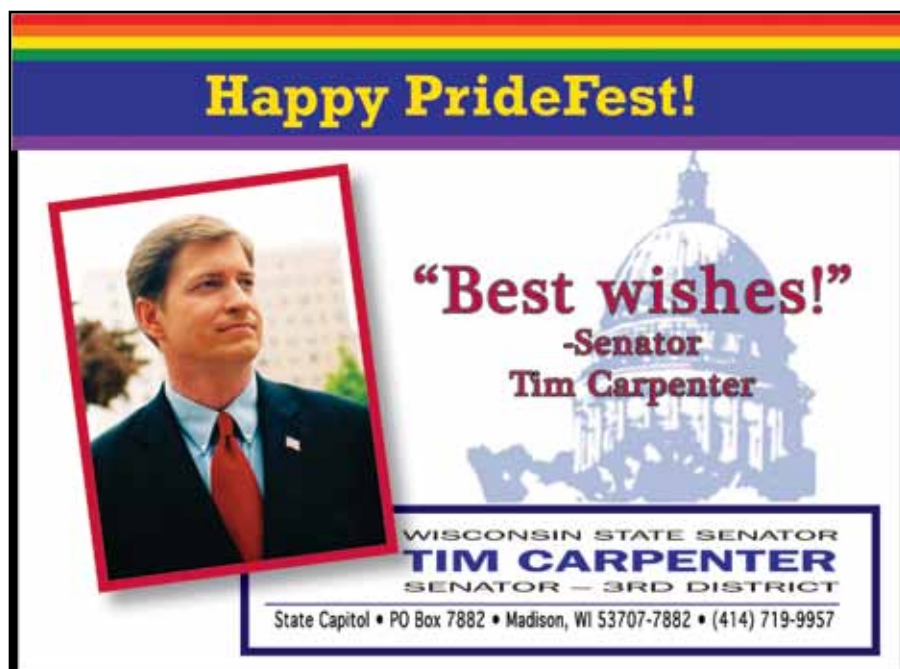
thousands of male patients and their families, there was nowhere else in the world you can get that kind of training," Zukowski says.

Every year, Zukowski's radically changes the physical appearance of hundreds of people. He does not perform genital surgery, which he believes is better handled by other specialists. Still, approximately 65 percent of his practice is gender-related. Most of his surgeries are male-to-female transitions, but a small percentage are female to male.

"People come from all over the world to have themselves feminized and masculinized," says his surgical first assistant Mark Klingler. "Some are CEO's, some are celebrities, but most are ordinary people. Some are gender variant and live their lives in both their male and female personas, leaving their genitals intact but feminizing their faces. They want to look their best en femme when at home or out of town, but they also want to look their best when they're in a boy mode."

Do patients ever regret their decision after making the switch?

"I've never had anyone come back with a case of buyer's remorse," Zukowski says. "That's why they have to live as a woman for a year before the procedure. I was given a gift to be able to surgically sculpt a patient's face and body and help that patient be as beautiful (as they can) on the outside so they can feel good on the inside."



LOCAL SUPPORT

FORGE, a national organization headquartered in Milwaukee, provides social support for trans, gender non-conforming and gender non-binary individuals, as well as their loved ones. FORGE offers monthly in-person support meetings on the fourth Saturday of each month at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center. The organization also provides information, referrals and linkage to resources.

In addition to support and information, FORGE presents films in Milwaukee and hosts special events and speakers. FORGE works collaboratively with other Wisconsin LGBTQ and "mainstream" organizations to increase knowledge and understanding of trans people and loved ones.

To learn more, visit FORGE's website at forge-forward.org.



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Wisconsin congressman pushes for equality in Social Security benefits

Opinion

U.S. REP. RON KIND

As we celebrate Pride Month this June, we reflect upon the gains our nation has achieved in equality. While much progress has been made, there is still much work ahead of us. As a strong supporter of marriage equality, I was proud to introduce the Social Security and Marriage Equality Act earlier this year in an effort to ensure equality for all legally married couples to receive Social Security benefits.

An important step forward in equality was achieved with the 2013 U.S. Supreme Court case *United States v. Windsor*, in which the court ruled that the federal government may not create two classes of marriage. Although married same-sex couples who live in states that recognize their marriage are now eligible for the same protections, responsibilities and access to federal programs afforded to all other married couples, inequality remains for legally married

couples living in states that do not recognize their marriage. Because eligibility for Social Security spousal benefits is determined by place of residence, holds are being placed on Social Security benefits applications filed by legally married same-sex spouses who live in states that do not recognize their marriage.

The SAME Act, a bipartisan bill which I introduced with U.S. Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen, R-Florida, would ensure that same-sex spouses receive equal treatment under the Social Security Act, regardless of their ZIP code. The SAME Act would eliminate the requirement that a spouse must reside in a state that recognizes same-sex marriage in order to be eligible for Social Security spousal benefits and would provide full spousal benefits to all citizens who were legally married in the United States or in another country.

Throughout my 20-year marriage to Tawni, I've learned that our love and support for each other makes both of us stronger. I believe that where a legally married couple chooses to



live should have no impact on eligibility for Social Security spousal benefits. All married couples should have the comfort of knowing their unions will be treated equally under the law. The peace of mind and economic security provided by Social Security spousal benefits should be enjoyed by every married couple who pays into the system.

This is an issue of fundamental fairness and I'm proud to help lead this effort toward greater equality for every American citizen.

U.S. Rep. Ron Kind, D-La Crosse, has represented Wisconsin's Third Congressional District since 1997. Learn more about him at kind.house.gov.

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Galano Club helps LGBT people get sober

By Louis Weisberg

Staff writer

Every alcoholic and addict hits bottom differently.

For some, it might be breaking a family heirloom piece of china due to shakiness from cocaine. For someone else, it might be killing someone during a drunken blackout.

But for all alcoholics and addicts, the bottom is that moment they realize that their drinking or addictive behavior has taken control of their lives. Only then can the process of recovery begin — a lifelong process that requires a lot of support.

Since 1973, LGBT Milwaukeeans and visitors to the city have found the support they need at the Galano Club, currently located at 7210 W. Greenfield Ave. in downtown West Allis. The club hosts meetings for a variety of 12-step programs and is paid for by voluntary dues, contributions and fundraisers. It also provides socializing opportunities and group events. Straight people, of course, are welcome at the meetings, which are for anyone with a genuine desire to get clean and sober.

The club also has meetings that support people who are involved with someone struggling with addiction (Al-Anon) and a recovery book club, Pages of Healing. In the latter, people read books such as *Co-Dependent No More* to help them heal from addictive relationships and other harmful behaviors.

"I think that many times people don't know that help is available for improving your own sanity when dealing with a loved one who is an addict," says Raymond K-K, a charter member of the club and former board member who's been clean and sober for 30 years. (Members of 12-step programs remain anonymous in the press by not using their last names.)

Raymond has seen membership and participation ebb and flow over the years. Currently about 160 people are regularly involved with the club. Over the years, Raymond has witnessed varying trends in addiction, from cocaine to crack to meth to heroin.

Some of the meetings hosted at Galano focus on alcohol, others on narcotic substances and

others on behavior, such as sex addiction. But all follow the same 12-step format and principles, which is based on peer support from other alcoholics and addicts.

Recovery is a deeply personal journey that involves sharing one's innermost thoughts and private experiences. No one in recovery can afford to hold back. For those reasons, many LGBT people feel safer with a group such as Galano Club, which was founded by and exists for them. Before Galano Club came along, 12-step programs in Milwaukee that were welcoming of LGBT members were coded using the numbers 94 as their last two digits for identification.

Despite the enormous gains in visibility and social acceptance LGBT people have experienced since 1973, a lot of people still feel more comfortable being out and open around people like them. Many of them also feel as if other LGBT people understand issues that are unique to them, so they don't have to explain aspects of their lives that are familiar to people who have lived in the same culture and shared many of the same kinds of experiences.

"As a member of the LGBT community, the Galano Club is a great place to get into recovery because you're not afraid to talk about things that relate to your personal life," says Deb S., who's been sober for 20 years. "It's safe within those rooms. There's that community feeling."

For Deb, like many other LGBT people, struggles with sexual identity helped fuel her drinking. Numbing herself with alcohol helped her cope with the nascent realization that she's a lesbian.

"When I first discovered my sexuality, I wasn't accepting of myself and I drank a ton," Deb says. "It was a (way) to avoid who I was. I thought it helped relieve some of those (negative) feelings. No, it wasn't the answer I was looking for — not one bit."

Twenty years ago, when Deb was coming out, socializing in bars was an LGBT tradition. That's changed as society has grown more inclusive. Now LGBT people feel free to socialize in the world at large.

But alcohol is a traditional way of socializing in all of America, and having a non-drinking community of LGBT people to associate

with — a community such as Galano offers — is vital to helping people like Deb stay sober, she says.

"I need to put myself in situations that support my sobriety, like hanging around with people who aren't using and are having a good time without drinking," says Raymond K-K. "Going out to dinner after a meeting, going on road trips with other people who are sober helps me stay sober."

The National Council on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence says that nearly 15 percent of the U.S. population — 18 million people — abuse alcohol. Statistics also show that 100,000 Americans die each year of alcohol-related causes and that driving under the influence is a factor in nearly half of the nation's highway deaths.

In the LGBT community, the numbers are even scarier. Studies have found that LGBT people abuse alcohol at three times the rate of heterosexuals.

Raymond K-K says that being LGBT is not the only risk factor for becoming alcoholic or addicted. Socioeconomic factors also play a large role, as do aging, racism and other characteristics.

But no matter what their race, age or sexual orientation, all addicts have one thing in common.

According to 12-step philosophy, Raymond K-K says, "When you're dealing with somebody who's chemically dependent, there's these two specific things that are different from people who just abuse chemicals or just get drunk now and then. (Addicts) have this obsession of the mind and an 'allergy' of the body. Something happens different to a person who's an alcoholic or an addict when they use."

Raymond K-K believes that "there's a genetic predisposition that's clearly marked. You can't separate far from the DNA of another addict."

Coping with addiction is a lifelong battle, according to 12-step programs. There's a saying among alcoholics that "one drink is too many and a thousand not enough." If an addict starts drinking or using again, no matter how long he or she has been sober or clean, it's the beginning of an inevitable spiral back into what Raymond calls the "horror" of active addiction.

The first of the 12 steps is accepting "powerlessness" over one's addiction. That powerlessness never goes away.

"I'm 30 years sober and I still need this program," Raymond says. "I need to continue to use this program. It's not just like I go to it to help others. This really helps me. Without it I am selfish, I am that rude person on the telephone, I am self-centered. This helps me to live differently."

For more about the Galano Club, visit galanoclub.org.



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Laramie outlaws anti-LGBT discrimination



By Lisa Neff

Staff writer

In the 17 years since Matthew Shepard was beaten to death in Laramie, Wyoming, his name has been invoked often by lawmakers seeking to pass hate crimes bills and anti-discrimination ordinances.

But Wyoming resisted.

And Laramie resisted, until May 13, when the city council voted 7-2 in favor of an ordinance banning bias based on sexual orientation and gender identity. The measure provides protections for LGBT people in access to employment, housing and public facilities. After years of rejection or inattention, the ordinance faced little opposition on final reading.

Shepard, 21, died on Oct. 12, 1998, at Poudre Valley Hospital in Colorado. Six days earlier, he had left a bar with Aaron McKinney and

Russell Henderson, two young men who had offered him a ride home. Instead, they drove to a remote, rural area, where they robbed, beat and tortured Shepard, then left him tied to a fence. Eighteen hours later, a cyclist found Shepard, covered in blood and unconscious. He never regained consciousness.

In the days after the discovery of Shepard's body slumped on a fence, vigils spread across the country and around the world.

Shepard's killers crafted a gay-panic defense that drew the sympathies of far-right extremists such as the Rev. Fred Phelps. Activists also sought to advance legislation to beat back discrimination and bias crimes.

Then-President Bill Clinton renewed attempts to amend federal hate crimes laws to include sexual orientation. In the session after Shepard's murder, the Wyoming House took

up a hate crimes bill that failed on a 30-30 tie. Activists have been trying to enact LGBT civil rights protections in the state ever since.

With the vote on May 13, Laramie became the first city in Wyoming to outlaw anti-LGBT discrimination.

Mayor Dave Paulekas said the ordinance is about fairness. "To me, this is about treating people fairly, it's about treating people the way I would want to be treated, the way we all expect to be treated," he said. "And it's nothing more than that, in my mind."

"I'm so proud to be a resident of Wyoming tonight and a member of this community," said state Rep. Cathy Connolly, a Democrat from Laramie and a lesbian, when addressing the council the night of the vote.

Activists now are focused on enacting a similar measure in Cheyenne.

PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS
Gay college sophomore Matthew Shepard was beaten to death in Laramie, Wyoming, in October 1998.

No. 94: Michael Sam signs to play pro football in Canada

From AP reports

Michael Sam has found a pro football job. In Canada.

Sam, the first openly gay player drafted in the NFL, signed a two-year contract with the Montreal Alouettes of the Canadian Football league.

"Michael Sam is a very good football player and that's the reason we signed him," said general manager Jim Popp. "He's an outstanding pass rusher."

He also was unemployed after being dropped by two NFL teams last season.

Sam came out before last year's NFL draft. He was selected in the seventh round by the St. Louis Rams and cut in training camp. The Dallas Cowboys signed him to their practice squad but released him in October. Sam then made another unsuccessful attempt at an NFL job at this year's veterans combine.

The 25-year-old defensive end was intro-

duced at a news conference in late May in Montreal and then reported to training camp. The regular season opens June 25, when Montreal hosts Ottawa.

Sam starred in college in Missouri, earning SEC Defensive Player of the Year honors in 2013. After he came out, his NFL jersey was an instant bestseller and President Barack Obama publicly congratulated Sam and the Rams.

"Today is another indication of how open and progressive the CFL is — consistent with our rich and storied history of great football tradition," CFL Commissioner Jeffrey Orridge said in a statement.

Aware of Sam's celebrity, the team immediately put his No. 94 Alouettes jersey on sale on its website for \$139.95.

The Alouettes had Sam on their negotiation list, and Popp said he was in contact with Sam all along. The 6-foot-2, 260-pound

player finally accepted a contract after completing his commitment to *Dancing With the Stars*.

"Each time he was let go, there were discussions," Popp said. "He wanted to give it one last shot at the combine."

Popp said Sam was considered a "tweener" by NFL clubs, not quite the right body type to be a defensive end or an outside linebacker for that league.

But he may fit perfectly in the CFL. Popp believes Sam can follow a path similar to that of Cam Wake, who was converted from linebacker to end when he joined the B.C. Lions in 2007. Wake was the CFL Defensive Player of the Year in each of his two seasons before signing with the Miami Dolphins, where he has had a successful NFL career.

"If he proves (NFL) people wrong it would be great for us and I think he can do it," Popp said.

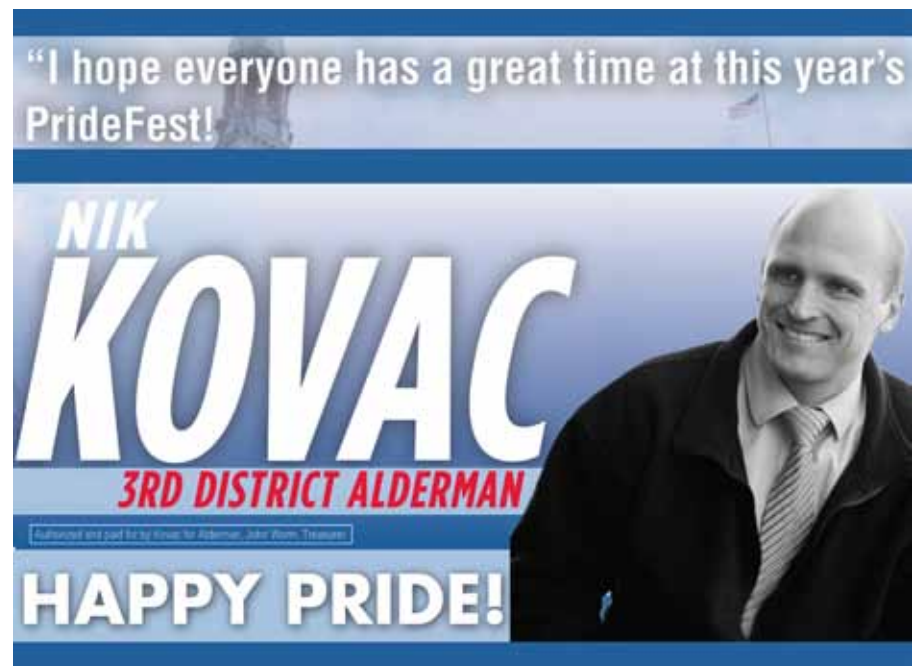


PHOTO: MONTREAL ALOUETTES

Michael Sam has signed to play for the Montreal Alouettes.



Candidates for Democratic Party of Wisconsin Chair & 1st Vice Chair, Martha Laning & Rep. David Bowen, wish PrideFest a successful year!



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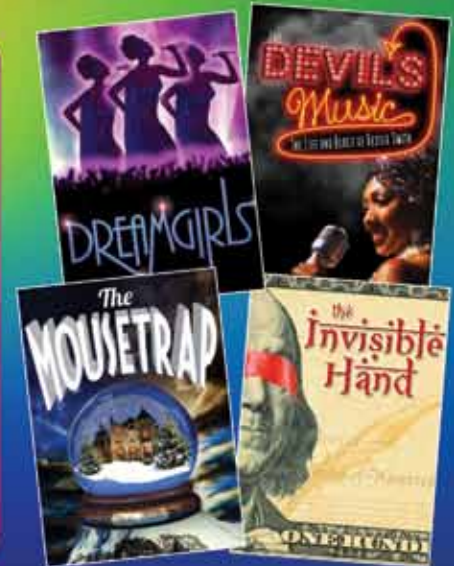
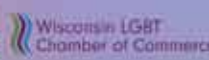
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The rainbow and beyond: WiG's annual LGBT Quiz

Compiled by Lisa Neff

For the June 1978 Gay Freedom Day Parade in San Francisco, 30 people came together to hand-dye two rainbow-striped flags.

Some six months later, rainbow flags flew again in San Francisco, in the vigils that followed the assassination of openly gay Supervisor Harvey Milk.

Today, the rainbow flag is known worldwide as a symbol of LGBT Pride. The flags flap in our parades, stick to our bumpers, tattoo our biceps and adorn our storefronts. We march behind the flag at city halls, capitols and courthouses. We rally under the flag at victory parties and vigils.

WiG's annual LGBT pop quiz tests your knowledge of all-things-rainbow. Well, some-things-rainbow.



1. This island resort community installed a permanent rainbow-colored crosswalk to celebrate LGBT Pride and salute diversity.

- A. Provincetown, Massachusetts
- B. Hilton Head, South Carolina
- C. Mackinac Island, Michigan
- D. Key West, Florida

2. "Over the Rainbow" had an introductory verse that Judy Garland did not sing in *The Wizard of Oz*. True or false?

3. This country singer-songwriter said, "The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain." Won't you always love her?

4. The current LGBT rainbow Pride flag contains how many colors?

- A. 6
- B. 8
- C. 9
- D. 15

5. Who designed the LGBT Rainbow flag?

- A. Ginger Baker
- B. Harvey Milk
- C. Gilbert Baker
- D. Yves Saint Laurent

6. The first LGBT rainbow Pride flag contained a pink stripe that symbolized sex. However, hot pink wasn't as available so the color was removed. True or false?

7. She once said, "When I die I have visions of fags singing 'Over the Rainbow' and the flag at Fire Island being flown at half mast." When she died, Fire Island homes were reportedly draped in black.

8. Benjamin Franklin proposed that a rainbow flag be used to signify neutral ships in times of war. True or false?

9. The colors in the LGBT rainbow Pride flag are symbolic. Red is for life, for instance. What does purple symbolize?

10. Rainbows caused by sunlight always appear in the section of sky directly opposite the sun. True or false?

11. In a double rainbow, a second arc is seen outside the primary arc and the order of colors is the same, with the red on the outer side of the arc. True or false?



ANSWERS:
 1: D.
 2: True. It began, "When all the world is a hopeless jumble and the raindrops tumble all around, Heaven opens a magic lane."
 3: Dolly Parton.
 4: A. The first version of the flag contained eight stripes.
 5: C. San Francisco artist Gilbert Baker in 1978.
 6: True.
 7: Judy Garland.
 8: False. But Thomas Paine made such a proposal.
 9: Spirit.
 10: True.
 11: False. The colors are reversed and red is on the inner side of the arc.

Congressman Ron Kind



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Pot of gold: Ireland voters approve same-sex marriage

From WiG and AP reports

Ireland's gay citizens woke up on May 24 in what felt like a nation reborn — some with dreams of wedding plans dancing in their heads.

Many weren't rising too early that morning.

The Irish gay community's biggest party in history came late the day before, after the announcement that voters had passed a gay marriage referendum by a landslide.

Ireland's unexpectedly strong 62 percent "yes" to adding same-sex marriage to its conservative 1937 constitution is expected to lead to a wave of gay weddings as early as July, after both houses of parliament pass a marriage bill in June.

Ireland is the first country in the world to approve gay marriage in a national popular vote. And Ireland is the 21st nation and the 10th predominately Catholic country in which same-sex couples can marry.

For Ireland's most prominent gay couple, Sen. Katherine Zappone and Ann Louise Gilligan, it's an emotionally overwhelming time. Since 2003, they have fought the Irish government in courts to have their marriage in Canada recognized as valid.

"For so long, I've been having to dig in my heels and say, 'Well, we are married. I'm a married woman!'" said Zappone, a Seattle native who resettled with her Irish spouse in Dublin after they met and fell in love while studying theology in Boston College. "Now that it has happened, at a personal level, it's just going to take a long time to let that acceptance sink in."

THE "YES" VOTE

The percentage of approval surprised both sides. More than 1.2 million Irish voters backed the "yes" side to less than 750,000 voting "no."

"With today's vote, we have disclosed who we are: a generous, compassionate, bold and joyful people," Prime Minister Enda Kenny proclaimed.

Analysts credited the "yes" side with adeptly employing social media to mobilize young, first-time voters, tens of thousands of whom voted for the first time in the referendum. The "yes" campaign also featured moving personal stories from prominent Irish people — either coming

BY THE NUMBERS

Ireland, this summer, will become the 21st country where same-sex couples can legally marry.

In 19 countries, the right is nationwide. In addition to Ireland, the Netherlands, Belgium, Spain, Canada, South Africa, Norway, Sweden, Portugal, Iceland, Argentina, Denmark, France, Brazil, Uruguay, New Zealand, Britain, Luxembourg and Finland.

In two countries, Mexico and the United States, same-sex couples can marry in some jurisdictions but not nationwide.

— Lisa Neff

out as gay or describing hopes for their gay children — that helped convince wavering voters to back equality.

THE CELEBRATION

After the result was announced, thousands of celebrants flooded into the Irish capital's pubs and clubs. At the George, Ireland's oldest gay pub, drag queens danced and lip-synced to Queen. The founding father of Ireland's gay rights campaign, Sen. David Norris, basked in the greatest accomplishment of the movement's 40-year history.

"The people in this small island off the western coast of Europe have said to the rest of the world: 'This is what it is to be decent, to be civilized, and to be tolerant! And let the rest of the world catch up!'" Norris, 70, shouted with jubilation to the hundreds packing the disco ball-lit hall.

In the 1970s and 1980s, Norris waged an often lonely legal fight to force Ireland to quash its Victorian-era laws outlawing same-sex sex acts. Ireland finally complied in 1993, becoming the last European Union country to do so.

This time, the gay community in Ireland managed to build a decisive base of support.

"People from the LGBT community in Ireland are a minority. But with our parents, our families, or friends and co-workers and colleagues, we're a majority," said Leo Varadkar, a 36-year-old Irish Cabinet minister who in January announced on national radio that he is gay. "For me it wasn't just a referendum. It was more like a social revolution."

THE IMPACT

Both Catholic Church leaders and gay rights advocates said the result signaled a social revolution in Ireland, where only a few decades ago the authority of Catholic teaching was reinforced by voters who massively backed bans on abortion and divorce in the 1980s.

Voters legalized divorce only by a razor-thin margin in 1995 but now, by a firm majority, dismissed the Catholic Church's repeated calls to reject same-sex marriage.

The Vatican's secretary of state called the vote a "defeat for humanity."

But Dublin Archbishop Diarmuid Martin said the "overwhelming vote" against church teaching on gay marriage meant that Catholic leaders in Ireland needed urgently to find a new message and voice for reaching Ireland's young.

"It's a social revolution. ...The church needs to do a reality check right across the board," said Martin, who suggested that some church figures who argued for gay marriage's rejection came across as harsh, damning and unloving.

Across the Atlantic, U.S. marriage equality advocates, including some who worked with the Irish Yes Equality campaign, cheered the victory.

"The global momentum for the freedom



PHOTO: AP/PETER MORRISON

Marriage-equality supporters celebrate on May 23 as the first results start to filter through in the Irish referendum in Dublin, Ireland.

to marry reflects and reinforces the progress we are marking here in the United States," said Evan Wolfson, president of Freedom to Marry and a longtime advocate of marriage equality. "And we look now to the Supreme Court to bring our

country to national resolution, following Ireland's good example."

The U.S. Supreme Court is expected to rule on same-sex marriage later this month.

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Lavender Class of 2015 faces workplace discrimination

Opinion
RILEY FOLDS

College graduation season has come and gone. Students are transitioning from campus life to the workplace.

which have municipal ordinances banning such discrimination. The patchwork nature of protections adds a layer of complexity to the job-search process that heterosexuals don't have to worry about.

For months, students have been attending career fairs, emailing resumes and interviewing for jobs. While this is an exciting time, it's also stressful — particularly for graduating seniors who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

There is a solution — one that's been present but on hold for about the same amount of time that new graduates have been alive: The Employment Non-Discrimination Act, a comprehensive piece of legislation that would prohibit workplace discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity in all 50 states.

Many colleges and universities, including UWM, support their LGBT students with special graduation celebrations known as Lavender Graduations. Such ceremonies have become a tradition at more than 60 campuses nationally.

First presented to Congress in 1994, ENDA is finally gaining traction. In early November 2013, the U.S. Senate voted 64 to 32 to pass ENDA. All Senate Democrats joined 10 Senate Republicans to approve the bill.

But the world at large isn't always as accepting of LGBT people as their academic experiences suggest. Discrimination in the workplace is not uncommon and it can manifest in various ways — from crude slurs to being overlooked for promotions.

Then it went to the House of Representatives, where Speaker of the House John Boehner bottled it up in committee.

And most of the time it's legal.

In all likelihood, ENDA will remain stagnant in the House for some time. While the law's fate is in legislative purgatory, the professional lives of graduating LGBT seniors remain imperiled.

Contrary to what many people believe, Title IV of the Civil Rights Act, the federal statute that prohibits discrimination in the workplace, does not protect individuals based on their sexual orientations or gender identities. Some municipal governments and state legislatures have enacted protections, resulting in a patchwork of laws. In 29 states, LGBT people can be denied jobs, fired or otherwise discriminated against for being — or for suspected of being — LGBT. (Wisconsin is one of the exceptions. In 1982, it became the first state to ban discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, although gender identity is not protected statewide.)

Dealing with the current situation is in the hands of the jobseeker. They must research before applying for jobs to learn which jurisdictions and companies offer employment protection. They must also take the initiative to look for inclusive employers, so they'll know whether to list LGBT-community related affiliations on their resumes and whether they can come out at work.

LGBT graduates from the University of Texas face legal employment discrimination in most of their state — the exceptions being cities such as Austin and Dallas,

Until the law catches up with public and business support for equality, LGBT job-seekers have additional homework to do and obstacles to overcome.

Riley Folds is the author of Your Queer Career: The Ultimate Career Guide for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Job Seekers.

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PrideFest focuses on local talent and the local community

By Matthew Reddin

Staff writer

PrideFest is often billed as the nation's largest LGBT Pride event held on its own permanent festival grounds, as well as the largest such event staffed entirely by volunteers.

This year, size doesn't matter as much to PrideFest organizers — unless you're talking about the size of commitment to the LGBT community.

PrideFest's mission always has been to serve the community, says communications director Michail Takach. But in recent years the focus has been split between that and booking the biggest stars possible.

"This year, we want people to look beyond the headliners," Takach says.

The festival still has strong headliners — bisexual singer-songwriter and activist Ani DiFranco has the top mainstage spot on June 6. She's been in demand by PrideFest-goers for some time. Iconic R&B group En Vogue will close the festival on June 7.

But Takach says the festival made a concerted effort to add more local acts than ever before. Legendary Milwaukee drag queen BJ Daniels will host an evening of local drag artists on the opening night, which is June 5. And artists with Wisconsin addresses or ties are spread throughout the mainstage schedule: synthpop band GGOOLLDD, Kenosha native Tom Goss, glam rockers Tigernite and power pop band Ian and the Dream, just to name a few.

The festival's other two major music stages are following the mainstage's lead. Takach says the Wom!nz Spot is local and diverse, offering a wide variety of artists with different musical styles. Even the Dance Pavilion is getting in on the act. Instead of the EDM focus that Takach says has been the norm, the festival has booked DJs willing to expand beyond that spectrum.

The festival also was lucky to book local drag queen Trixie Mattel — now nationally

known thanks to competing on *RuPaul's Drag Race* this season. Chicago emcee Trannika Rex, returning for her third year, is co-hosting with Trixie.

In addition, Trixie will host the festival's new, second VIP area — dubbed "Trixie's Fun House," — which Takach says is meant to appeal to younger audiences.

Of course, PrideFest is more than a music festival. So its efforts to include and engage the local community go beyond the music stages.

A welcome addition this year are several gender-neutral bathrooms, which Takach says are a direct response to community feedback. He says the festival has always encouraged patrons to feel comfortable using the bathroom of whichever gender they identify with — "the idea that gender policing is acceptable is not acceptable," he says. But he admits the policy wasn't always clear, and bathrooms labeled by gender are still an obstacle for queer attendees who don't identify as either male or female.

As a result, the festival has gone from a single gender-neutral bathroom to three that are spread across the grounds. Takach says the organization will do better at advertising their availability, along with PrideFest's inclusion policies.

"Our policy was always good. This year, it's going to be great."

This year's festival also marks an important anniversary for many same-sex couples who rushed to courthouses last June, when a



GGOOLLDD.



Madison band Sexy Ester.



Drag queen BJ Daniels.

federal judge struck down Wisconsin's ban on same-sex marriage. Takach says the festival is adapting to that new reality, with its first-ever wedding expo on Friday, June 5, and an event for couples celebrating their first anniversary that day, thanks to donations by Milwaukee County Executive Chris Abele.

And as always, attending PrideFest is an opportunity for the community to support itself, thanks to the multiple fundraising efforts tied to the event. Takach says the festival's Plus One program is back this year, allowing ticket buyers to donate a dollar or more to a charitable group. This year's beneficiary is Pathfinders' Q-Blok, an initiative that helps LGBT youth in danger of homelessness secure housing and financial support.

PrideFest also is teaming up with the other festivals hosted on the Summerfest grounds for its biggest food drive ever. The festival has always brought in a few tons of food each year by offering discounted tickets in exchange for non-perishable food items that are donated to the ARCW food pantry and other charities. This year, PrideFest will be part of "The Fests Feed Milwaukee," a united campaign in conjunction with the Hunger Task Force. The campaign's goal is to collect 160,000 tons of food by the end of the summer.

That partnership hints at what Takach says is one of the biggest shifts he's seen in 20 years of attending PrideFest: a gradual evolution from a political statement to an open, crossover cultural celebration. Every year, he sees more families and LGBT allies joining the festivities, making the event a kickoff to the summer's lakeside festivals.

"That's a cause for everyone to celebrate," Takach says.

PRIDEFEST 2015

PrideFest Milwaukee runs June 5-7 at the Summerfest Grounds. Headliners include the BJ Daniels Revue on June 5, Ani DiFranco on June 6 (see next page) and EnVogue on June 7. See page 26 for a full schedule. Tickets are \$13, \$33 for a weekend pass, and can be ordered at pridefest.com.

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Ani DiFranco, the Righteous Babe herself, headlines PrideFest



PHOTO: CHARLES WALDORF

Ani DiFranco plays PrideFest on June 6.

By Gregg Shapiro

Contributing writer

Want to get a sense of the swift passage of time? It's been almost 25 years since singer/songwriter Ani DiFranco, one of the most distinctive voices in contemporary music, released her debut LP on her own Righteous Babe record label. That's right, 25 years since you first heard her sing "Both Hands."

Since then, the indie music goddess has released 18 studio albums, including her latest, *Allergic to Water*, in November of last year. She also signed some big names to her label, released some collaboration albums and generally became one of the most famous feminists, activists and entrepreneurs in the music world.

Allergic to Water continues in the same mood and style of her previous New Orleans-era recordings such as *Reprive* (2006), *Red Letter Year* (2008) and *Which Side Are You On?* (2012). It features standout tracks, such as "Careless Words," "Yeah Yr Right," "Still My Heart" and "Rainy Parade."

'I'm definitely a woman-centered woman and a human rights-centered artist.'

WiG spoke with DiFranco, currently in the middle of the tour that will bring her to PrideFest on June 6.

Ani, 2015 marks the 25th anniversary of the release of your self-titled debut album. Are you planning to do anything special to commemorate that event? Oh, no (laughs). That album's been so long forgotten. I guess there are some tunes on it that I still play. But it's been such a long road, littered with so many records. Somebody was just telling me that 10 years ago was the release of my record

Dilate, which was kind of popular. They said, "You should do a show that's just the whole *Dilate* album this year." I don't know — there's something about me that tends to keep moving forward instead.

Is there any advice that the Ani of 2015 would give to the Ani of 1990? Wow! I think if I had to be as concise as possible, I'd say, "Be more patient." It would apply to everything. I guess for a young'un, I was fairly patient. To go the indie route, you kind of have to take a decade to do what a major-label can do overnight. Still, my impatience worked against me at many turns.

You've been living in New Orleans for a few years and have recorded all or parts of your last four albums there. How would you say that New Orleans and Louisiana come through in your work? In so many ways. I think first and foremost in just the bio-rhythm of my body. I think I kicked it down a notch when I moved to New Orleans. It was in conjunction with unconditional love com-

ing into my life and then children and family. Everything collaborated to make me chill the eff out. I took my cue from the people of New Orleans and the way they live down there.

And speaking of them, there're so many awesome musicians to rub elbows with. That's what I've been doing ever since. Much to my joy and the benefit of my records and such.

"Harder Than It Needs To Be," from *Allergic to Water* is one of the best explanations I've ever heard about the way a person's family is present in that person, whether or not they want them to be. That's cool that you picked up on that song. I like that song, too. I think in my songwriting — I'm not old yet but in my old age — I've been writing songs for 25 years and I am really pushing myself towards simplicity these days. I'm really trying hard. I think that was a song where it was successful. You can use very few words to say something that everybody understands.

At some point, I imagine it's when you find your significant other, your partner, that you really begin to address your parents in you. You try to change these behaviors that are just mimicked from childhood.

As a lyricist, you have a history of exceptional wordplay, exemplified on *Allergic to Water* in songs such as "Dithering" and "Happy All the Time." What role does wordplay play in your lyric writing? I guess that's a natural offshoot of my playful nature. When you live through language there are certain quirks about English that become very fun to play with.

In recent years, your label Righteous Babe has released albums by queer artists such as Nona Hendryx and Jennifer Knapp. Can you please say something about the inclusion of out artists on the Righteous Babe roster? That's always been a part of the Righteous Babe mission through me and my heart and my songs — inclusion and giving everybody equal airtime in this culture. It's interesting, if I look back over my writing career, I pushed that part of my identity forward — my bisexuality — as a political mission. Shove it out there, these alternative experiences that were not yet, when I was young, on the TV or accepted in mainstream culture like they are now. I think a diversity of voices is essential in art. Everybody needs to see themselves reflected to feel connected and whole and part of the human family. At Righteous Babe, we've always tried to provide a safe space for alternative voices to connect with people.

Speaking of queer artists, you are performing at PrideFest in Milwaukee. What

PRIDEFEST 2015

Ani DiFranco will perform on June 6 on the Miller Lite Mainstage at 10 p.m. Crystal Bowersox and Betty Who will open. Visit pridefest.org for details.

does it mean to you to perform at such an event? It's going to be really fun for me to be included. I haven't actually played a lot of Pridefests. It's certainly been a long time. I was actually trying to recall when the last time was that I played a Pride event. It's cool. I feel like I will be diversifying it from my angle (laughs). Not so queer anymore, but definitely a woman-centered woman and just a human rights-centered artist.

Earlier, we talked about Louisiana. With the 2016 presidential election less than a year and a half away, Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal has been a vocal presence in the Republican sector and might be running for president. As a vocal political activist, what do you think about that? I think the more the merrier on that Republican side. I say bring out all the people that want to run. As somebody who stands left of Democrats in this world, to see chaos and infighting and undercutting happening on the far right side of the spectrum is kind of a relief.

I have to hope that we are feeling a pendulum swing back to liberal values, back to — I think — common sense, economically and culturally. We have an opportunity now to address things such as the criminal justice system, police brutality, to make big structural changes. I really hope that we can continue this momentum and do so.

Of the 813 prime time TV series during the 2014-15 season, 32 regularly appearing characters were LGBT — or 3.9 percent. That's up from 3.3 percent last season but still lower than the record high of 4.4 percent during the 2011-12 season. There were an additional 33 LGBT characters in recurring roles.

— GLAAD



PHOTO: CHUCK HODES/FOX

Fox's *Empire* tackles LGBT rights issues via gay songwriter Jamal (left).

Hometown Queen

For Brian Firkus, a childhood slur became the springboard for success as Trixie Mattel

By Kerrie Kennedy

Contributing writer

Over-the-top local drag queen Trixie Mattel recently achieved A-list status when she was invited to join Season 7 of *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Already known in the local club scene, Trixie became an instant cult favorite for an often polarizing brand of drag that challenges conventional ideas about gender. And despite being sent home in the fourth week of the competition, Trixie was brought back later in the competition and won her way to a sixth-place finish.

Out of drag, Trixie is Milwaukee native Brian Firkus, a former makeup artist and UWM student. *WiG* spoke to Firkus shortly after his final episode aired about his amazing journey and what's next after *Drag Race*.

Tell us about the process of being selected for *RuPaul's Drag Race*. Was it a total surprise or did you have a feeling this was your destiny? I auditioned for the first time after seeing the success of Bianca and Adore (Season 6) and feeling like I was somewhere in the middle of those two. One was more of a comedian and the other was very strange aesthetically. It just felt right, like it was good timing. I kind of knew it was going to happen. I felt like they hadn't had a "me" yet.

What was happening with your career before you got the show? In Milwaukee, I was kind of on the fringe of drag. I wasn't booked at the normal clubs, because I'm too weird. So I was traveling to Chicago a lot. Chicago audiences don't really care what kind of drag you do, as long as you do it really well.

You have a background in music and theater. Do you think that helped set you apart from other drag queens on the show and in general? In general, yes. More than anything, my background in theater has made me passionate about being visual and acting like this character. I think it's given me a lot of uniqueness. But on *Drag Race*, it doesn't matter what your background is — in fact, if you're good at something, they punish you, because they expect more. It's a gift to be on the show, but it's horrible to go through. It's a lot like plastic surgery — it's a horrible process, but the rewards are great.

Fans were stunned when you were eliminated. Then you came back and were eliminated again. How did that affect you? It was actually great, because even though I was very confused at first, I felt supported by the fans. People wanted me back. They liked me because they liked Trixie. That was amazing!

What do you think it is about Trixie that resonates with fans? People like my persona — it's kind of a marriage of childhood (and) *Pee-wee's Playhouse* mixed with off-color comedy that comes from a dark place. People seem to relate to that.

I know you and Pearl were close, but tell us who the bitches were. Violet was a bitch during filming. In real life, she's so nice, but the experience — that horrible death match environment — brought out the worst in her. She told me later that she felt bad. But she's great. I recently visited her in Atlanta.

Let's talk about your look. It's very unique, very Barbie-on-steroids. I used to look more like a person, but after reading a book about dolls in the '60s, I started doing a more conceptual look, more like a "thing" than a person. Makeup-wise, I'm very heavy handed, but I still feel beautiful. People might think, "oh, she doesn't know how to do her makeup," but I love looking like that.

'In Milwaukee, I was kind of on the fringe of drag. I wasn't booked at the normal clubs, because I'm too weird.'

You're sort of doing a caricature of a drag queen. Do older, pageant-style drag queens ever get upset with you? All the time! They don't get me at all. Kennedy is very pageant. She didn't really like me. A lot of pageant queens look at me and think I'm not polished. But I think pageant drag is the kitsch of drag, the Parmesan cheese of drag. It's not art, not creation, not breaking down barriers, not doing anything new. Beautiful women walk down the street every day. I love women, but I'm not interested in tricking the eye into being their gender.

Did you watch the recent Caitlyn Jenner interview with Diane Sawyer? What were your thoughts? I think it's wonderful, because it's great to see a transgender person sharing their truth. To be an Olympic champion and share what you're going

through — that's some real sh*t! I mean, she's rich and famous, and not many transgender people can relate to that. But like (her), many of us have something going on with our families. The show explored that a little bit.

Speaking of, Trixie is the name your stepdad gave you as a way of putting you down for being gay. What message do you have for young gay men in similar situations? I guess you have to figure out what your escape route is and use it. For me, it was comedy. Horrible things would be happening at home, and I could laugh about it. Trixie Mattel is my shelter from all of that — my advice is you have to find yours.

Has your family come around? They're just not very involved. They haven't watched *Drag Race* or anything. It's nothing new — when I was a kid, I'd be doing all these extracurricular activities, and no one would come. You have to be your own support team, I guess.

You represent a new generation of queens. Are you the future of drag? I think the future of drag is that we're not as interested in the rules. Drag to me isn't even a man in a wig. There are so many drag queens who are women. Drag is a developed persona that's big and over-the-top and supported by an extreme look. Pee-wee Herman is a drag queen — he's pretending to be a little boy.

Doing drag today is like running a small business. If you do an up-do, wear a gown and sing a Top 40 song, you're just another drag queen. No one will ever pay you if you have something everyone else has.

You're in high demand right now. What's next? I'm currently developing a "One-Doll Show." It's me telling jokes and stories, tap dancing, singing and playing the guitar — kind of an interactive stand-up variety show. I'll be traveling all over the world in the next year to perform it. And right now, I'm packing my suitcases and heading to L.A.

PRIDEFEST 2015

Trixie Mattel will host this year's Dance Pavilion, along with Chicago emcee Trannika Rex all three days of PrideFest. Visit pridefest.org for details.



Trixie Mattel's Tricks and Tips for Looking and Feeling Fabulous:

Don't blend. Blending is for rich people.

Wear your nails as long as you possibly can. You don't need to be able to function or open doors.

Don't rely on your natural beauty! You don't look OK without makeup.

Wear fake lashes. Everybody looks better with lashes on.

Say something big. Wear all-black, but carry a fun bag. You need a pop.

Be in love with yourself. When a drag queen enters the room, everybody notices, because we feel a certain way when we're dressed up, and that energy fills the room. It's all about self-esteem.





FRIDAY, JUNE 5

WEDDING EXPO all day (Harley Stage Area)

4:00 P.M.

- 13 Tom Goss
- 4 Lady Gia Drag Show
- 11 Mandy Cappleman
- 12 EveryDay Hero Handprint Banner
- 11 Heather Jean Maywood

5:00 P.M.

- 15 TGIP (Thank Goodness it's Pride!)

- 9 GSA Mixer
- 8 Sam Jensen

5:15 P.M.

- 13 Abbey of the Brew City Sisters

5:30 P.M.

- 8 Eliza Hansen
- 12 Project Q Dancers

6:00 P.M.

- 4 Trixie Mattel/Trannika Rex Weekend Hosts!
- 11 Alyce Hart
- 8 Milwaukee Belly Dance
- 4 DJ Duo featuring AJ Dubbz & Carla Starla
- 11 Elks Teeth & Rabbits Feet

6:30 P.M.

- 13 Opening Ceremonies
- 15 Laugh @ the Loft! Featuring Laugh Out!
- 10 Interfaith Ceremony
- 12 GypsyMoon Dance

7:00 P.M.

- 4 DJ Shawna
- 8 Midnite Show

7:30 P.M.

- 13 GGOOLDD

8:00 P.M.

- 4 DJs of Scarlet featuring DJ Luna & DJ Scotty T
- 11 Lauryl Sulfate and her Ladies of Leisure
- 8 Keep Calm and Dance
- 15 Elena

- 11 Annabel Lee

8:45 P.M.

- 13 Alex Newell

9:00 P.M.

- 8 Ali Clayton
- Greg Bach

9:30 P.M.

- 15 Le Jazz Hot Follies with Dora Diamond
- 8 Ali Dunne
- Jeff Wheatley-Heckman
- 13 BJ Daniels Revue

10:00 P.M.

- 11 Conversations
- 11 Miltown Kings
- 8 Sam Gordon
- Cody Melcher
- 4 DJ Drew G of Dirty Pop

SATURDAY, JUNE 6

LGBT History Exhibit (All Day- Arts & History Building)

12:00 P.M.

- 13 Tigernite
- 8 Kohl's Color Wheel (until 5 pm)
- 8 Fairytale
- 11 Conversations

12:30 P.M.

- 12 Yoga with Marie

1:00 P.M.

- 13 City of Festivals Men's Chorus
- 8 Jake Eggert Magic
- 11 Victims of Symmetry
- 10 Ronnie Kroell

1:30 P.M.

- 12 Addressing Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault in the LGBTQ Community

2:00 P.M.

- 13 Irene Keenen
- 11 Ms. Lotus Fankh
- 8 Kohl's Wild Theater
- 9 Activities, Games & Art
- 15 Drag Bingo
- 10 Options for childbirth

2:30 P.M.

- 12 US Attorney James L Santelle Discusses Supreme Court Decision on Same Sex Marriage

3:00 P.M.

- 11 The Violet Hour
- 15 Elena
- 10 LGBT Family Law in Wisconsin

3:15 P.M.

- 4 DJ X-Tasy

3:20 P.M.

- 13 Something to Do

3:30 P.M.

- 12 Zumba with Chris

4:00 P.M.

- 15 Moonlight Karaoke featuring John Kasper
- 9 Drag Workshop
- 8 Jake Eggert Magic
- 11 Savage Sevyn

4:15 P.M.

- 4 Leather/Fetish Gear Show

4:30 P.M.

- 10 Becoming a Foster Parent
- 12 LGBT Dancers with Line Dancing

4:40 P.M.

- 13 Brody Ray

5:00 P.M.

- 11 Lisa Ridgely & The Fainting Room
- 8 Yeah, Bro

5:15 P.M.

- 4 Trannika's Midwest Drag Revue

5:30 P.M.

- 12 Everyday Hero Banner

6:00 P.M.

- 13 Eryn Woods
- 10 Miltown Kings Make Over Show
- 15 Drag King Showcase w/ Travis Hard
- 8 Milwaukee Belly Dance
- 9 Drag Show & Dance
- 11 Roxie Bean

6:30 P.M.

- 12 Tamarind Tribal Belly Dance
- 4 Trixie Mattel and Trannika Rex Host!
- 4 DJ Tim Walters

7:00 P.M.

- 11 Lashes and Staches
- 8 Sam Jensen

7:15 P.M.

- 13 Crystal Bowersox

7:30 P.M.

- 4 DJ NMF
- 12 Project Q Hip-Hop Dancers
- 15 Corky Morgan

8:00 P.M.

- 11 The Zimmer Effect
- 8 Keep Calm and Dance

8:30 P.M.

- 4 DJ Ryan Kenney
- 15 Lex Allen

8:45 P.M.

- 13 Betty Who

9:00 P.M.

- 11 Kia Rap Princess
- 8 Tall Boys

9:45 P.M.

!!FIREWORKS!!

10:00 P.M.

- 13 Ani Difranto
- 15 Katie Beth
- 8 Freakazoid with Linux
- 4 DJ Hector Fonseca

10:30 P.M.

- 11 Lady Sabo

SUNDAY, JUNE 7

LGBT History Exhibit (all day - Arts & History Building)

12:00 P.M.

- 8 Age of Reptiles (until 5 p.m.)

12:30 P.M.

- 13 Women's Voices Milwaukee
- 12 Yoga with Marie

1:00 P.M.

- 8 Julie Sobanski
- 10 Citizen Action of Wisconsin
- 8 Face painting (until 4 p.m.)

1:30 P.M.

- 12 LGBT Aging Issues

1:45 P.M.

- 13 Glamazons

2:00 P.M.

- 4 Afternoon Pride Dance Party with DJ Eleazar

2:30 P.M.

- 12 Coming Out Stories; Then and Now

3:00 P.M.

- 13 Ian & The Dream
- 9 Activities, Games & Art
- 15 Drag Queen Bingo
- 8 Gene Covell

3:30 P.M.

- 12 Ballroom Dancing with Chris

4:00 P.M.

- 9 T Party
- 15 Charlene Orffeo
- 11 Jen Cintron
- 8 Julie Sobanski

- 11 Krystal and Kat

4:15 P.M.

- 13 Sandra Valls

4:30 P.M.

- 12 Tamarind Tribal Belly Dance
- 10 The Secret Kindness Agents

5:00 P.M.

- 4 Trixie Mattel & Trannika Rex Hosts!

- 15 The Doris Daze

- 8 Eliza Hansen

- 4 DJ Leo

5:15 P.M.

- 13 David Hernandez

5:30 P.M.

- 12 Gypsy Moon Dance

6:00 P.M.

- 4 Bret Law
- 15 Dixie Kuppe's Kamp and Kurlers Review
- 9 LGBTs Got Talent!
- 11 Rocket Paloma
- 8 Milwaukee Belly Dance
- 11 Delray
- 10 Alliance School 10th Annual Pride Graduation

6:30 P.M.

- 13 Ty Herndon

7:00 P.M.

- 4 DJ Chomper
- 15 "If Vaginas Could Talk" by the Vagina Warriors
- 8 Ali Dunne
- Greg Bach

7:30 P.M.

- 8 Tall Boys
- 12 Project Q Dancers

8:00 P.M.

- 4 DJ Joe Gauthreaux
- 11 Conversations
- 8 Keep Calm and Dance
- 15 Rose on Fire
- 11 Sexy Ester

8:15 P.M.

- 13 En Vogue

9:00 P.M.

- 8 Sam Gordon
- Cody Melcher

9:30 P.M.

- 4 Derrick Barry as Britney Spears

10:00 P.M.

- 10 Chris Cox

TICKETS:
General Admission: \$16 Gate (\$13 Advance)
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EDITOR'S NOTE: Acts, times and venues are subject to change with little notice. Check at the Info Desk or visit pridefest.com.

Crystal Bowersox debuts songs from new album at PrideFest

By Bill Lamb

Contributing writer

For Crystal Bowersox, being a touring musician striving for artistry and perfection is not an option. She says that music is "something that I've tried to quit, but I can't. It's like an addiction. ...Being a musician I don't feel is something people choose, it chooses them."

The first thing most people know about Bowersox is that she finished second in Season 9 of *American Idol* (Simon Cowell's final season), behind that year's winner Lee DeWyze. That's an unexpected level of success when you consider that Bowersox has a distinct musical style not unlike soulful performers Janis Joplin, Tracy Chapman and Melissa Etheridge — not a style frequently rewarded on the program.

Bowersox says she appreciates her time on the show and she learned much more than she knew at the time, thanks to her fellow alumni. "I owe (*Idol*) nothing but gratitude." She also says she continues to value a particular special moment. "I take a little pride in claiming that Simon's last comment he ever made on *American Idol* was to me, and it was, 'Outstanding!'"

After the show ended, Bowersox recorded two well-received studio albums. *Farmer's Daughter* was released in December 2010 on her post-*Idol* label, and it was followed by *All That For This* in March 2013 on the independent label Shanachie Entertainment. More recently, she released an EP, *Promises*, last fall, and she sings with singer-songwriter Seth Glier on the moving ballad "If I Could Change One Thing," the title song from his album released in early April this year.

In speaking about that project, she explains, "Seth and I have become friends over some time. He performed as an opener for me and I was totally taken aback by his talent." She also revealed that plans are underway to record her next full-length studio album this year.

Bowersox is a single mother and says balancing motherhood and being a musician is a tough thing to manage. "That is the hardest part of the game," she says. "My son is school-age now. He'll be starting first-grade in the fall and it takes a strong group of friends and family to help pick up the slack when I'm gone."

Like many musicians, she says, she always has to deal with conflicting emotions depending on whether she's touring. "When you're on the road, you long for home, and when you're home, you long for the road."

PRIDEFEST 2015

Crystal Bowersox will perform at 7:15 p.m. on June 6 at the Miller Lite Mainstage, opening for Ani DiFranco. Visit pridefest.org for details.



Bisexual folk artist Crystal Bowersox will open for Ani DiFranco at PrideFest on June 6.

In November 2013, Bowersox came out publicly as bisexual during the promotion of her song "Coming Out for Christmas," stating, "I have been bisexual as long as I can remember."

"Honestly, if anyone watched me perform on *American Idol*, I feel like it was obvious anyway," she says now, adding that her sexual orientation was a known fact for many years in her personal life before she publicly came out. "It wasn't something that I did for myself. I didn't have any overwhelming need to announce it to the world ... but I just wanted to reach out to anyone who might be struggling with it."

Bowersox says she wrote the song after having lunch with songwriter Maia Sharp. "It started out as a joke ... (but) it became a more serious topic when you throw in LGBTQ homeless youth issues. Coming home for the holidays should always be a joyous event."

On stage at PrideFest, Bowersox will perform a selection of songs from her first two albums. However, she is most excited to introduce new songs that she is planning to record for the upcoming release. She also mentioned that even those unfamiliar with her music will hear cover songs they are likely to know.

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Building Community through Music

Kenosha-born pop artist Tom Goss debuts at PrideFest

By Gregg Shapiro

Contributing writer

Tom Goss is the kind of artist who likes to keep his fans guessing. On his first few albums, he played original, catchy acoustic pop. Then, in 2013, he collaborated with dance music legend Richard Morel for the irresistible and fuzzy club track "Bears" and its accompanying entertaining music video.

On his new album *Wait*, Goss greatly expands his sound, incorporating more synthesizers as well as female backing vocals. The results are definitely worth, well, waiting for.

In addition to a wonderful duet with fellow gay singer/songwriter Matt Alber on "Breath and Sound," songs such as "It Only Takes One," "I Think I," "Deeper Shade of Blue," "Falling" and "You and Me" combine to make *Wait* Goss's best album to date.

WiG spoke with the singer in May, in advance of his debut at PrideFest on June 5.

Tom, when did you first discover that you could sing? If we're being honest, that's something I've always struggled defining. I don't have a traditionally beautiful voice. It's a voice that's a little rougher around the edges, a kind of working-man's, blue-collar voice. Early on in my career, I would do all I could to cover it, to sound more like I was "supposed to sound."

In the past couple of years, I've grown more comfortable with the uniqueness of my voice and have worked hard to shed the previously affixed filters, to be as authentic to my voice as possible. These days I'm grateful that I don't sound like everyone else, and I'm lucky to have a voice that is honest and reveals the depth of my musical message.

When did you write your first song? Almost immediately after picking up the guitar. It was my freshman year in college. I remember taking my boom box and a blank cassette into the bathroom to record it. I was convinced the bathroom was "best for the acoustics" of the song. I have no idea what the song was, but I'm sure it was horrible! I wrote pretty horrible songs for about four years before I wrote anything worth listening to.

Who are some of your musical influences? Early on it was Dave Matthews, Jack Johnson, Ben Folds, Ben Harper, Damien Rice, The Beatles and Jason Mraz. More recently, I'd say Awolnation, M83, Namoli Brennet, Twenty One Pilots, Andy Grammer, Childish Gambino, and Macklemore. Lots and lots of stuff. There is so much amazing stuff out there (laughs)!

Since the start of your recording career, you've been an out musician. Can you please say something about that experience? I'm not very good at pretending to be someone I'm not. I'm an overly earnest and



PRIDEFEST 2015

Tom Goss will perform at 4 p.m. on June 5 at the Miller Lite Mainstage. Visit pridefest.org for details.

Out pop artist Tom Goss makes his PrideFest debut on June 5.

honest Midwesterner. I am very uncomfortable being inauthentic. Even more importantly, where would I be without my husband? He's the best thing that's ever happened to me, by like a million. I'm not sure there was any other option.

Until recently, you lived in Washington, D.C. — the city where BETTY got its start in the 1980s and where musician/producer/DJ Rich Morel lives and works. What was it like being part of the LGBT music scene in D.C.? I love Washington, D.C. I grew up there musically. It was everything I needed while I was finding my voice. I used to play three to four times a week, all over the city, pimping myself out on Myspace and just trying to make \$20. There is a wealth of great musical history in town and neighborhoods like (the) U Street (Corridor) just ooze artistry and integrity. I fully believe that D.C. is at the front end of a new artistic renaissance; artists are flocking to the city.

Rich Morel is one of my musical heroes and I was honored to work with him on "Bears." I can't say enough good things about Rich. Through and through, an amazing individual.

Your new album, *Wait*, takes your sound to the next level. How did you approach making this album? I'm super proud of *Wait*. I think we really tapped into something fresh. In my previous records, I took

the songs into the studio, hired a studio band and got to recording. Often, I was hearing the songs as a full band, for the first time, while we were recording. However, for *Wait*, I wanted to do things a little differently. First, I spent a year and a half writing songs for it — 74 songs to be exact. I figured if I wrote 50 to 100 songs, 10 of them have got to be amazing, right?

Secondly, I formed a band in D.C. and we chose the songs together. I brought them 30 or so and we immediately cut that number to about 20. Then we played those 20 as a band and it became obvious that a handful didn't work as well with a full band. We spent a lot of time fleshing out ideas and finally narrowed it down to a fairly long, but fast-moving 13.

Finally, I convinced my drummer Liz DeRoche to stay in the studio and mix with Mike Ofca and me. She's brilliant. She brought so much to the table. She writes and performs dance music, so she's always seeing things from a different perspective. She played all the drums and keys on the record, as well as arranging most of the background vocals. Throwing her into the mix really helped us create some new sounds, bringing the songs to another level.

You recently expanded your performance talents by acting in Rob Williams' movie *Out to Kill*. What was that experience like for you? I had a great time! It was fun to do something completely different, to dive into

another art form and step out of my comfort zone. Dying a third of the way into the movie made it much easier to say yes. Memorizing 25 pages is a lot easier than 90 (laughs)!

Would you like to do more acting? Absolutely! Actually, I just moved to Los Angeles. I signed the lease on my place in February, so I'm definitely a newbie. I'm looking forward to exploring new and exciting opportunities in Los Angeles.

You are going to be playing PrideFest in Milwaukee. Have you been a part of the Pride circuit throughout your career? For sure. Prides are great! I can't even tell you how many I've been to. Folks come out with fun and community on their mind. It's a time of year where everyone — all genders, colors, ages and sizes — come together as one. I wish we celebrated Pride more than once a year.

You also have a personal connection to Wisconsin, having grown up in Kenosha. What does it mean to you come back to the area to perform your music? I love Wisconsin! I am proud to have grown up in Kenosha. The more time I spend away, the more I appreciate the life values that Wisconsin instilled in me. Whenever I'm back, I feel like there's a part of me that just lets go, relaxes and I feel completely at home.

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Lex Allen: 'Music needs to carry a message of worth'

By Maddy Hughes

Contributing writer

Lex Allen says the positive vibes in his music are sincere. He's had personal struggles, and his work in overcoming them accounts for his need to empower his audience, as well as himself, he says.

We talked about how he got to this point, the meaning of his career and his desire to be a focal point of the Milwaukee LGBT community.

How did your music career begin and how has your sound evolved over the years? I started as a kid in church. My cousin was in a quartet in church and seeing him and all the greats on stage made me want to do that. ...I picked up a lot from other artists, writing techniques, etc. I rap a verse in a new project I have coming out. Being around (local creative group) New Age Narcissism has opened up a lot to me and taught me to be diverse. I do more wordplay now and write with more of a hip-hop feel. It gives you room to joke around and be more playful.

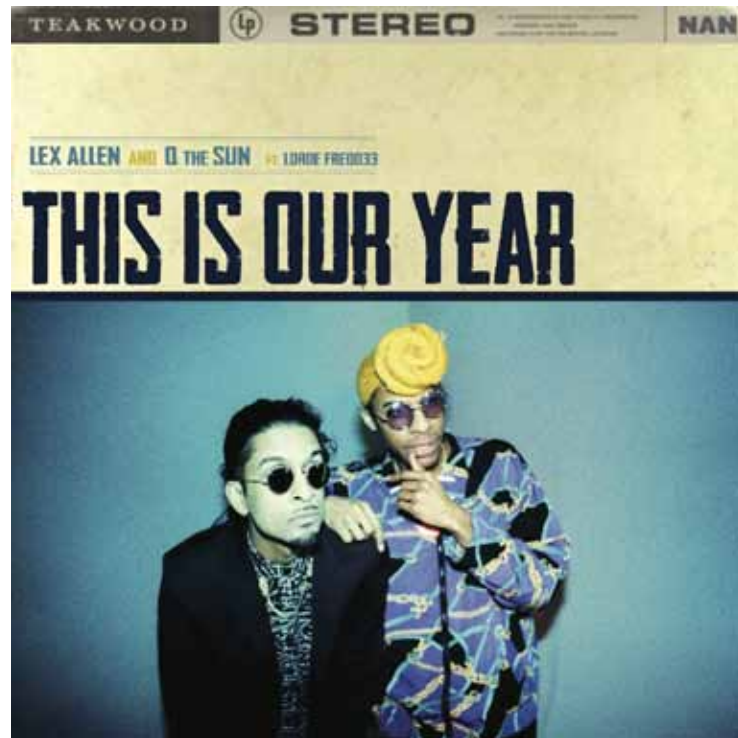
For readers who don't know much about your musical style and personal brand, would you describe it? My brand is all about empowering the powerless. I had to stay in a homeless shelter growing up and it was a trying time. It was sh*tty and sad, but now it's made me very free. I don't worry about things when I don't need to, and I've realized I'm in charge and in control of my life.

"Soul pop fusion" is how I would describe my style, with a new-age kick. My family is from the South, so I love country. You'll hear that soulful sound if you listen to the song "Mirror Mirror." I have no limits to what I'm trying to create, but you have to be current in what you offer, and offer something to get people through their day.

Party songs are party songs, but there's no purpose to them except maybe to have a good time. There needs to be a message of growth and worth to make timeless music. Empowerment is relevant year to year, you need to move people with your words rather than just add to the wishy-washy fads of the time. I have a new song called "#TagsForLikes" about when I lost my phone for two weeks and realized that I hadn't been present in the moment. I'm not anti-technology, but I'm all about being present in your life and not disrespecting the connectivity you could have with everyone.

This will be your second performance at PrideFest, right? This is. ...I just was persistent and constantly motivated, connecting with people and getting more involved with the community. I just started talking to people and not being scared, not giving up. Just getting people to take notice, posting my songs online all the time. I can't wait to see how I grow in the LGBT community.

Do you have past experiences going to PrideFest — good memories or appreciation of the event as a whole that you'd like to speak about? Yeah, I just love to see people



Lex Allen takes the stage at PrideFest on June 6.

that come in from up north who don't expect to be able to be themselves. I was in Door County and it was such a surprise to see a lack of LGBT representation. It really opened my eyes to how people can't express themselves every day. (PrideFest) gives them a chance to do that. Not that we don't have our struggle in the city but it's easier for us because we have more places to go out. Some people in isolated communities don't have as many options.

You recently came out with a collaborative video called "This is Our Year." Of course the meaning could simply be that you're going to make a lot of music and perform more this year, but is there something else about this time for you as an artist that you're speaking to in the song? One, our city is booming with music. When I was growing up, I lived in a poverty-stricken area and having access to do things outside of where we were wasn't as easy. So that's just a song for my family, which includes everyone I know. It's an embodiment of community, basically the embodiment of self.

The opening lyrics are, "I'm a mess at times/I don't do everything right." It's about people putting limitations on themselves just because they're not perfect and sometimes when they realize it, it's too late. ...That's where we all are; there's no time like the present. Everybody has a purpose and maybe you just need to hear something, a poem or a song, outside of yourself to realize how great and capable you are.

After PrideFest, where else can we see you perform? I've got a fun summer lineup. I'm opening for the group Peppers on the Briggs and Stratton stage at Summerfest. We're going all out, it's gonna be an amazing show. July 3 I'll be at Summerfest again with my brother WebsterX opening for Lupe Fiasco. I'll be singing with Kiings on the Fourth of July at Summerfest, and I'll be doing the Lunar Koss series on top of the MAC building downtown again on July 17. And I'm headlining Brady Street Fest.

Any long-term plans for your music career that you'd like to share with us? I'm planning on releasing a new EP *Social Me Duh* between June 7 and June 17. I'm really excited to give people new music to listen to while I work on a new conceptual album. This (album) is just a fun release of things that are on my mind with nice beats. My producers Q the Sun and Jason Kartz just get my sound.

We're here, Wisconsin is no longer a fly-by state, and I'm so happy to be part of what is now a budding artistic community.

PRIDEFEST 2015

Lex Allen will perform at 8:30 p.m. on June 6 at the Loft Lounge. Visit pridefest.org for details.

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Tigernite set to glam rock out at PrideFest

By Bill Lamb
Contributing writer

According to Molly Roberts, the lead vocalist of Milwaukee band Tigernite, one of the Midwest's biggest exports to the rest of the nation is rock music.

If so, consider the band a shipping mag-nate in the making. Since forming in June 2013, the quartet has shot to the forefront of the Milwaukee music scene and has been building a solid reputation for themselves and the city nationwide.

The band's formation is a complex story, but Roberts says it starts all the way back in middle school. "Alex (Becker, the band's drummer) and I started playing together in seventh-grade," she says, adding that the duo had been creating music together off and on ever since. This project came together when they were joined by guitarist Maxwell Emmet, who originally saw the group as a power trio.

But as Roberts began to step away from her bass to focus her energy on fronting the band as lead vocalist, they realized they'd need a replacement. Enter Facebook. The band posted a message looking for bass players and eventually found their missing piece, Eric Arsnow — whom Roberts has in fact played with in the past, and is surprised she didn't think of him in the first place.

Together, the quartet has become known as a glam rock band, although Roberts says it wasn't planned that way — glam just seems to come naturally. All four have ties to the visual arts. And their live debut was at Milwaukee's wrestling variety show Mondo Lucha, an incredibly outrageous and glam event. So they needed to come up with something visually arresting right from the start. Roberts says her mother, a professional costume designer, helped design their onstage appearance, and it's subsequently helped them stand out in a very competitive local scene.

Roberts says the band is largely into '70s guitar rock and '80s new wave, and her interest in those genres started young. "I grew up listening to music that my dad was into, like the Scorpions, Boston and David Bowie," she says. As she got older, she was drawn toward female artists like Cyndi Lauper and Joan Jett, who join contemporary influences like Yeah Yeah Yeahs, Metric and Gossip.

After two years of touring, Tigernite is ready to release its first album, which Roberts says the group is very excited about. Due for release on Aug. 1, a sampling of the as-yet-untitled album has already been released in the form of "Drag," the latest single. And the band is at work on creating visuals to accompany the record. Roberts



PHOTO: JOHN GRANT

Tigernite was formed two years ago and will perform on June 6 at PrideFest.

says the group worked with an illustrator who will be creating a comic book to accompany the album.

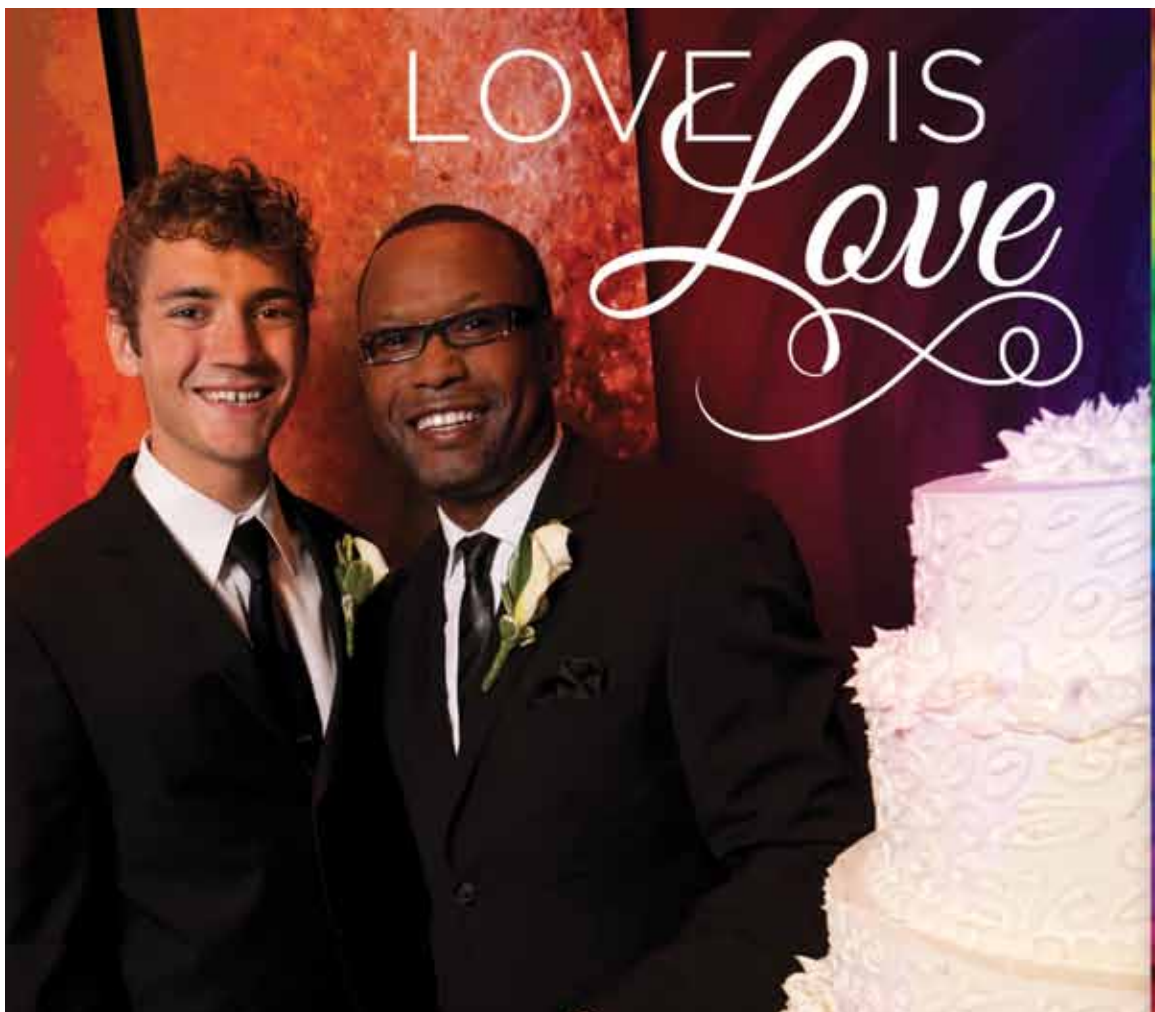
They'll also be incorporating visual elements along with their new songs into their live set, which Wisconsin audiences will get lots of chances to see at gigs like Summer Soulstice and Summerfest. The first chance, though, will be at PrideFest. The group was originally booked to perform at PrideFest's Wom!nz Spot Lounge, but when organizers wanted "something big" to kick off the mainstage on June 6, Tigernite jumped at

the chance.

Roberts also is proud of Tigernite's involvement with the rock 'n' roll summer camp Girls Rock Milwaukee. The mission is to empower girls and build self-esteem through music.

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Jennifer Morales writes about Milwaukee's characters

By Gregg Shapiro

Contributing writer

Meet Me Halfway (University of Wisconsin Press, 2015), the fiction debut by Jennifer Morales, is subtitled *Milwaukee Stories* for good reason. Milwaukee is as much a character in the novel as any of Morales' others: high school students Johnquell and Taquan, Johnquell's mother Gloria and his aunt Bee-Bee, the elderly Frances and Mrs. Czernicki, and dedicated teacher Mrs. Charles.

This collection of nine interconnected short stories is largely set in present-day Milwaukee, although one titled "Prelude to a Revolution" takes us back to the late 1960s, setting the tone for the other stories' portrait of the racially divided city of today.

WiG spoke with Morales in April, before she embarked on a book tour for *Meet Me Halfway*.

I always like to begin by asking fiction writers who their influences are? I'm influenced by everything I've read, but I think the real influences on my fiction writing are the day-to-day storytellers in my life. My late grandmother used to love to hold court at the dining table and tell us stories that made her laugh and cry like they were happening again right there. My mom has an almost painfully acute eye for detail, and my dad, who had schizophrenia, used to tell me the most fantastic stories about his (fictional) life as an FBI agent in charge of hunting down Nazis. In my political and performance lives, I've also spent years listening to politicians, ministers, actors and activists tell stories — when they are talking, my writer ear is always attuned to how they frame a narrative for audience effect.

The format of *Meet Me Halfway* is linked stories, with different narrators. Why did you choose that configuration as opposed to framing it as a straightforward novel? I came to fiction writing after many years of writing poetry, so I think my natural tendency is writing in shorter forms. After writing "Heavy Lifting," the first story in *Meet Me Halfway*, I felt compelled to try to bring in a wide range of Milwaukee voices. I kept asking, "Who does the character in the last story need to encounter in the next one?" I wanted to show the diversity of the city and the many ways that people interact — for better or for worse — across group boundaries in a deeply divided place.

What was the inspiration for "Heavy Lifting," the original story? The long answer comes from my 23 years living in hyper-segregated Milwaukee. I came from a racially mixed family in the Chicago area and had a diverse group of friends, so I was absolutely shocked to see how sharply segregated my new hometown was. In Milwaukee, I served on the city's school board and was active in community causes, as well as being a mom to a diverse bunch of kids, a writer-in-the-schools and a middle-school Sunday school teacher. So I got to know many young people and see their struggles with the city's racial legacy first-hand. As an elected official trying to convince senior citizens to raise their own property taxes to support the schools, I also got to hear the voices of many of the city's elders.

From all that history, you get the short answer: I was lying on my couch one day after getting back from an exhausting MFA in creative writing residency and noticed my bookshelf was leaning and probably

MORALES next page

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MORALES from prior page

should be moved. Even though I hadn't been able to write anything for a week, I suddenly stood up, grabbed my laptop and wrote the first half of "Heavy Lifting," about a black Milwaukee teen moving a bookcase for his elderly white neighbor. I don't know where Johnquell and Mrs. Czernicki came from, but they popped into my head and threw me off the couch. So I knew I had to write their story down.

How did you know that you wanted to develop the characters into a full-length book? It's really simple: I fell in love with my characters and I wanted to know more about their lives. I kept wondering about people who played minor roles in one story — What would they do in their own story? What are they like? What do they need to learn? — and then, next thing I knew, I'd be off writing another one.

Teachers, from opposite ends of the spectrum, play a prominent role in *Meet Me Halfway*. As someone who is a teacher, what can you tell me about your approach to writing about teachers? Teachers are my heroes. Although I teach writing workshops, I have never been a full-time classroom teacher. Those who do that job day after day, year after year in the K-12 schools have my deepest respect and gratitude. That said, teachers are human, too. They can be jerks and bigots and sometimes fail to understand their students. I wanted to reflect the full range — from the astute, caring, almost super-human ones, to the pompous, discriminatory examples.

As a former school board member, public school parent and education researcher, I've had a lot of opportunities to see teachers in action, but the Stu character is based on an experience I had as a student. Stu is modeled on a racist substitute teacher I was subjected to in my high school history class — a class normally taught by a teacher I practically worshipped. He also was a Vietnam vet, like Stu, and used that

status to bully us into parroting his version of U.S. history.

You make use of dialect, in "Pressing On" and "Fragging," for example. My characters speak a range of Milwaukee "Englises." There's Frances, who speaks South-Side-white-Milwaukee-ese, and Netania, who is a native English speaker whose language is inflected by her parents' Mexican Spanish. And there are several black characters who speak different Milwaukee variations on African American Vernacular English (AAVE). There are also black characters who speak what linguists call "Edited English" — the language of the white professional class. I wanted to represent all those voices because I love language and I have had close relationships with people who speak each of these Milwaukee dialects.

"Fragging" deals explicitly with the clash of cultures that different forms of English can provoke. Johnquell has a conflict with Stu, the substitute, over his use of what Stu calls "gangster" English. But Johnquell is capable of speaking multiple English dialects. His school friend Taquan comes from a working-class black/Puerto Rican home and he speaks a deeper AAVE that is also influenced by his mom's native Spanish.

Everyone's home language deserves to be honored and heard with care because that's our heart language — the language our families talk to us in, the language we first heard our names spoken in.

One of the reasons that I saved "Pressing On" — Taquan's story — for last is because I think many middle-class white readers will be challenged by his voice. I wanted them to be invested in the series of stories before getting to Taquan, so that they take the time to hear him and see him for the funny, resilient, good-hearted kid that he is and root for him to succeed.

What can you tell me about the queer characters in *Meet Me Halfway*, including



Jennifer Morales' fiction debut, *Meet Me Halfway*, tells nine interconnected stories that depict Milwaukee's diversity and its challenges.

Netania and Aunt Bee-Bee? As a queer woman, I felt it was really important to include some kind of LGBT storyline in a book about inter-group relations and I managed to build in two: "Menudo," which is about Bee-Bee surprising herself by falling in love with Netania, and "Misdirected," in which Gloria meets an older lesbian who tells her a painful story about gay life in Milwaukee in the early 1960s.

There is another gay character, the quiet but not closeted Theo, in "That's the Way Cats Are." He's a gay man navigating life as a single senior citizen and doing pretty well in a place that struggles with racism as much as Milwaukee does. Other forms of discrimination can be pushed to the background, but we have to combat all types of oppression simultaneously. Both "Menudo" and "Misdirected" get at those intersections, by touching on racism as well as queer issues.

Milwaukee is not a city that has made its way into much contemporary popular or literary fiction. What would it mean to you if *Meet Me Halfway* changed that? Well, I've been saying that *Meet Me Half-*

way is both a love letter and a mugshot (laughs). Milwaukee is an amazing place and I wanted to show how much diversity, brilliance, resilience and energy there are in its people. On the other hand, I also felt like I needed to capture some of the ways racism infects daily life in the city and challenge Milwaukeeans to change. So, the stories come across as both a paean and an indictment, and that's how I feel about the place — "You're wonderful, now change."

After 23 years in Milwaukee, you have relocated to Viroqua. What will you miss most about Milwaukee? I've been living in rural Wisconsin now for about a year and I know what I miss: the people. Viroqua has its forms of diversity — there are dairy farmers who have been here for generations, Amish folks, artists and back-to-the-landers, with a scattering of people of color — but it's not the kind of energetic mix you find in a big city. I miss the range of voices and cultures and the way my world shifts when those voices and cultures bump up against each other and sometimes blend.

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Madison's FIVE Nightclub lives on, thanks to patrons

By Michael Muckian
Contributing writer

When a business can transcend its original purpose, you do what it takes to keep that rare enterprise alive.

Dave Eick, the owner of Madison's FIVE Nightclub, may know that better than anyone. The Hartford native willingly admits to you that his earlier work in the hospitality industry is nothing in comparison to his time at FIVE, where he's operating more than just a nightclub. He's operating a home for Wisconsin's LGBT community.

Eick never saw himself eventually running a gay bar and nightclub when he moved to the Madison area in the 1990s. At that time, he was a general manager for Pizza Hut of Southern Wisconsin, running outlets in Janesville, Madison and Stoughton. He also helped open a Madison franchise of Red Robin Gourmet Burgers — all while still in the closet.

That changed in 2003. "I decided to stop lying to myself and start to deal with things," Eick says. While he was coming out, Eick started visiting the bar he would later run, then called Club 5. Located just off Fish Hatchery Road on Madison's south side, the club was owned by Ed Grunewald, who recognized Eick from his other jobs in the industry.

After four months, Grunewald offered Eick a bartending job.

"I was working five jobs at the time, including one that I hated, so that was an easy decision to make," Eick says. By 2008, the former bartender worked his way up to become Club 5's general manager. Now in a position of greater financial stability, Eick and his partner began house-hunting.

But then Grunewald was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer, a swiftly moving variety that eventually claimed his life. Grunewald died on April 21, 2008, but not before he offered Eick sole ownership of Club 5.

"He told me I was the only one who could keep it alive, and if I didn't take it he would close Club 5 permanently," Eick remembers. "All I can say is that it was an incredible gift from Ed."

Eick's first stroke of good fortune turned into the calm before a storm of legal problems. Grunewald's estate did not recognize the late owner's gift, and his heirs fought Eick's legal right to Club 5. The new owner finally settled with Grunewald's estate just to get his late mentor's heirs out of the picture, Eick says.

As great a gift as the business had been, it was handed over at a time of growing financial uncertainty. What eventually became known as the Great Recession had just begun to rear its head and, like business owners everywhere, Eick reduced expenses, trimmed staff and did what he could to keep the enterprise afloat.

It was enough to keep the club alive throughout the recession, during which Eick tweaked the name to FIVE Nightclub. But things went south in 2013, when the city of Madison began rebuilding Fish Hatchery Road and its bridge across the Beltline, just adjacent to the club. The lengthy construction project took traffic on the road — and consequently to FIVE — down to a crawl.

"That really shot us in the foot," Eick says. "I blame 90 percent of my financial troubles on the road project."

The payroll, which at its height supported 26 employees, was cut to just 10 workers, and Eick did everything he could to rein in costs. The club's financial misfortunes began to reverse, but it was a case of too little, too late.

The club owed back taxes. Eick was behind on the building's rent. And while two different potential partners were interested in signing on, their vision ultimately didn't align with Eick's, and they dropped out.

Eick did manage to make some inroads, adding volleyball leagues and hosting regular Latin dance nights that attracted Madison's Latino community. Those efforts helped pay off the back taxes and retired some additional debt, but it still wasn't enough. A pending rent increase for 2014 convinced Eick that there was no hope in sight.

'I feel that this is my bar and preserving it is my responsibility to this community.'



Dave Eick, the owner of Madison's FIVE Nightclub.

On April 14, Eick announced that he would have to close FIVE Nightclub. "Times have changed in society. I have explored countless options and a spirit-crushing rent (has) led me to a heartbreaking decision," he said in his public statement.

Fortunately, the club's fans, friends and patrons would have none of it. Social media ignited with calls of concern and cries for help or assistance. On April 15, Eick's landlord called. He, too, had been inundated with calls, never once realizing how important the club was to so many people who called it home.

The landlord offered rent relief for a period so that Eick could redirect his limited capital to introduce new moneymaking services to the club. But the owner still needed an additional \$40,000 to satisfy his back rent and stabilize his operation in the face of the pending rent increase.

Eick took a step he never thought he would take in his business life: He asked for help. And he did so through a medium he never had used — a crowdsourcing Internet page called GoFundMe, where fan Brian Ponce had started a campaign to save the bar.

"This was not my idea and I don't like GoFundMe pages, but there were so many people around the country who wanted to help," Eick says.

Both Eick and his landlord realized that FIVE Nightclub was more than a business. It was a place where LGBT people from communities throughout the Midwest could gather in a non-threatening environment where they weren't judged. Many couples first met at the club, giving it special meaning to them. Others simply had strong emotional ties to the place. And the subsequent donations reflected that.

During the next two weeks, customers would come in and hand Eick envelopes of cash in response to the campaign, dubbed "FIVEForever." The club sold T-shirts and cover-charge packages to raise money, and fans donated on the GoFundMe page.

Four days in, donations stood at \$21,000, more than half the \$40,000 needed. A week later, on April 25, Eick was able to take the stage and announce that FIVE Nightclub had reached its \$40,000 goal

and that the fundraising effort was over. "It was our busiest night ever, with people wall to wall," Eick says. "I don't know that I will ever be able to say thank you the right way."

Lightening had struck a second time for both Eick and his LGBT clientele. The outpouring of love and support has convinced him that failure is no longer an option.

"This will be the driving force for the rest of my life and serving community that wants us here will be my measuring stick," Eick says. "I always felt like I was operating Ed's bar, even after he passed away. Now I feel that this is my bar and preserving it is my responsibility to this community."



The Harlem Renaissance was not only a seminal moment in African American history, but also a significant moment in the history of gay African Americans. Both black lesbians and gay men played a crucial role in the literary and musical renaissance that made Harlem famous in the 1920s.

— *The Gay Almanac*. 1996. The National Museum & Archive of Lesbian and Gay History.

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Milwaukee theater groups embrace LGBT audiences

By Kirstin Roble

Contributing writer

As political climates have shifted decade by decade, the LGBT community has gone from a discriminated-against minority to a favored one to embrace, in some circles. In Milwaukee, one of those circles is the performing arts community, already seen as a stereotypical hub for queer artists and audiences.

Many of Milwaukee's theaters are making their implicit ties explicit, with a variety of events and groups springing up that target LGBT audience members and allies. At Milwaukee Chamber Theatre, Skylight Music Theatre, the Milwaukee Rep and the Florentine Opera, artistic administrators are reaching out through special LGBT pre-show receptions, community engagements and the themes of the productions themselves.

When Milwaukee Chamber Theatre mounted its debut show last season, *Master Class*, featuring Angela Iannone as the opera diva Maria Callas, the company offered an "LGBT Night Out," according to producing artistic director C. Michael Wright. In an email interview, he said the event featured discounted tickets and a free pre-show reception. "The evening was very well attended and we plan to continue and expand upon (it) in our upcoming season," Wright said.

MCT commonly builds its season around strong and diverse leading characters, including LGBT characters. The 2015-16 season includes a work about Elizabeth Bishop, the lesbian poet whose 30-year friendship with fellow poet Robert Lowell is the subject of *Dear Elizabeth*, opening in September.

Wright says the company was involved with the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin's 30th-anniversary celebration last year, in which he directed a monologue

scene featuring local actor Norman Moses. MCT also recently joined the Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce. "We are hoping that this new partnership will lead to additional collaborations and ways to reach out to the LGBT community," Wright says.

Other companies reach out to the community in other ways. Skylight Music Theatre has previously partnered with PrideFest Milwaukee on events, according to audience development manager Mara McGhee, as well as the chamber, the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center and Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin.

Skylight's "Be Out Night" offers discounted tickets for members of the LGBT community and a chance to mingle before the show. McGhee says the company paired "Be Out Nights" with three shows last year, and will do the same this year — for productions of *My Fair Lady*, *Crowns* and *The Pirates of Penzance*.

"Eventually, we hope to expand 'Be Out Nights' to more performances and continue to highlight LGBT issues," McGhee said.

The Milwaukee Rep features its own LGBT events — the "Out and About" series. Started in conjunction with WiG, the series has proven to be incredibly popular, according to the Rep's marketing manager, Joy Surber.

"It's a great evening. For \$30, you get tickets to the show, drinks and appetizers," Surber said. "We did three last year, but are expanding because of the demand."

This year, the Rep will host four "Out and About" events — for its productions of *Dreamgirls*, *The Mousetrap*, *The Devil's Music: The Life and Blues of Bessie Smith* and *The Invisible Hand*.

One of the plays paired with an "Out and About" event last year, the world-premiere play *after all the terrible things I do*, provided the Milwaukee Rep with a larger-than-usual opportunity to promote awareness of

bullied LGBT youth.

Another leader in engaging LGBT audiences is the Florentine Opera. One of their major community efforts is the Florentine Camerata, an LGBT affinity group that organizes opera socials that provide education about upcoming works, as well as previews.

"Our camerata is very active, presenting opera parties one-two weeks before each opera opens," says Richard Clark, the Florentine's director of marketing and communications. "Our camerata focuses these events to raise awareness of opera in the LGBT community."

In addition to hosting camerata events throughout the city, the Florentine will step up its community involvement this year by joining Milwaukee's Pride parade for the first time, which Clark says is a way to emphasize the unity of the overlapping opera and LGBT communities.

MCT, the Skylight, the Rep and the Florentine are only four examples of the theater community's embrace of LGBT audiences.

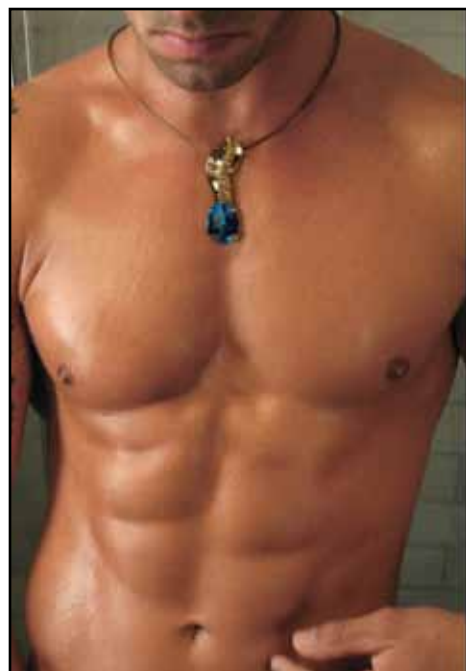
"It's great to see how unified Milwaukee is becoming," Clark says. "Less and less are communities being labeled for a certain characteristic but rather as a nice destination or an evening and weekend day out. It's really great."



PHOTOS: FLORENTINE OPERA CO.

LGBT affinity groups and events, like the "Be Out At Skylight" nights (inset) or the Florentine Opera's Camerata group, offer discounts and socializing opportunities for community members and allies.

That's a sentiment McGhee echoes. "With each year, we see more and more opportunities for LGBT promotion," McGhee says. "I would characterize Milwaukee as a welcoming community for LGBT (community members) and it's great. We're on the way to being a fore-runner for LGBT-friendly cities and that is exciting."



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Pride, page by page — a special reading list

By Lisa Neff

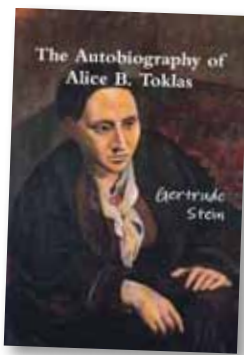
Staff writer

The American Library Association wants book-lovers to add a steamy gay romance or a lesbian-themed literary masterpiece to their summer reading list.

The ALA designated June as GLBT Book Month and has plans to promote a nationwide celebration of writings that reflect the lives and experiences of LGBT people.

The initiative is coordinated through the ALA's diversity and outreach office and the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table.

The Publishing Triangle, an association of lesbians and gay men in the publishing industry, established the first-known Pride-related book month in the early 1990s. This year's celebration is a first for the ALA, which also presents the annual Stonewall Book Awards for adult and children's literature and compiles the Rainbow Books list of recommended titles for kids and young adults and the Over the Rainbow list for adults.



The Autobiography of Alice B. Toklas, by Gertrude Stein.

BEST LGBT LITERATURE, FROM THE PUBLISHING TRIANGLE'S TOP 100 LIST

- *Death in Venice*, Thomas Mann
- *Giovanni's Room*, James Baldwin
- *Our Lady of the Flowers*, Jean Genet
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- *Kiss of the Spider Woman*, Manuel Puig
- *The Memoirs of Hadria*, Marguerite Yourcenar
- *Zami*, Audré Lorde
- *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Oscar Wilde
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- *The Listener*, Rachel Brasch, from Pegasus. A novel about challenges to identity that arise in both adolescence and middle age — and the student and therapist



Teaching a Man to Unstick His Tail, a new book of poetry by Ralph Hamilton.

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who may have the power to save each other.

• *Living Large*: Wilna Hervey and Nan Mason, Joseph P. Eckhardt, from WoodstockArts. A dual biography and love story about an heiress who appeared in the Toonerville Trolley comedies and met the love of her life.

• *Teaching a Man to Unstick His Tail*, Ralph Hamilton, from Sibling Rivalry. A book about relationships — with those closest to us and with ourselves.

• *An American Queer: The Amazon Trail*, Lee Lynch, from Bold Strokes Books. A collection of Lee Lynch's columns, chronicling more than a quarter century of queer life in the United States — from the last decades of the 20th century into the 21st.

• *Seeing Sodomy in the Middle Ages*, Robert Mills, from University of Chicago Press. An exploration of the relationship between sodomy and motifs of vision and visibility in medieval culture.

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UW Gardens open gates to new audiences

By Michael Muckian

Contributing writer

The University of Wisconsin-Madison's best-kept secret hides in plain sight just west of the heart of the school's massive campus. But if Benjamin Futa has his way, it won't stay secret for very much longer.

Amid flat expanses of athletic playing fields and tucked among the boxy university classroom buildings sits a charming Queen Anne-style residence wreathed in historic gardens that bloom to life every spring. Allen Centennial Gardens is a public botanical garden and outdoor classroom for the UW Horticulture Department and Futa, at age 25, is the gardens' newest and, historically, youngest garden director.

His goal is to bring more recognition to the garden, and make the 365-day-a-year enterprise even more accessible and inviting to audiences both on and off campus.

"At 2.5 acres, this is a human-scale garden with a historic residence on the property," says Futa, who assumed his new position on May 4. "The size and scale help people feel that this is something they can do at home."

The 27 individually themed gardens, located at 620 Babcock Drive on the UW campus, feature a mix of garden styles, plant materials and design innovations. Anchoring the property is the former home of the first four deans of the UW College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. The house currently is being renovated to become a more integral part of the gardens' educational programming, Futa says.

The gardens, originally located outside the UW Plant Sciences building, were moved to their current location in 1989 when Plant Science underwent an expansion. A major gift from Ethel Allen, the widow of UW bacteriologist Oscar Allen, helped fund the project. The gardens continue to be independently funded through donations and are not part of the UW System budget.

"I think everybody craves some level of connection to the natural world," says Futa, a South Bend, Indiana, native who

moved here with his fiancée Paul Sexton earlier this year. "A garden is a special place that involves human interaction with nature, and it's nature's serenity that draws them in."

Prior to coming to Madison, Futa served as head of horticulture and grounds at the Fernwood Botanical Gardens in Niles, Michigan, as well as working at the Lurie Garden in Chicago's Millennium Park. A horticulturist at heart, Futa also headed up Fernwood's member and donor relations, and he is hoping to find new ways to stimulate greater public interest in what Allen Centennial Gardens has to offer.

"I know that we spend \$20,000 on plant materials each year, but we don't have a plant database so I can't tell you exactly how many types of plants we currently have," Futa says. "We're a living museum and museums tell their stories through their collections."

Creating that database is something Futa hopes to get underway soon. More important, however, is broadening the gardens' appeal, particularly among the student population that passes by every day of the school year.

"Our gates are open, but not necessarily the easiest place to find," Futa says. "I want to open the gates in more ways than one. I want to show everyone that gardens can and should be part of their lives."

Part of that, he explains, is programming. Futa would like to see more activities with more groups that are interactive with the garden environment. "Science cafes" that blend social or sustenance activities with outdoor educational talks might be one way, and yoga classes in the garden could be another, he adds.



PHOTO: BEN FUTA

Benjamin Futa (upper right), the youngest-ever director of UW-Madison's Allen Centennial Gardens, hopes to attract new visitors to the property.

"Gardening is a performance art that can bridge the gap for botanists, pharmacologists and other groups," Futa explains. "We want to draw on a number of new audiences and get more people inside the gates."

Much of the attraction, of course, is the plantings themselves. Each spring, more than 2,000 tulips blossom, one of the gardens' biggest draws, Futa says. Other aspects of the garden give variety, color and appeal beyond what many such gardens can provide.

"The most interesting part to me is our extensive rock garden, which must comprise 10 to 15 percent of the property," Futa says. "It's done to a very high level and has been recognized by the North American Rock Garden Society. It's really miraculous."

The most arresting single plant in the

garden is a very old larch tree. Several years ago an ice storm did significant damage to the tree, and its two remaining arms wrap themselves around a newly established Japanese garden, creating a striking horticultural statement.

"You can tell that the tree has a story to tell and that's why people are drawn to it," Futa says. "The sign by the tree says that we have no idea how old the tree is, but we do know that it's very old."

Like the gardens, Madison has great appeal for Futa, who plans to marry Sexton next summer. The wedding will take place among family and friends back in South Bend, but the pair will return to Madison afterward for what Futa hopes will be many more seasons of the Allen Centennial Garden's blooming enterprise.

"I have just fallen in love with Madison," Futa says.

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Crafting 'Carol' A lesbian romance for the cinema

By Jake Coyle

AP film writer

Cate Blanchett and Rooney Mara are sitting in a bright room, with the Mediterranean all around, atop the Palais des Festival, the hub of the Cannes Film Festival. As the stars of Todd Haynes' 1950s lesbian romance *Carol*, they've been at the very center of Cannes, both because *Carol* epitomizes the positive female focus of this year's festival and because few films have been more lauded here.

The megawatt attention for the pair is ironic, in a way. In *Carol*, Blanchett and Mara play women drawn irresistibly together, but who must cloak their surging affection for one another in subtle, hidden gestures, keeping their love unseen to a conservative, male-dominated world.

"There's something *Romeo and Juliet*-esque about it," Blanchett says of the film. "There's a universality to the love story that moves it out of the niche. It's about the perspective or the feeling of being in love for the first time. And, yes, it's not immaterial that there are two women at the center of it. But at certain moments, it kind of is."

The long-in-development *Carol* is finally out in the open after more than a decade of attempts to adapt the 1952 novel by Patricia Highsmith (*The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *Strangers on a Train*). The book, originally published under a pseudonym, has long been a classic of gay literature.

By the reception at Cannes, *Carol* seems sure to be in the Oscar hunt this year after it opens in wide release on Dec. 18, particularly for its sumptuous period produc-

tion and the raved-about performances of its two stars.

Chemistry between Mara and Blanchett is essential for the film to work, but the production schedule didn't allow any time for rehearsals. It was either going to be there, or not.

"A lot of people ask me: What did you do to get the chemistry?" says Mara. "But chemistry, I don't think is something you can create. You either have it or you don't."

As a couple, they are seemingly quite different. Blanchett, who plays a married but separating woman with a child, is a regal, 46-year-old Australian, a hugely respected force of theater and film. Mara, who plays a timid department store clerk infatuated with Blanchett's Carol, is a petite but tough 30-year-old who broke through in David Fincher's *The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo*.

But Blanchett says their chemistry came from their firm faith in the project and a shared seriousness.

"I feel we're both quite practical and pragmatic about the work," she says. "We're both pretty unshockable. There was a little: 'Don't worry, don't be embarrassed.'"

Mara, though, initially turned down the film before Haynes and Blanchett came aboard. The script, by Phyllis Nagy, first came to Mara while she was recovering from the attention of *Dragon Tattoo*.

"Everything I read, I was like, 'Oh I can't do that. I'll be terrible in that. I don't know how to do that. I don't know who that is.' I



PHOTO: THE WEINSTEIN COMPANY

Cate Blanchett (right) and Rooney Mara star in *Carol*, a 1950s lesbian romance.

felt like I couldn't play anyone," says Mara. "Now looking back on it, I must have really hated myself to turn it down."

For Haynes, Blanchett and Mara add to a filmography littered with powerful female performances: Kate Winslet in *Mildred Pierce*, Julianne Moore in the also-1950s-set *Far From Heaven* and Blanchett, herself, as Bob Dylan in *I'm Not There*.

"I'm very lucky to be able to have had some great chances working with women and on stories about women's lives that I

think are under-represented in independent film and Hollywood," Haynes said in an earlier interview. "I'm proud of that mantle, if that's what I'm slowly earning."

Carol may have taken years to finally arrive, but at its world premiere at Cannes, its timeliness was obvious.

"There's no point making these things if they're just museum pieces," Blanchett says. "Todd is able to have one foot in that time frame and then be so ahead of what we feel is contemporary."

Dr. Waters Iconic filmmaker John Waters gets honorary degree

From The Associated Press

When the Rhode Island School of Design offered iconic filmmaker John Waters an honorary degree, he was surprised. After all, he got thrown out of every school he ever went to.

Known for quirky films that push the boundaries of good taste, including 1972's outrageous cult classic *Pink Flamingos*, Waters was the keynote speaker at the prestigious art school's commencement in late May.

Waters also received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts degree. Recipients are chosen by the RISD community and nominations are reviewed by a committee of students, faculty and staff.

"I don't even know if I got a high school diploma. It's very peculiar. I feel very flattered," said Waters, who attended New York University briefly in the 1960s before getting kicked out for smoking marijuana on campus. "I feel like the scarecrow in *The*

Wizard of Oz when they give him a brain."

RISD's 2015 Honorary Degree Committee cited Waters' body of films as an "enduring inspiration for RISD students seeking to break boundaries, challenge conventions, and define an expressive style," said RISD president Rosanne Somerson.

"In the words of one nominator, he 'embodies the RISD 'tude galore,'" Somerson said.

Waters shared the stage with three members of the band Talking Heads — two are RISD alumni — and *New Yorker* staff writer Adam Gopnik.

Waters has written and directed more than a dozen films over his decades-long career, many of them low-budget movies featuring a cadre of unconventional characters, including drag queen Divine, Waters' longtime friend and muse. Waters saw mainstream success with 1988's *Hairspray*, another cult classic that was adapt-

ed into a Broadway musical in 2002. He also is an author and photographer.

"I shouldn't have been in school. You go to school to figure out what you wanted to do. I knew what I wanted to do," Waters said. "I wish I had gone to RISD. They would have encouraged my ideas. I could have made *Pink Flamingos*."

Waters does more writing these days than filmmaking: The paperback of his 2014 memoir *Carsick: John Waters Hitchhikes Across America* debuts this month. Waters said he was inspired to hitchhike from his native Baltimore to San Francisco because his life is so scheduled and controlled.

"My inspiration has always been the same, which is human behavior I can't understand, which is always my interest, always has been," Waters said.

The filmmaker said he had looked forward to the degree "without irony, for one of the few times in my life."



PHOTO: WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

John Waters received his honorary degree from the Rhode Island School of Design.

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