

The Weekly Voice of Wisconsin's LGBT Community

WI Light

May 12-18, 1999

Tea with Mussolini

Conversations with Cher and Franco Zaffinelli
Page 12

Inside



Which Burger Is LGBT Friendly
Page 7



GAY2K Travel
Page 18



Mr. Drummer Photos
Page 22

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

On Images

Dear Readers,

Over the last few weeks, my email has provided me with a reminder of how powerful an image can be.

About ten days ago, I began receiving a deluge of emails urging me to call a special hotline to let Budweiser know that it was okay to run an ad in a LGBT paper. The ad in question shows an image of two men holding hands. Actually you don't see the men, just their hands and part of their legs. It has a tag line about being yourself. It was run in one Gay paper, *EXP* in St. Louis to promote an image of Bud as a Gay friendly company that supports the St. Louis PrideFest celebration.

A savvy PR firm involved in promoting that event orchestrated an email campaign. It sent out messages saying that Bud was getting calls protesting the ad. Why that would happen for this ad and not for the other ads Bud has run in Gay papers is anyone's guess. The messages pointed out — quite correctly — that this is the first time, Bud has run an ad showing actual physical contact between real live homosexuals.

The emails urged everyone to call a Budweiser hotline to show support for the ad. They also encouraged those receiving them to pass the messages to others so they would call too. Later the messages were subtly changed. Many started out with the line "Support Bud Light," some even said that in the subject line. Several LGBT groups like GLAAD passed the emails on to the thousands, who are on their mailing lists so they would call too.

I was not among those doing the calling or the sending.

It's a nice ad. I just don't want to spend my time thanking a company for doing what it should have been doing all along. Like most of corporate America, Bud regularly uses heterosexual coupling to sell its products. Why should I — or anyone else — get excited because for once they decided to depict a Gay couple in an ad run in a Gay paper?

If some people or groups like the religious right want to take that ad as a sign of approval of Gay relationships that's fine with me. I could care less if Bud or anyone else thinks it's okay for me to hold another man's hand.

I am disturbed because I have never seen an equivalent amount of attention for the Miller Brewing Company. Miller has given far more to our community than Budweiser has. One of the emails said Bud will give \$250,000 to LGBT events this year. That's nice and I am happy they are doing that.

Miller and its affiliated companies will give over \$1 million for the fight against AIDS alone. That's not even mentioning donations to other LGBT causes. Does anyone think the religious right doesn't protest their largess in the LGBT community?

Nevertheless the image of two male hands locked together combined with smart marketing has gotten tens of thousands of emails circulating around the net urging support for Budweiser. Is that sign of corporate approval — given to sell beer — more important to us than the larger contributions made by one of Bud's competitors?

In thinking about this, I imagine the possibility of a different image. One that is far removed from the image projected in the Bud ad. I think someone in Bud's Gay marketing or agency — assuming they have one — could very well be chortling heartily right now.

"Those dumb guys at Miller," he laughs. "They have actually contributed tons of money to the Gay community, much more than we have and for much longer period of time. We put out a few hundred bucks for an ad in a local Gay paper and viola! Thousands of people call to support our brand. Best of all, most of them are out there right now selling Bud for us for free."

Thinking about that possibility makes me wonder what kind of image WE are projecting of ourselves and our community with all those emails and phone calls.

Enjoy the *Light*

Bill Meunier

Editor



The "Village Elders" photo exhibit was the reason for a celebration at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center, 170 S. Second Street. The exhibit is being shown for only the second time outside of New York. It's Milwaukee showing is sponsored by SAGE Milwaukee, Wisconsin Light, The Milwaukee County Council on Aging, the Cream City Foundation, and the LGBT Center. Shown above are L-R Neil Albrecht, the LGBT Center's Executive Director, SAGE-Milwaukee founder Eldon Murray and Downtown Alderman Paul Henningsen.

Ross and Erv

by Bill Meunier

When Ross Walker, 61, and Erv Uecker, 67, decided to settle in Milwaukee, its LGBT community gained more than two additional residents, it gained two community leaders.

They met in June, 1957 through a mutual friend. It wasn't love at first sight. "We were friends at first sight," said Erv. They say "we are still friends" 42 years later.

Perhaps that's the key to a relationship, which has taken them from a Lutheran parsonage in Chicago to a horse breeding farm and finally to Milwaukee, where they are instrumental in keeping the BESTD Clinic operating. That's a lot of scenery for one couple and perhaps that's part of their secret, too.

"I am stubborn," says Ross. "We're both stubborn," adds Erv. "It isn't something we planned. It just unfolded. At this point in our lives, we wouldn't have it any other way. We're friends, we compliment each other."

Erv said he is a "recovering Lutheran." He was ordained as a Lutheran Minister in 1968. For ten years, he was the Pastor at Chicago's St. Luke's Lutheran Church where he directed a staff of four associate pastors.

Although the church was in a middle class, blue-collar neighborhood, the couple lived together in the parsonage. "Everybody did what they had to do to deal with it," said Erv. Ross added, "Some people thought we were brothers until both of our mothers showed up at church one day."

Our Village Elders

There was a confrontation with the Church council over a Gay issue. "We challenged them to look at what they were doing," said Erv. "A group in Chicago wanted to have a Gay dance. The church was a community center but most people were squeamish about that." The dance was held at the church.

A few years ago, St. Luke's voted to be an "affirming congregation" that welcomes Gays and Lesbians. "There was a same-sex couple that left the congregation because of that vote," said Erv. "They didn't like being labeled."

Erv makes it clear he doesn't like labels, either. "I think people get to know you as a friend, a co-worker. Then when they realize, you do whatever you have to do to deal with it," said Erv.

Ross was a special education teacher in the Chicago Public System. "I did that until it was no longer fun," he said. He started the system's Environmental Education program.

The two also bought a horse-breeding farm here in Oxford, Wisconsin. They bred horses there for about 12 years before selling it. We had 60 head of horses at one time and 5, if you pardon the expression, studs," said Erv. "It was not our idea of retirement. Who wants to shovel horse dung all day?" asks Ross.

In 1983, the couple stopped in Milwaukee on their way to sell a property. "We were going to retire at Marco Island in Florida," said Ross. "We met some friends in Milwaukee. We decided we didn't need Florida."

That fateful decision was Milwaukee's gain. Ross and Erv got very involved in the BESTD Clinic. They were instrumental in the founding of its new Milwaukee LGBT Community Center.

Ross and Erv work full time — without pay — for the Clinic. Ross said, "I can see some direct results of my efforts." He also likes "helping people get connected to a system that's going to work for them." Erv said he likes the structure of BESTD. "Everybody works. Our board consists of active volunteers."

Ross and Erv helped fulfill the dream of an LGBT community center in Milwaukee. They provided the initial money and the impetus for the Center. Although they are no longer involved with the Center, both can take pride in what they brought about. "They did a splendid job in converting the space," said Erv. He praises Brian O'Malley, who supervised the remodeling.

Ross says, "The Center will be successful if people get involved and make it successful. I think it will be what the community wants it to be."

So what do these two whirlwinds of energy do for fun? "We have romantic candlelit dinners at home," said Erv. He laughed adding, "In fact we had one just last night."

"We have no need to travel. We've been there, done that," said Ross. "We're just very comfortable being at home and sharing with a few friends." They do take day trips partly to satisfy their newfound interest in genealogy. "We make a lot of stops at cemeteries," laughs Ross.

A few years ago, Ross did some research on his parents but put it aside. Last year, he became interested in it again. The couple has amassed the names of 16,000 relatives. That figure doesn't include their adopted "family" in Milwaukee.

Despite their dislike of labels, the members of that family have a few to pin on Ross and Erv: caring, committed and deeply in love.



NIGHTS OUT

News...

Two important people were missing from **La Cage** last weekend. George Prentice, the owner, was in Denver with his racecar. Back here, DJ Tanya AKA Tony was home with a banged up leg. Not to worry though — DJ Dave filled in admirably while Tim worked the lights.

Up in Mad Town, fans of frozen drinks should be all abuzz over **Club 5's** new frozen drink machine. Owner Ed Grunewald said it can make somewhere around a gazillion different kinds. Hmm... that should be just enough of a variety for the big crowds that flock there. Look for the new — and from what

Boy week-end was just two weeks ago, it might be better to separate these contests on the calendar. That way both of them get more attention. Maybe we can invent some new ones like Mr. Dungeon Master USofA or Mr. Master and Slave Wisconsin — America. Then we can have some other leather pageants during the rest of the year. Plus, if we organized enough of those pageants, Milwaukee could become the Butch capital of the world!

Speaking of contests, the Mr. SSBL contest held at The **Ball Game** was a big success. \$870 was raised by and for the Saturday Softball League. The winner

was David Frye of the **Balistreri's Pizza** team. Second place went to Joe from **Club 219**. There are seven teams this year, but there were only four contestants. Hey, where were the rest of you?

Speaking of softball, the Mugshots team has started something over at that bar. They've been gathering there on Tuesday evenings, and now the place gets packed with other Gays, too. Of course, that's a good thing for owner Craig, who happens to be Gay himself.

The last, last call for **In Between** was sounded at about 1:35am on Monday, May 10. The closing night party was a blast, a sad blast, but a blast nonetheless. Signs and ads

promoting parties held at the bar over the last three and half years were plastered on the walls.

In addition to a lot of regulars, bartenders and owners, several bars including **Fluid**, **Mugshots** and **La Cage** showed up to give the place a good send off. Owner Curt Peck brought in a stripper and the last half-hour or so featured an open bar. At one point, they broke open a Packer piñata. There were tons of lighters — collected from those left behind at the bar — inside. I think I have a six or seven month supply now. People scribbled messages on big sheets of paper wishing Curt and his staff all the best.

I did have two last night honors. I had the last highest score on the Lucky 13 game. Curt said he was going to use all his quarters to beat me — HA! I was also the last customer out of the door. For one last time, we all had a great time.

Speaking of last, here's one last thing for you to think about. Remember the Switch is on in Walker's Point!

That's a wrap for this week, folks. Hope to see you out and about soon. Meanwhile, be fierce, stay safe and be proud!



The Final "Last Call" at In Between.

Dusty AFTER DARK

I hear expensive — machine to start cranking out some really cool stuff very soon.

Speaking of **Club 5**, we understand they are going to do a new menu in the restaurant. Word has it that there will still be some high end items, but the emphasis will be on more casual fare. The publisher and I had a great lunch there last Thursday. We found good food, good service and reasonable prices. What more could you ask for?

Recaps... The Mr. Drummer weekend was a roaring success. (See our photo spread on the next page.) There were nice receptions at the **1100 Club**, **Woody's** and **South Water Street Docks**. The main event was at the **Milwaukee Eagle**. It's nice to see the bars working together to put something like this on.

However, considering the fact that Daddy-

LAST CALL!



Going Out

WEDNESDAY, MAY 12

Fannie's (Milwaukee), Karaoke at Fannies, hosted by Marlene.

La Cage (Milwaukee), Possum Queen House Party. 10pm. Guest DJ John Murges. Special Raffles. \$3 Cover. Benefits ARCW & Cancer Foundation. Also, new La Cage cards available 11pm-close.

THURSDAY, MAY 13

La Cage (Milwaukee), New La Cage cards available 11pm-close.

FRIDAY, MAY 14

Cavalier Lounge (La Crosse), Grand re-opening. DJ, buffet, prize drawings. You could win a free 4-day, 3-night Bahamas cruise. 114 5th Ave., North.

La Cage (Milwaukee), New La Cage cards available 11pm-close.

SATURDAY, MAY 15

Ballgame (Milwaukee), Possum Queen fund-raising Tenderloin Dinner served 4:30-6:30pm; silent auction, \$10 per dinner ticket. Party goes from 4-8pm.

C'est La Vie (Milwaukee), BESTD Clinic offers free, anonymous HIV testing and counseling. 9pm-midnight.

La Cage (Milwaukee), New La Cage cards available 11pm-close.

Napalese (Green Bay), Turn-About Nite.

Za's (Green Bay), Mr. Gay Wisconsin-USofA finals.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 19

Fluid (Milwaukee), BESTD Clinic offers free, anonymous HIV testing and counseling. 9pm-midnight.

FRIDAY, MAY 21

M&M Club (Milwaukee), The vocal stylings of John Scoots.

LIVE WEEKLY ENTERTAINMENT

C'est La Vie (Milwaukee), Female Impersonators on Sat. & Sun., 10:30pm.

Club 5 (Madison), Female Impersonators on Sun., 10pm.

Club 219 (Milwaukee), Female Impersonators on Thurs. & Sun., 11:30pm. Strippers every Wed., Fri. & Sat., 11pm.

Fannies (Milwaukee), Karaoke hosted by Marlene. First Sunday and second and fourth Wednesdays of the month.

Kathy's Nut Hut (Milwaukee), Lingerie and Bikini Revue, every Wed., 4:30-6:30pm.

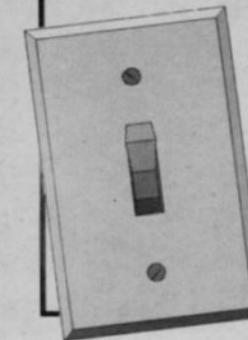
Kirby's Klub (Madison), Female Impersonators on Sat., 10pm.

La Cage (Milwaukee), La Cage Showcase every Fri. & Sun. at 11pm.

Shoreline (Milwaukee), Practices at La Cage, 8-11pm plus Free Lessons.

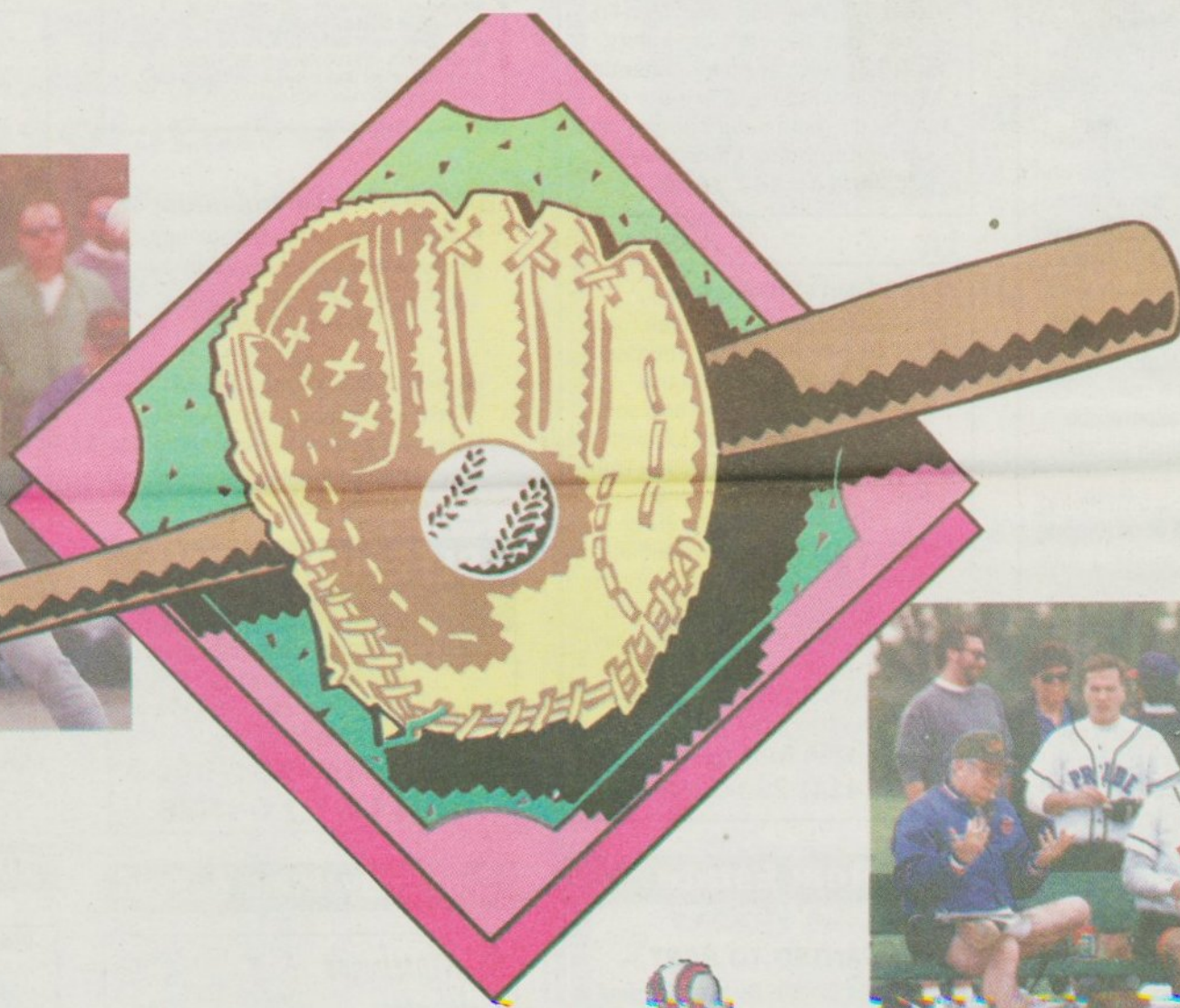
This Is It! (Milwaukee), Sylvain appears live every Sun. night at 8pm.

OUTBACK PATIO

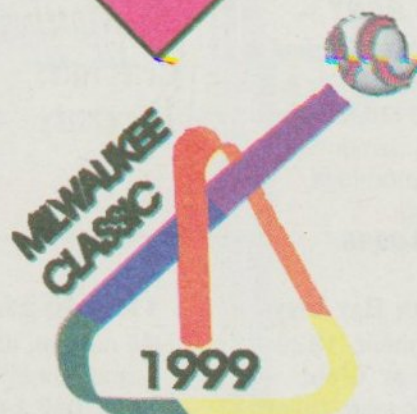


MAKE THE
SWITCH
MAY '99

CATCH THE EXCITEMENT THE MILWAUKEE CLASSIC



MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND
MAY 29-30



WICK FIELD
49TH AND VLIET

MILWAUKEE, WI