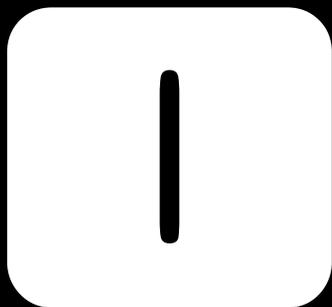


September
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our lives



Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

RAISING JOHNNY

Parenting a child in
a transgendered family

DOMESTIC PARTNERSHIP PROTECTIONS

Tamara Packard details
the legal significance of our
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THERAPY SHOPPING

Jimmy Owen's
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OUR SECOND ANNUAL

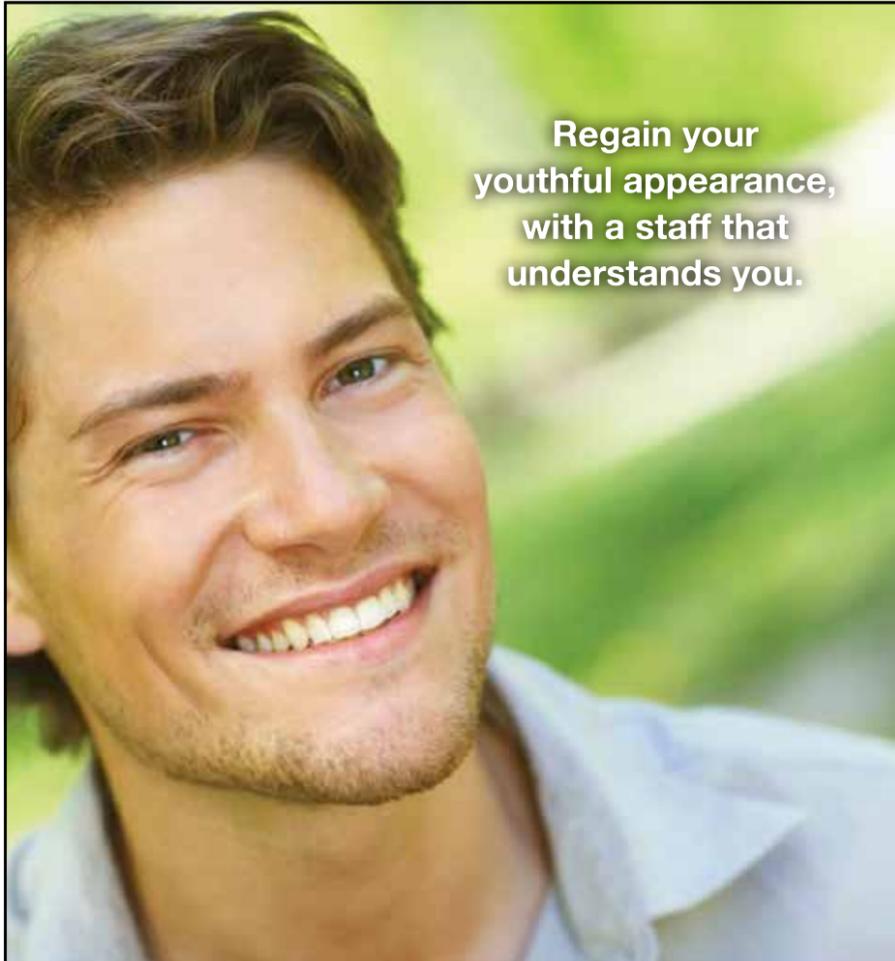
ARTS & CULTURE

ISSUE

Joel Duffrin

Drag artist and creator of "Josie Lynn"

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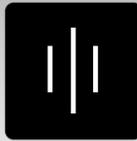
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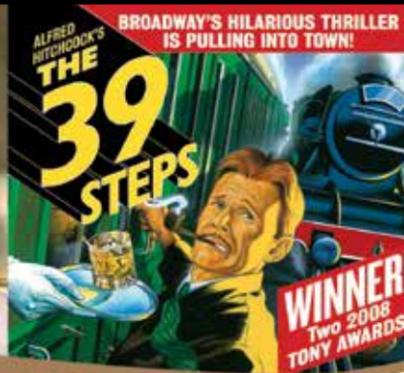
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Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

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September/October 2009 Volume 3, Issue 2
Life in the Middle Publishing, LLC
Patrick Farabaugh & Joseph Patane,
Publishers. 215 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd.,
Box 1202, Madison, WI 53701

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Our History
23 "Homocrats" stir up Wisconsin
Richard Wagner revisits the sex plank of 1966

Cover Photo by **Eric Baillies**

Share your story ideas with us. Consider contributing to *Our Lives*. Tell us your interests at: OURLIVESMADISON.COM

Finding the Hero in You



As the Madison Gay Hockey Association begins their fourth season this month, I've been reflecting a lot. When we reach midseason, I'll have officially been playing longer in the Madison league than I did with New York.

Below is the speech I gave at the 2007 Inaugural Championships for the MGHA to the 400 people who came out to witness what I personally consider a historic night for our community and one of the most important days in my life.

I just want to start by saying thank you to each and every one of you for being here tonight to share this moment together with us. This has been an unimaginable few months for the people you see here, both on the ice and with you in the stands, and for me personally it's been an incredibly long journey that's led to standing here.

Please take a moment and look around at all the people sitting here with you tonight. Madison is a special place. The city you live in, that we all here call home, has given birth to and fostered something that quite literally now has the world watching.

What is here tonight started in 2002 when I learned how to play hockey with the New York City Gay Hockey Association. Discovering that league changed my life. From the first time I stepped out on the ice I felt like part of a family. I felt safe, and I began meeting people and making friends who helped me learn a healthy way of looking at myself and at the world. Those people helped me find my value and a sense of being proud of whom I am. But truly nothing there can compare to what I've felt happen here.

I felt like part of a family. I felt safe, and I began meeting people and making friends who helped me learn a healthy way of looking at myself and at the world. Those people helped me find my value and a sense of being proud of who I am.

Back when the MGHA was just a thought, before anyone here had stepped out on this ice together to create our group, all that existed was an idea of what I wanted to see built. I wanted what I had in New York. I want you to know now that all of you here tonight have far exceeded that vision.

Each of these players tonight have shown me something to be proud of, and given me reasons to love life and love who we are. From Sherry and her Gay Straight Alliance high school students, to Mark and his sister Angie getting to play and coach together on the same team... all the way down to Lora Wilkinson's simple smile. Together we've put a recognizable face on LGBT people that has reached and touched more individuals than I know how to count. One personal example: A few weeks ago my grandmother was profoundly affected by how human our lives really are after she came to watch me play for the first time in her life. It was her first time ever being around gay people. Playing in a gay league has brought us together, made us stronger, and moved our visibility into

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editor

a language that many people can easily understand and relate to—the language of sports.

It's only been a few years since I was struggling to accept myself. Before finding the NYCGHA I wouldn't let myself have gay friends. I felt lost and incredibly confused about my life. When I looked out at all of the gay people I could see, I was scared to reach out because all I knew how to see were other scared people.

For me personally, tonight's Championship Games and our entire season have been about heroes. To me a hero is someone who has the courage to believe in himself and overcome fear to become bigger than who they are. Our first season has been full of these people who, by investing in themselves, have found and shown that necessary courage to become the visible kinds of role models that I wish had back when I was lost and searching.

I would like to read to you a few of the letters that people have had the courage to write.

Here's the first: "You all should know now that I officially came out January 1, 2005, as a man. But this is about hockey. I left the UW-La Crosse hockey team for a lot of reasons. But many of them had to do with my coming out. I wanted to play with guys and I didn't want to be ashamed of it. I didn't care if I wasn't as big as them. If I wasn't as fast. If I was the absolute worst guy on the team. That never mattered to me. I'd rather be ranked the worst on a team where I belong and can be myself rather than be good on a team that makes me live a complete and total lie. So I left the women's team. Out of nowhere, along comes MGHA. When I thought I wouldn't find a way to play, MGHA came about. A co-ed league of LGBTQA hockey players. Heck yes. So now I'm back into it. I'm dreaming about breakaways and penalty shots and angles and keeping my head on a swivel. I love it."

And here's another: "If it weren't for you, I don't think my parents would know that there is an accepting community of people in this generation "awaiting" my own generation. When I first started to question my own sexuality, my dad sort of said, 'You know, if you decide to be straight, though, that's cool, too!' and... 'You have to really be careful... there are a lot of hateful people out there.' I told him... 'Dad, when I'm with people like this, I really believe in myself.' You've really made this an outlet not just for people your age in the community who are already out and want to try something new with people who are accepting... but for people who are trying to come out and are younger and already love the sport. I love Sundays. Thanks so much for this opportunity."

And just one last one: "I had a great time playing tonight. It was the most fun I've had since I started playing. My team really worked well together tonight and everyone is improving so much. I know this probably doesn't need to be said again, but I just wanted to thank you again for starting this league and putting so much effort into it. It has honestly changed my life. You pretty much created a community that I have wanted to have for as long as I can remember. It feels great to know that I have a place that I can feel like I fit in and have people that understand me on a deeper level."

Those were written by our three youngest players, and I am very, very proud to say, they were written by my heroes. Will Bazil, Caity, and Jay, please come up to receive your medals. ■

With love,
Patrick Farabaugh
PUBLISHER / EDITOR



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OUR PEOPLE

Up to the Challenge

Meet **Katie Belanger**. As Fair Wisconsin's new Executive Director, she's using her experience and resolve to fight the good fight.



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community

Where are you from and what is your background?

I'm Wisconsin-born and raised; grew up in Wauwatosa and went to UW-Madison. I've been here ever since.

How did you become an advocate for marriage equality?

My first exposure to politics was as an intern with Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin. Watching her fight for health care, veterans' rights and LGBT equality was the definitive moment of my career. I had the pleasure of working as her Finance Director. I have also worked for Governor Doyle, for Libby Burmaster and for a few other political leaders – all of whom support LGBT equality.

When Glenn Carlson, then Fair Wisconsin Executive Director, asked me to be the organization's first Legislative Director, to spearhead the effort to enact domestic partnership protections, I didn't hesitate. When he decided he wanted more time with his partner, Michael, the board looked for someone who could fill his shoes at Fair Wisconsin. He did an amazing job; he knew Wisconsin politics and government, was passionate about LGBT equality and had a proven record winning on progressive issues and advancing an agenda. That's the bar that's been set—and I'm honored they chose me to lead this organization into the future. As a straight woman who is married, I am proud to say that Fair Wisconsin does not discriminate. I am ready, willing and able to take on this next challenge.

What would people be surprised to know about the passage of the new Domestic Partnership protections?

I think people would be surprised by the broad coalition that came together to support this. Domestic partnerships were endorsed by many legislators, labor unions and progressive allies throughout the state. Thanks to the hard work of Fair Wisconsin and its allies, Wisconsin is the first state with an existing constitutional amendment banning both marriage equality and civil unions to later enact domestic partnerships. We are the first state in the Midwest to advance relationship-recognition through legislation. This is something Wisconsin can be very proud of—we are moving forward again.

As the new Executive Director, what is on your agenda for your first 100 days... and after that?

First, we need to be ready to defend domestic partnerships from the legal challenges that our opponents have already brought forward. We need to re-fill our coffers after the expense of supporting the enactment of domestic partnerships to ensure that we have the resources to defend these crucial protections in court. At the same time, we need to educate people on the domestic partnership protections so that LGBT couples know what these are and how to use them. We need to help county clerks know how to register committed LGBT couples, too.

This legislative victory, while a major advancement, is just one step. We won because of our strategic planning and how carefully we worked with our allies in the community, in the Legislature and our progressive allies across the state. We need to engage these same groups and other LGBT equality supporters across the state in developing an agenda that keeps Wisconsin moving forward. There is no other organization better positioned than Fair Wisconsin to lead this fight – and my job is to ensure we have the resources, relationships and resolve to get the job done. ■



Lizard Legacy

Jane Boyd, Outreach's 2009 Susan Green Woman of the Year, receives due honors for her role in forming and maintaining Lizards, a social group for "older" lesbians.

How did you come to form Lizards? When I was new to Madison, all I wanted to do was meet other lesbians. The women's group that became Lizards actually began when someone sent around a brochure inviting women to meet at Lysistrata. [Lysistrata was a woman-owned restaurant and bar that later burned down.] I went with a lesbian friend, and I thought the get-together was a good idea. So, I started a once-a-month dinner at a restaurant, and it eventually evolved into a potluck in women's homes.

What is the goal of the Lizards? It boils down to just helping lesbians find other lesbians. Socializing is what Lizards is all about: no programming or topics. It's simply a social group for lesbians over 30.

Did you meet your partner in Lizards? Yes. We met in 1986, started dating in 1987, and we've been together ever since. Pat and I have a wonderful relationship.

Who are you, and what are some of the experiences you've had in your life? Well, I worked at a Texaco gas station pumping gas in coveralls and roller skates. Also, I was in the Army and was seen hugging someone goodbye and got reported and investigated by the CIA. I went before a review board and was discharged from the armed forces.

I got a degree in social work in 1946. I worked at Oregon School for Girls, Mendota Mental Health Institute, then Columbia prison in Portage. I retired in 1989.

What is the current group like? The current Lizards meets about six times a year, and sometimes as many as 25 members attend the get-togethers, which are hosted in Wisconsin Rapids, Stevens Point, Oxford, Wautoma, Portage, Pardeeville and Madison. Ages range from 40 to 80.

How did you mentor the group? No one ever felt left out. I tried to get people to interact, especially with the new ones. I tried to draw new and/or quiet people into the group using my social work skills. Often, I would foresee someone who I knew was single and looking for a partner and introduce them to someone they might like to meet.

What is the origin of the name "Lizards?" I was reading an article in TIME magazine where the writers had observed lesbian behavior among lizards. I seized upon that idea and used the term "lizards" as a code word when leaving messages for group members, because I was aware that not everyone wanted me to say that we were a lesbian group. The term stuck and became the name of the group. ■

Long-standing Lizards Members Share Their Experiences:

Elizabeth Conrad I met my partner, Mary Jane, at a Lizards potluck. We've been together 20 years. I am grateful for Jane and for the Lizards; the group filled a void in my life.

Donna Coleman I went to my first potluck and ended up volunteering to host the next. I've hosted and kept the list and sent the mailings for the last 15 years now.

Over the years, the list has varied from 35 to 130 people. Sometimes we get a lot of students, and professors come from a variety of universities; we even have an Army general in our group. We have had meetings as far away as Sterling, Illinois, Winona, Minnesota, and the UP [Michigan's Upper Peninsula].

Caroline Werner It was Jane's energy that kept the initial continuity to keep the group going in the early stages. I really admire her "stick-to-itiveness." The group is pretty solid at this point, and that's what makes being a part of it so special. You can expect to see people you know there that you may not have a chance to see at any other time.

Anne Thompson Some of us fondly call Jane the "Grand Lizard." I remember Jane arriving on her big black motorcycle. We'd hear a roar down the road, and suddenly there was a small figure on a big cycle pulling into the driveway. We all owe Jane a great debt of gratitude. She was one of the first women to create a time and place for lesbians to come together and enjoy each other's company, and she has been a great role model for us. —Virginia Harrison

OUTREACH 2009 COMMUNITY AWARD WINNERS

COURAGE AWARD: Governor Jim Doyle for his successful effort to include a state-wide domestic partnership registry.

MAN: Gary Hollander Mr. Hollander the Executive Director of Diverse & Resilient, an LGBT capacity building organization. Over 25 years, Mr. Hollander has made a significant and on-going contribution to underserved groups, LGBT community centers, state-wide public health, and individual well-being.

ORGANIZATION: SSBL SSBL has a history of not only promoting social interaction through its softball events, but also of building community through co-operative support of other LGBT sporting leagues in the greater Madison area.

ALLY: Jeanne Marshall Ms. Marshall has a long and proud resume on behalf of the LGBT community, including an extensive role in the AIDS Network ACT Ride, Proud Theater, OutReach, First Congregational United Church of Christ, and AIDS Memorial Quilt Project.

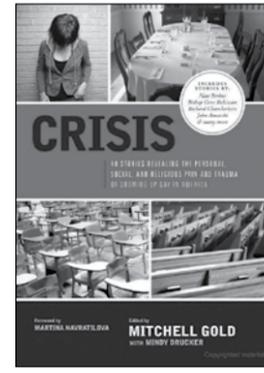
VOLUNTER: Roger Hansen Mr. Hansen's long and intensive involvement in the Speaker's Bureau and coming out support group facilitation demonstrates the impact that one volunteer can have on many lives.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION: Donna Wess and Linda Lenzke The OutReach Board of Directors honors Wess and Lenzke for their determined work in building the most successful women's group in OutReach history, Women4Women. In less than a year, these two individuals took an idea by visionary community member and turned it into a vibrant, inclusive group for women who love women.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION: William Wartmann Also presented to William Wartmann for his outstanding philanthropic activity, especially to LGBT community groups.

Addressing Religion-Based Homophobia

Crisis by Mitchell Gold and Mindy Drucker



Organized religion has provided pain as well as spiritual support for many people. Frequently for lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people, and their allies (LGBTAs), the faith that should support their growth has condemned them, sometimes with violent results. At times, families of LGBT people have, based on their religious beliefs, shunned them. While this experience isn't universal, it is widespread enough to prompt furniture entrepreneur Mitchell Gold to co-edit "Crisis: 40 Stories Revealing the Personal, Social, and Religious Pain and Trauma of Growing Up Gay in America." Along with his organization, Faith in America (faithinamerica.info), this collection of personal stories is intended to help end religion-based bigotry.

The book, co-edited with Mindy Drucker, is divided into two parts: The body contains 40 personal stories of the impact of religion in the lives of gay men and lesbians. While many are well-known activists, there are also stories from average citizens, and Gold acknowledges that gay men are overrepresented in the stories. In the preface Gold has encouraged others, especially lesbians and transgender individuals, to share their stories at CrisisBook.org.

One story of particular interest to Our Lives readers is the account by U.S. Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin of coming out more publicly as she was running for office. These mini-memoirs reach the heart, hopefully convincing some to be more open to the LGBT community. Especially painful are the stories by two mothers, Mary Lou Wallner and Elke Kennedy, on the pain of losing their children due to homophobia.

The second part of the book is intended to touch the intellect, with information to encourage readers to quit using religion to justify their homophobia. Statistics on the impact of homophobia, particularly on youth, are offered in an opening section. Following the personal stories, "The Sin Question," contains two commentaries by current or former ministers addressing the relationship between religion and homosexuality. Especially compelling and useful is the sermon by a Baptist minister, Dr. H. Stephen Shoemaker, who addresses the most commonly cited Biblical passages one by one and debunks their use to justify discrimination and abuse. Gold and Drucker have also provided useful information in both "The Untold Story" and the Resources section. In the former, they address what various groups can do to help correct the damage that's been done by religious-based homophobia. The Resources section lists a variety of helpful organizations as well as a list of groups not to call.

Gold is putting his money behind this book. He has directed the proceeds to a variety of charities including the Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN), Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) and the Point Foundation. Through his Faith in America group (faithinamerica.info) Gold is distributing 5,000 copies of Crisis to high schools and 1,000 to churches during 2009. Commercial purchases of the book help supports these efforts.

For anyone interested in issues affecting LGBT communities, religion and/or LGBT youth, I strongly recommend this book. I would go further and suggest they share copies with schools, churches, youth and those struggling to accept the LGBT people in their lives. Not only will they give the recipients comfort and information, they will also financially support efforts nationwide to end homophobia. —Ward Holz

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Teach Your Students Well

Attorney **Christopher Krimmer** explains how he came to teach a class on sexual orientation and the law at Marquette University—a Jesuit Institution.

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When Christopher Krimmer attended law school in 1994, he didn't come out to his fellow students. However, once word got out that he was gay, he experienced a change in the way classmates regarded him, ranging from avoidance to name-calling.

He transferred schools and found that he could be openly gay and be just another student at his new law school. Not only was he not discriminated against, but he was welcomed with open arms.

After Christopher graduated, he started to think about how he wanted future students to have a greater understanding of the challenges faced by members of LGBT communities as well as a foundation of case-law knowledge to help them effectively represent LGBT clients. He worked for the

"After my first year as one of a very small number of 'out' students at Marquette, this class was like a life raft," Jo Futrell said. "To be in a law class where I could speak from my own perspective as a lesbian—that was a big deal."

AIDS Network and taught at the University of Phoenix. Then, he submitted a proposal to Marquette University Law School's Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Peter Rofes for a class on sexual orientation and the law.

Interestingly, Marquette was the first law school he attended; the one where students called him "pretty boy" and requested changes to avoid sitting next to him in class. But, it turns out that students—and faculty and staff—of every stripe can be found on the campus of a Jesuit university as well as at a state school.

Rofes told Krimmer that he was very interested in his class proposal, and he ran it past the academic faculty board. There were no objections. In fact, Rofes said, "I found my colleagues receptive to the idea and, in many respects, profoundly enthusiastic about offering the course. I had no pressure from anyone in the law school or university to refrain from offering the course. None. Zero."

Christopher will teach the class again this academic year in his role as adjunct professor. He hopes there will be a broader representation of the viewpoints of his students.

"I couldn't get lively debates going in my class," Krimmer said, "Because all 16 students were within the same area of the sociopolitical spectrum. I had to play the devil's advocate. So, I had the "Religion and Society" professor (a vocal opponent of gay marriage) come teach my class one day. I traded classes with him, so I taught law and religion, and the late Professor Howard Eisenberg taught about gay marriage."

Krimmer said the "Religion and the Law" students were respectful, thoughtful and intuitive. "I didn't get a lot of pushback from them," he said. "Maybe the gay issue isn't as dramatic for the younger generation. It was a really positive experience."

In fact, the class evaluations Krimmer received from his students indicate that the entire class was a positive experience.

Jo Futrell took Krimmer's class and had this to say about it, "Because of Christopher's class, I finally understand the constitutional standards of judicial review because the LGBT case law made sense to me; it has a direct impact on my life and my community. Plus, we had real discussions about sexual orientation in the legal context—something that is impossible in other courses. It gave me a firmer foothold in law school and a sense of possibility as a gay attorney. Finally, it made me a better advocate for LGBT clients—it made me want to take that on as part of being an attorney."

Jo found some more personal benefits from enrolling in the class as well. "After my first year as one of a very small number of 'out' students at Marquette, this class was like a life raft," she said. "To be in a law class where I could speak from my own perspective as a lesbian—that was a big deal."

The class wasn't filled with LGBT students, though. Jo said she knows of straight students who have recommended it to their straight friends.

This is good news for people like Peter Rofes, who hopes Christopher's class will become a permanent part of the curriculum. "LGBT people have distinct legal needs and problems, like a host of constituencies in a pluralistic society. We want to prepare lawyers to practice law in the twenty-first century. Lots of attorneys will have to do estate planning for same-sex couples, represent same-sex individuals in matters of custody and placement, etc. We want our students to be well equipped to help gay men and lesbians solve legal issues in the twenty-first century."

Krimmer is busy practicing law as well. At Balisle & Roberson, S.C., he is happy to say he works with strong advocates for LGBT communities, and a primary focus of their practice is with LGBT communities. He listed the many legal services his firm offers LGBT people or those who are in a relationship with someone who is: adoptions, powers of attorney, wills (estate planning) child custody/visitation disputes, partnership agreements ...

After identifying the need for a college course on Sexual Orientation and the Law at Marquette University, Krimmer is writing a book, *Sexual Orientation and the Law in Wisconsin* (State Bar of Wisconsin, projected for early 2010) for attorneys, explaining how to represent gay and lesbian clients. The book spotlights different areas of the law in Wisconsin, how each affects LGBT communities and how to make your law firm more receptive to and comfortable for LGBT folks.

"I'm an opportunist," Christopher said. "I believe in the opportunity of asking. If you don't ask, it may not happen. You have to create the opportunity or at least plant the seed." —Virginia Harrison

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our lives
Michele Burton-Driscoll
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user hipmamaofjohnny



Love Makes a Family

And sometimes, love also makes the man. **Tyler Driscoll, Michele Burton-Driscoll,** and their son, **Johnny,** show us how.

Editor's Note: The following narrative was written by all three members of a Madison family that has seen many challenges and changes. They are glad to have the opportunity to share their story with Our Lives readers in the hopes that people within the LGBTQ community and beyond can benefit from their message.

Johnny

Hi, my name is Johnny. I'm nine years old, and I'm in fourth grade. My parents are Tyler and Michele.

My family is a different family because my dad is transgender. Transgender means that he was a girl but he wanted to be a boy, so he transitioned from a girl to a boy. He took a type of medicine called testosterone. He didn't have a beard; that's basically what he looked like. He was my mom and also, I felt like he was my dad. I didn't exactly know that he was my mom at first. I thought he was a man, but he

wasn't. And I was friends with him when I barely knew him. When I first met him, he gave me a little cup that I still like to use. I started being with him a lot more, and I felt that he was my parent, that he was my dad. It just feels, I don't know, fine, regular.

A little bit before their wedding, I found out that my mom was going to be my dad. I don't know, I just remember being excited for him, because I did know that he wanted to be a man (and he wanted to change his name), and I felt excited that he could. I don't really know how people know if they're transgender. I think it is okay to change your gender. Gender is if you are a boy or a girl. I didn't tell any of my friends because I didn't ask if I could. Two or three of my friends know now, and they think that it is okay and just fine. It's not really a subject I bring up very much. Sometimes I don't like talking about it because it makes me feel uncomfortable. It makes me feel uncomfortable because I don't want to really share my family's stuff; it's personal. I do feel that sometimes someone is going to hurt me or make fun of me because my dad is transgender. Some people at my school do use an insult; they say "gay" in a mean way. I don't want to be called gay because I know they're not using it to be nice. In a perfect world, if people knew about it and thought it was fine and okay, it would be better. I would be open to answering questions so people can learn more and feel more open-minded about it.

My favorite part of my family is that we're different. We're different from other families because my parents are queer, and we talk about our feelings a lot. We're the same as other families because we love each other and help each other feel safe and strong.

I plan to go to college at UW-Madison. I'm going to learn to be an oceanographer so I can study artifacts from the sea. I want to have a family when I grow up, and I don't know what it will look like, but it doesn't really matter to me because there will be love. My mama and daddy show me that love is the most important thing for my family. I hope that people can understand that it is okay to be transgender and queer. I think that no matter what, we are all people, and we all need love.

Tyler and Michele

Johnny plays soccer and golf and would prefer to spend most of his time in the water. He loves Pokemon and video games. He cares about his friends' feelings, and he is kind and gentle, smart and silly. He reads a lot, and we take pride in calling him our absent-minded professor. We believe in who he is, and it is clear to us that he does, too. As parents, our top priority is Johnny's health and happiness. We both feel strongly about nurturing and encouraging our son's sensitive and kind-hearted personality. We want him to have the curiosity to explore this world and the courage to learn how he will thrive here.

Together, we teach him that being different is a good thing—if you are being honest to yourself and respectful to others. Our family's transition from a two-mommy household to a visibly mama-daddy one has taught us our true happiness is found in loving who we are and that we are stronger people because of the differences.

Tyler

It wasn't until I was writing this narrative that it was clear what I was facing when I sat down, pen in hand, staring dutifully at the clean, white pages staring doubtfully back.

I'm facing a life that, until recently, was spiraling dangerously close to a life about to end. Instead of dying, I dug down to the very roots of me, the ones with little grip left, and I changed the direction of my path. I am what I'm sitting here writing about. I tucked my son, Johnny, into bed tonight and lovingly covered my snoozing and adorable wife with "Quilty," this faded and threadbare, handmade quilt, sewn by my grandmother. It is believed to hold special powers including the ability to put to sleep any and all sick little ones, whether the suffering is a fever, a tummy ache or a tender, calomined shoulder of a restless wonder. As I pulled the tattered corners up to her chin, she roused, and I asked if I could go on a bike ride. It was when I was pedaling that I found the words to explain myself.

Only sometimes can I almost forget that I lived for 27 years as a person that I didn't want to be. I survived by getting good grades in high school. I moved to Madison and finished college with a degree that I wanted and had a general interest in. I had friends, a job that I liked, I was physically healthy, and I was poor but financially independent. I had all these things, yet every night when I closed my eyes—when there was no other sound besides my breathing—I felt trapped and overwhelmingly alone. A lot of us know how desperate and heart-achingly dreadful being lonely and confused feels. But the difference for me was that I didn't have the language for how I really felt. I was doing everything I should and wanted to, but something didn't add up. I had a lot of pain invested into figuring out who I really was. I thought I was an artist, maybe with the gift of genuine soul-searching, but it turns out I was transgendered and lost.

My gender-identity crisis peaked at a point only after years of my getting snapshots of what wasn't right. I struggled with clinical depression and had to pick up the pieces of a life post-breakdown. I was going to finally accept the fact that I was too screwed up for love, but miraculously, I fell into the loving arms of my partner.

Like an approaching train in the distance, you don't know how powerful it is until it is right on top of you. Even though it was becoming clear that Holly needed to transition, when she decided to, it hit me like a ton of bricks. This was real, and I was scared and felt like running.

It wasn't until I became intimate with Michele that my gender identity problem came into focus. I began to be able to point at the things in my lesbian life that didn't feel right. It was like putting together a puzzle where the pieces look to fit, but just don't quite snap into place. We were reading a book about lesbian lovemaking, and the chapters on butch/femme role-playing appealed to me, less in regards to intercourse, but more so in the day-to-day world. For example, I always pumped the gas, and I always marched downstairs to change the blown fuse. After lengthy discussions about desire, it became apparent to both Michele and me that I was growing both comfortable and curious about doing more of the things in our relationship that are typically seen/perceived as male. At first, these were very conspicu-

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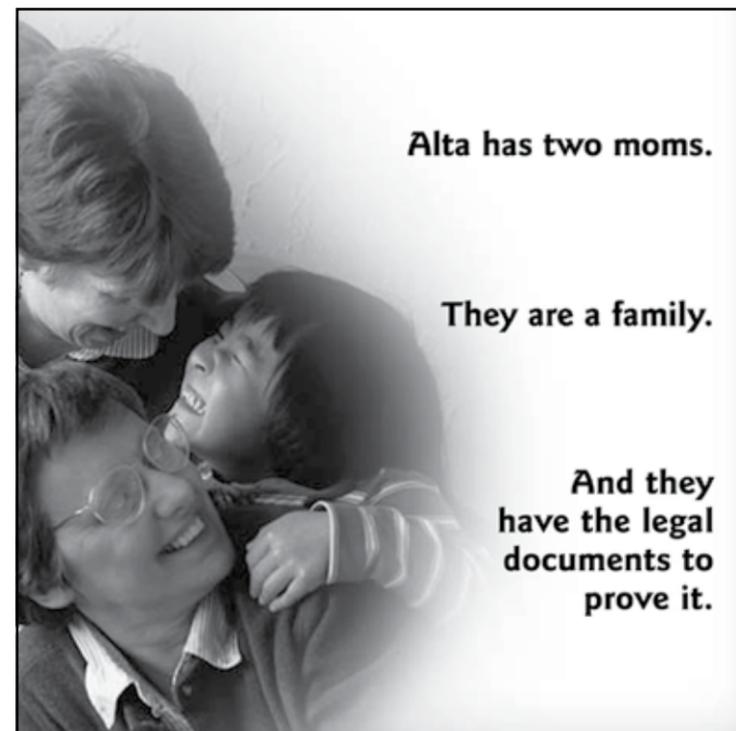
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ously masculine behaviors, like I was tending to the family as a 1950s dad. I did the chores that required the muscle, and she embraced the gentleness of motherly fem-dom. I think we both struggled with this outdated division of labor because it felt anti-feminist, but we were torn because it worked so well for us. As time went by, my brain seemed to figure out that I was, in fact, living in the wrong body, and I was setting up a lifestyle that I was failing to live up to.

"It doesn't matter what other people think." Almost everyone who confides in a friend a flaw they find in themselves will hear this sentence. And, to a certain extent, it doesn't matter. But, on a level under the surface—scratch your ego with a fingernail and you'll find it—is a reality built on what others see, or think they see. Are we all scared and vulnerable? Yes! Are we all pretending we're not? YES! I've always thought about this, but I never worried about it until I realized that I was transgender, and I wasn't going to make it if I didn't honor that identity.

I found a good therapist, someone who finally could ask the questions that enabled me to pull the right answers and put them out for me to look at and contemplate. The hardest part about my gender transition from female-to-male was uttering the sentence, "I am a female-to-male transsexual, and I want to live as a man." And, although the logistics of making this change happen have been, at times, daunting, the memory of every phone call and appointment to do so feels as smooth as butter compared to my scratchy throat leading up to that one sentence. When I decided that transition was the route for me, I studied the "Harry Benjamin Standards of Care," the essential tranny handbook, and started, step-by-step, to turn my life in a new direction.

I didn't have to spend a long time fighting to be seen as male by the general public. Within three months of starting testosterone injections, I was passing as male. I attribute this to a supportive work environment and a strong family. Those in transition tend to earmark their progress by the number of months on hormones. I went through a second puberty that lasted for eight months, and I felt all sorts of new feelings then. At first, as my appearance started to change, I felt awkward and anti-social. But, as my facial features became more square and the weight of my torso shifted from my hips to my beer belly, I started to see in my reflection what I always wanted to see but never thought was possible. I'm sure I would have faced much more

difficulty had I been less hairy, but I was able to grow a beard almost immediately, and that didn't hurt my ability to be seen as male.

A popular question within my queer spaces is, "When did you know?" Everyone has a different answer, but for me it was something that grew from the inside out, not something that I got to try on and check the fit of. I could never understand my life, and after years of unrest and emotional uncertainty, a nervous breakdown and depression, I met Michele. My relationship with this special woman was the catalyst to unlocking who I was and who I could be. Michele continues to be a huge strength and fighter for my happiness and acceptance as a man. I know that my struggles have been her struggles, too. I have needed her to be strong for me, and she stood tall and fierce for the both of us. I don't know how she was able to soar, or what questions she had posed for herself, but whatever she had to do to get us to the other side, she did with dignity and grace.

My gender presentation doesn't necessarily influence my parenting. I just want to show and teach my child how to grow to be a happy, healthy adult. The fact that I'm trans doesn't change what kind of lessons I want him to learn. He's kind and respectful, sensitive and smart. I want to support his interest and nurture the wonderful things about him. I can do this regardless of what gender society perceives me to be. Ultimately, I believe I can be a better parent now, after transition, because I feel more grounded and fulfilled. I also think my unique experience adds perspective to our little family which can only further our abilities to love and know others.

I think over time, as I grow into this new life, I will remember this journey with something not unlike fond memories of a difficult project well done. My craftsmanship isn't as stellar as I'd like perhaps, but it is my own. It has been my experience that transitioning hasn't

been like I imagined it would be, but so what? Instead of opening a seemingly small door to a huge Technicolor landscape of succulent edible gardens, like in "Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory," becoming Tyler has been like unwrapping tiny but precious gifts, lovingly placed and decorated by a loved one's hand—each more perfect than the last. I know Michele is the one behind all the little bows on each gift I'm finding along the way. She has shown me love and patience and honest respect and passion in ways I only thought could live on the pages of the best stories. She has walked with me



I hope that people can understand that it is okay to be transgender and queer. I think that no matter what, we are all people, and we all need love.

through times that cover every inch between good and bad. She has pushed and pulled me through darkness. She has sacrificed and compromised, and we have stayed together, and I couldn't love her more for her generosity and strength.

I really am a man, but have finally been able to understand that I'm a different kind, perhaps, than the others I meet. But that doesn't make me less of one. I had a very radical rite of passage compared to biological boys, but it won't stop me from being the kind of loving and understanding Father that my son needs. This realization is what it took to let me write about my experience and my family's journey to here. There is no doubt in my mind that I am meant to be.

Michele

I'm a mother, a nurturer, a nurse, I'm queer and I know how to fight. Fighting has never been anything new for me. I fought my way through an abusive childhood, I fought my way out of an abusive relationship with my son's biological father, I fought hard through being a single mother, I fought hard for the strength to come out to friends and family as a lesbian, I fought hard for respect as a lesbian family, and now I am fighting hard in my latest and greatest fight, for a new life for my partner.

I fell hard the night I met Holly. I was sitting quietly in the corner of a neighborhood bar after working my ass off canvassing for Howard Dean on the night of the Iowa caucus. This adorable girl, charming dimple in her left cheek, came up to me with so much confidence and swept me from my feet. She was my knight in shining armor. And, when she met my three-year old son Johnny, the puzzle was complete. These two, I know, are cosmically connected, and now the universe makes sense to me. She babysat every weekend while I studied myself through nursing school. Ten months later, we were a two-mommy family living in Madison. Things were about to get interesting, and I was about to learn so much about myself and my partner that I had never imagined. In those 10 months and beyond, there were signs that my girlfriend was indeed someday going to be my husband.

I entered this relationship as a woman loving another woman. And, loving another woman was comforting; I felt safe and secure. I expected to live the rest of my life with this woman. I had a plan for my family. We were going to raise a sensitive, intelligent boy as two moms. Like an approaching train in the distance, you don't know how powerful it is until it is right on top of you. Even though it was becoming clear that Holly needed to transition, when she decided to, it hit me like a ton of bricks. This was real, and I was scared and felt like running.

Initially I didn't stand up to fight; I did run away. I was terrified of the words coming from my partner's mouth and soul. I didn't know what to do with any of this new knowledge, and I froze. I had to step back, take one very deep and very long breath, and figure out how to stand strong and fierce with all of this. I started doing research. I learned all the vocabulary. Up until that time, I never used the word "transgender." Researching was tough, though. There is not much out there about the transgender topic, let alone the topic of being a tranny wife or being a transgender parent. The only consistency I could find throughout my research was that other couples going through this type of transition typically failed to keep their relationship together.

Eventually, I set my research down, I took another deep breath and I remembered why I even started the research. I love this transgendered man. I love him more than I can put into words. He is the man who taught me to believe in myself, the man who selflessly took

on the role of being my son's father, the man who thinks I'm the most intelligent and most gorgeous woman in the world. Tyler is my husband. I picture us at the age of around 75, swaying on our porch swing, wrinkled hand in wrinkled hand, looking back on how brave we both were.

I take so much pride in our ability to parent Johnny together. If there were only one thing I was meant to do in this life, it is to be a mama. There is no other person on this planet I would choose to co-parent with. Together as parents, Tyler and I are a force to be reckoned with. Johnny is a gorgeous, brilliant, sensitive human being, and I feel honored to be his parent. ■

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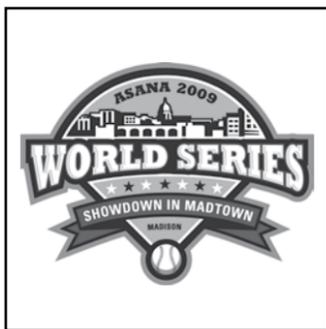
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ASANA Softball World Series September 1-5, Madison

The "Showdown in Madtown" includes softball games at Elver and Olbrich parks, as well as social events around town. Expect great tournament softball as well as an influx of athletes and visitors from around the country. Don't miss BurlesqueQuepade, a drag king/burlesque show and dance party at the Majestic Theater on September 4. madtown2009.org



O.P.E.N. Luncheon with UW Chancellor "Biddy" Martin September 14, Madison Club

The newly-formed Out Professional and Executive Network is hosting a business luncheon with UW-Madison's first openly gay Chancellor. Cost for O.P.E.N. charter members is \$20. The cost for non-members is \$30. RSVP early because space is limited. rsvp@openmadison.org



Wisconsin Book Festival October 7-11, Downtown Madison

The state's largest literary festival, with approximately 15,000 annual attendees, is one of the largest in the nation. Book lovers from across the region spend a weekend in downtown Madison and transform State Street into a vast, public literary salon. Presenters include Wade Rouse, Wendell Berry, Lorrie Moore, Robert Whitaker, Will Allen, Lynda Barry, Beth Fink and Michael Perry. wisconsinbookfestival.org

ORGANIZATIONS

A representative sampling

AIDS Network
600 Williamson St., Madison (608) 252-6540
aidsnetwork.org

Bowling Out Loud
beckwith.matt@yahoo.com

Dairyland Cowboys and Cowgirls
dcandc.org

Fair Wisconsin
122 State St., Madison (608) 441-0143
fairwisconsin.org

First Congregational Church
1609 University Ave., Madison (608) 233-9751
firstcongrmadison.org

Frontrunners/Frontwalkers
personalpages.tds.net/~tmcdurg

Gay/Bi Fathers Support Group
Doolguy@charter.net

Gay/Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE)
301 S. Bedford St., Madison (608) 661-4141
gsafor safeschools.org

Gay Softball League
ssblmadison.com

Gay Volleyball League
madisongayvolleyball.com

Hermanos Latinos
sneal@aidsnetwork.org

LGBT Business Alliance
madisonbusinessalliance.com

Madison Gay Hockey Association
madisongayhockey.org

Madison Minotaurs Gay Rugby
minotaursrugby.org

New Harvest Foundation
newharvestfoundation.org

OutReach Community Center
600 Williamson St., Madison (608) 255-8582
lgbtoutreach.org

PFLAG - Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays
(608) 848-2333
pflag-madison.org

Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus
perfectharmonychorus.org

Rural Dykes Association
pswfarm@juno.com

StageQ
stageq.com

UW - Madison LGBT Campus Center
800 Langdon St., Madison (608) 265-3344
wisc.edu/lgbt

Wisconsin Rainbow Families
wirainbowfamilies.com

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August 10 | Domestic Partnership Registry Celebration at the Executive Residence



August 15-16 | Wisconsin Capitol Pride at Willow Island



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Madison World Music Festival September 16-19, Memorial Union and the Willy Street Fair

The sixth annual World Music Festival brings to Madison extraordinary artists from around the world for free performances, workshops, lectures and other outreach events. All events are open to the public. uniontheater.wisc.edu

PFLAG-Madison presents Bill McConkey September 20, 1704 Roberts Court

The UW-Oshkosh professor presenting his case to overturn Wisconsin's amendment banning gay marriage before the Wisconsin Supreme Court this fall. pflag-madison.org

Food For Thought Festival September 26, Martin Luther King, Jr., Blvd.

The annual festival is a fun, festive forum that explores and celebrates how to eat more pleasurably, healthfully and sustainably. Enjoy cooking demonstrations by guest chefs, live music, kids' activities, great food and more! Special guest speaker: Michael Pollan, author of "In Defense of Food: An Eater's Manifesto" and others. reapfoodgroup.org

AIDS Walk October 11, Milwaukee Summerfest Grounds

This year's Walk is expected to surpass a total of \$10 million raised since its inception to support AIDS prevention, care and treatment services. Bon Iver will perform and address an expected crowd of over 5,000 walkers at the opening ceremony. arcw.org

GSAFE's Third Annual Walk/Run/Eat October 11, Goodman Community Center

This annual fundraising event includes a 5K walk, a 5K run, and a 10K run. Food is provided by Queen Anne's Catering. gsafor safeschools.org

Women's Fish Camp October 16-18, Wilderness Park in Armenia Township, WI

The third annual Women's Fish Camp is a three-day camping and shore fishing event that includes demonstrations, raffle prizes, trophies and lots of fun. wifish.com

ABBA Mania October 28, Overture Hall, Madison

Complete with chest-hair baring jumpsuits and spot-on harmonies, the British foursome captures both the spirit and sound of the original Swedish super-group. overturecenter.com

Halloqueen October 30, The Majestic Theater, Madison

Tickets are \$10. All ages. indieQueer.com

Madison Opera: Carmen November 6 & 8, Overture Hall, Madison

The forty-ninth season opens with Georges Bizet's passion-filled "Carmen." Featuring mezzo-soprano Katharine Goeldner, the opera will be sung in French with projected English supertitles. madisonopera.org

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The Diary of JOSIE LYNN

A day in the life
of a drag performer.

by Joel Duffrin

our lives
Joel Duffrin
ourlivesmadison.com
user JosieLynn



June 27, 2009

It's **4 a.m.**, and I'm all snug in my bed. Suddenly, I awake to the sound of my alarm clock, jump up turn it off, and my heart is a racing. It's time to shower, shave and put on a face. Yes, that's right: makeup, lashes, pads and a wig. "Why is this crazy girl getting all dolled up—and so early?" you ask. Well, I am getting ready for an interview on Channel 15 News this morning with my two wonderful friends, Kimmy and my drag sister MiMi Jackson. What, pray tell, would we be doing on the news this morning and in drag? Well, Kimmy is putting on a show later tonight called the Annual Drag Down Cancer Comedy Benefit—an evening of performances, fun and spectacles to fight cancer. Our local news team heard about this wonderful event and wanted to know more about it.

Now it's **5 a.m.**, and I'm painting away, bringing Miss Josie Lynn to life. I am so excited and so nervous. This, to me, is what it truly feels like to be alive, and I love every minute of it.

6 a.m., I'm pressed to the mirror drawing on some lips. In the corner of my eye, I see Miss MiMi Jackson. Now my heart is doing double time. She says, "Girl, this is really happening; it really is," and then she gives me that wonderful smile that reassures me that this will be a day to remember. Now, on to the finishing touches: pads, hose, outfit, hair and jewelry.

By **6:10 a.m.**, we are in the car and off to the studio. The Channel 15 studio is just down the street from where I live, and we arrive in no time. Kimmy is in the parking lot waiting for us. We all walk up to the guest door and are escorted in and taken to the main news room where all the magic happens. There, we are introduced to the morning team: Barclay Pollak and Michelle Riell—two wonderful reporters who made us feel so welcome. Next, our mics are clipped to us: up, around, through and under (being concealed by our outfits), and now ... 3-2-1, showtime!

Our interviewers ask about the show and what it involves. Kimmy goes first, then MiMi, then me. We tell why we are doing this—loved ones we know who are living with cancer and those we have lost to this dreadful disease. Then we describe what we will be doing at the benefit that night, with the main objective to raise lots of money through performance, through comedy, through drag. And then I smile, thinking to myself, "This is why I do what I do, and why I love what I do."

What a fun way to promote this awesome show, walking around the Capitol Square during a Farmers' Market in full drag. And that's exactly what we did—coffee in one hand, show fliers in the other.

By **6:30 a.m.** the interview is over. We walk back to our vehicles, and MiMi turns to us and says, "Well, here we are all dressed up. Now we need a place to go." We all talk it over and think ... Coffee ... Downtown ... What a great idea! So, we get into our vehicles and hit the Beltline. This is a Saturday morning, and the Capitol Square Farmers' Market is in full swing. What a fun way to promote this awesome show, walking around the square during a Farmers' Market in full drag. And that's exactly what we did—coffee in one hand, show fliers in the other.

We arrive downtown and as I'm getting out of the car, I start to get a little nervous. But, I am compelled to move forward. I want to be in charge of today and make this a great experience, so we walk up toward the Capitol. MiMi and I enter the little coffee shop on the square, and walking up to the counter, we see a woman smiling at us. She says, "I just saw you two on TV; you both look great." Then all of a sudden, I'm not so nervous anymore. We place our order, chit-chat with the employees for a bit, and head outside to wait for Kimmy. What a beautiful day! The sun

MADISON OPERA'S 2009/2010 SEASON

CARMEN

Nov. 6 & 8, 2009 | Overture Hall

THE TURN OF THE SCREW

Jan. 28 - 31, 2010 | The Playhouse

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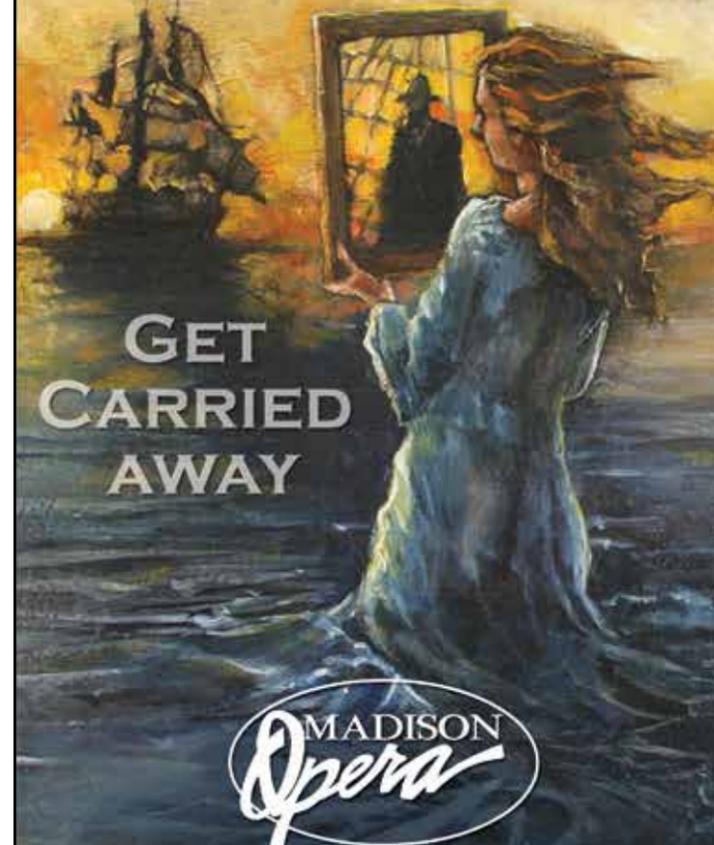
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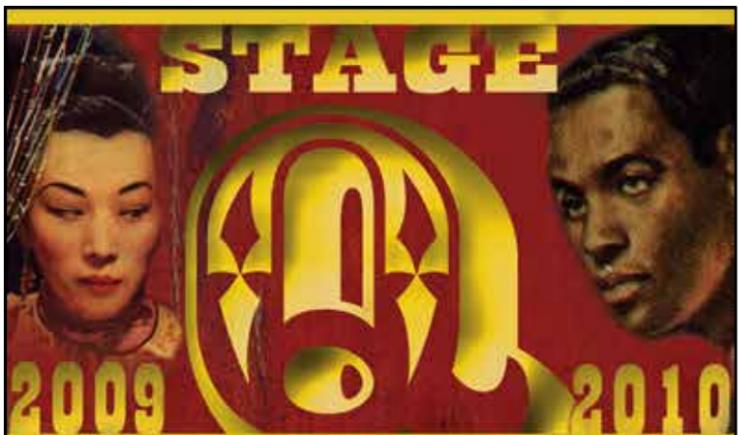
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is shining, the temperature is perfect, in the mid-70s, and for a couple of men in dresses, we couldn't ask for better weather. Then we see Kimmy walking toward us. She is smiling from ear to ear, and I can tell she is as excited as we are.

It's **7:00 a.m.** now, and the three of us are walking through the Farmers' Market. The expressions and looks that we are getting range from raised eyebrows of surprise to big smiles as we make our way around the square. We stop occasionally to answer questions, have our picture taken, or just to chat. The three of us have to chuckle as we hear comments ranging from "That's a man!" to "I love that outfit," to "Did you see his legs? I could never wear a skirt like that. Look at those legs." Then, I tell myself I'm so glad we did this, but it's time to head home, remove our many layers, and rest up for a big night.

By **9:00 a.m.** I'm home: wig off, heels off, washing my face. I'm turning back into Joel. I put on some comfy clothes, sink into my couch and let out a big sigh.

My mind kicks into high gear. Emotions are running high as I start to reflect and reminisce. I remember my grandma.

This particular memory is from 1996. My grandma is in the hospital with colon cancer in the final stages. There isn't much the doctors can do for her but make her feel as comfortable as they can. My mom and dad and I drove to Milwaukee to visit her in the hospital. Both my grandparents know all about me—about my being gay and my new love for entertaining as Josie Lynn. They, like my parents, are so loving and have given me the best gift I could ever ask for: the gift of acceptance. I could never ask for anything more. We arrive at the hospital and head up to her room, where my grandpa already is. My grandma is in her bed in an upright position, and as we walk in, her eyes still have that twinkle. She shines her beautiful, beautiful smile, the one that lights up any room. God, I miss that smile. I walk over and give her a hug and kiss, then a big hug for my grandpa.

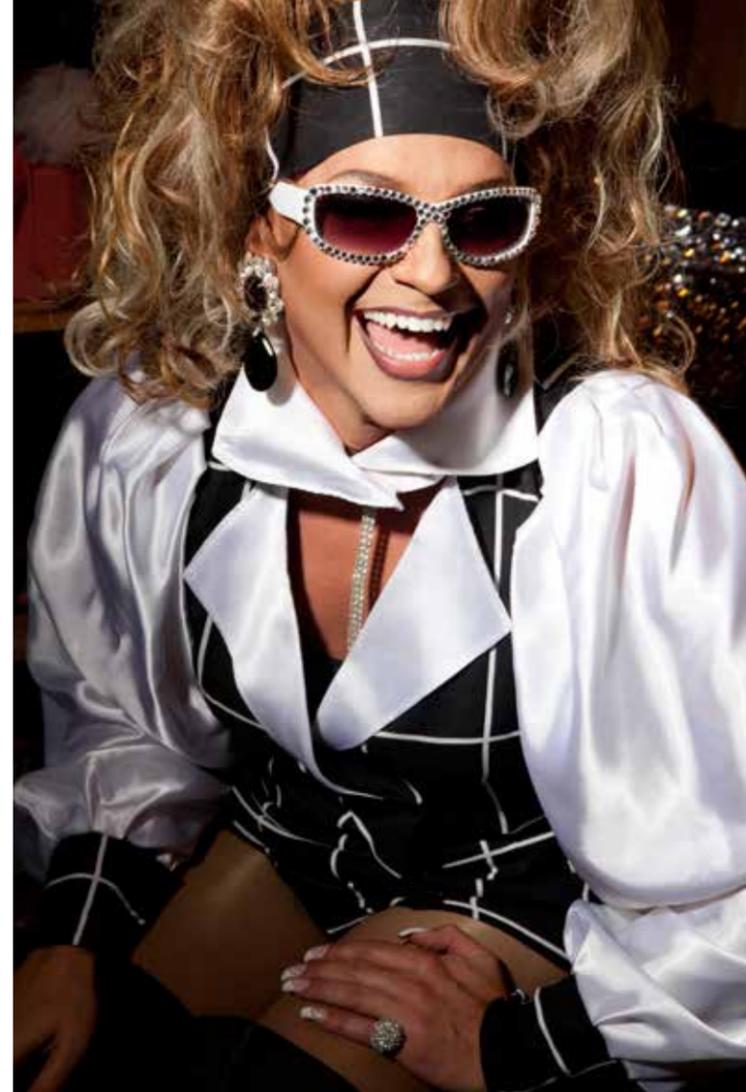
We all sit around and start talking of this and that, then the topic of Josie Lynn comes up. My mom pulls pictures of me as Josie Lynn out of her purse and we show them to my grandparents. They love them. They can't get over it; they can't believe that's me. While we are looking at the pictures, my aunt and uncle walk in. More hugs and more love fill the room.

Without missing a beat, my grandpa starts to tell a story. My grandpa has the greatest sense of humor, a little on the dry side. He starts to tell about his long-lost granddaughter (my grandparents have six grandsons), going on and on about this granddaughter who after all these years was reunited with Leon and Susan (my parents), and how she has come back into our lives. My aunt had the most confused look on her face, asking, "What? Who is this girl? Were did she come from?" My grandpa continues with his story and even shows them the pictures saying, "Look, here she is." After a little while, my grandma turns to grandpa and says, "Father." She always calls him that. "Father, now that's enough." So he confesses that the person in the pictures is me. "That's Joel," he says. We all had such a great laugh, and the room was so full of love and smiles. I'll never forget that smile on my grandma's face that day for as long as live. I love you Grandma, and I miss you so much.

Sitting here on my couch, I'm thinking to myself about how a picture of me in drag combined with a silly story caused so much joy, and it reminds me why I do what I do, and why I love doing what I do.

By **6:00 p.m.**, I am all rested up, showered, shaved and back in my bathroom putting on makeup. And, once again, my heart is racing. This time, I will wait to do the finishing touches when I get to the High Noon Saloon, our host for tonight's benefit. I pack the car with all my outfits, jewels, makeup, pads, music and everything else in between.

When I arrive at the bar I am greeted by Kimmy and MiMi, and we all



have a great laugh remembering our fun-filled morning. MiMi and I order a drink and hit the dressing room, where we both finish getting ready. Outfits on, hair teased, jewelry in place, we grab our drinks and head back into the main bar.

As we are greeting people, I notice two women sitting at the end of the bar with great big smiles and staring right at us. I'm intrigued, so we walk over to these ladies, and they say, "We saw you this morning at the Farmers' Market, and because of that we wanted to come out here tonight and see the show." WOW. You would have thought I had just won the lottery. I am so happy and excited that these two wonderful women came out because of us. I turn to MiMi and say this is going to be a great night.

It's **7 p.m.**, and it's show time. The bar is packed, and energy is at an all-time high. The performers are in the dressing room getting ready for their numbers. The acts tonight range from stand-up to drag queens and kings to musicians, and every performer does an amazing job. The crowd roars and cheers, and of course tips, tips, tips—raising money to help fight the dreadful disease: cancer, a disease that does not discriminate. It does not care what your age, color, religion or sexual orientation is, it will take hold of anyone, anywhere, at any time.

But tonight, cancer will not break us. It will not take hold of us, and it will NOT win. For we are strong when we stand together—together as a community, together as a family. We will continue to prove that for as long as we have each other, and my promise to you is that you will always have me, and I will always be there.

Once again, I remember why I do what I do, and why I love it so very much. Thank you, everyone. Thank you from the bottom of my heart. And remember: Love one another, but mostly, remember to love yourself. ■

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Every year in Wisconsin, nearly 7,000 years of life are lost to lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people because of their tobacco use.

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Kristine Kernz
Earl Rotmann

Robert Lewin
Tammy Mehlberg
Chuck Moyer



Our History by Richard Wagner

“Homocrats” stir up Wisconsin

The so-called “sex plank” by the Young Democrats led the way toward future legislation protecting gay and lesbian Wisconsinites in 1966.



I’ve written before that gay history in the middle of the country can often be overlooked. While it is true that the early homophile movement was deeply rooted on the coasts, the LGBT rights battle has been more

transcontinental. After all it was Illinois, which, during a model penal law reform, first decriminalized homosexual acts and other activity between consenting adults in America in 1961.

The first serious LGBT rights demonstration is generally credited to have taken place July 4, 1965, in front of Independence Hall, Philadelphia—four years before Stonewall. Gay men and lesbians were claiming that they too were citizens and entitled to equality under the law promised by the great Declaration. That this novel idea was to find a follow-up public expression in Wisconsin within nine months might not have been predicted. After all, in 1962, there was a gay purge at the U.W. Madison by the Dean of Men, who compiled lists of hundreds of confirmed or suspected gay men. Those who were on the lists were subjected to various intimidations.

So it might surprise some that in 1966 the U.W. Madison Young Democrats adopted a resolution to be forwarded to their March convention on homosexuality. The proposed plank said, “We favor the abolishment of laws directed toward preventing those persons who are homosexually inclined from freedom of action.”

Another proposal called for repeal of laws against unnatural sex acts between males and females. At the convention, the two were combined and called for the abolition of all laws restricting sexual relations between consenting adults, which do not violate the rights of others. The measure was adopted on a vote of 76 to 55.

Statewide media quickly dubbed it the “sex plank” and set off a furor of comment and condemnation. Going into the convention it was thought the big news would be the stance on the Vietnam War, with the Young Democrats critical of the Johnson Administration. There were pro-administration and anti-war floor demonstrations with national speakers addressing the issue on the convention’s first night. But the Vietnam stance was quickly overshadowed in the state press by the sex plank that was adopted on the last day of the gathering.

The provision was just one of a whole number of issues on which the Young Democrats had opinions. These included setting a uniform state drinking age of 18, voting at age 18, four-year

terms for governors, rent subsidies for the poor, repeal of the Taft-Hartley provisions that permitted right-to-work laws, study of a proposal aimed at a guaranteed annual minimum wage, against adding the militant black organization the W.E.B. DuBois Club to the Attorney General’s list of subversive organizations, and the elimination of the ban on artificially colored oleomargarine. Times were different. Only in Wisconsin could a pre-Stonewall debate on gay rights be paired with the right to buy yellow margarine.

The Milwaukee Journal reported on Monday, March 28, 1966, that during debate “opponents of the original plank said specific mention of homosexuals was an enlightened point of view but would merely provide campaign fodder for Republicans.” On Tuesday evening, the same paper reported this had come true as John Hazelwood, chairman of the Greater Milwaukee Republican League denounced the Young Dems’ platform that “clearly indicates that that organization has been captured by radicals.” Hazelwood charged the platform “blatantly encourages the legal acceptance of homosexuality and adultery.”

But Hazelwood had lots of company as papers continued to report. The Third State Senatorial District Democrats in Milwaukee on Tuesday night adopted a motion made by Democratic State Senator Casimir Kendzioriski disapproving of the sex plank stand. Chairman Ronald Hintzke told delegates that, if they remained silent, they would be approving the stand. Democratic State Senator Taylor Benson of Franksville in Racine County, calling the platform “an example of filth” went further and said, “Every Young Democrat who believes in the principles of decency, moral integrity and the sanctity of the family” should quit the organization and start a new one. Benson attributed the sex plank to beatniks and radicals from U.W. Madison. By April 5, thirty-six Young Democrats from southeastern Wisconsin has signed a statement that they “supported the solidarity of the family” and were opposed to “adultery, homosexuality and prostitution.” The signers believed that sex had no place in a political platform.

The state’s highest official, Republican Governor Warren Knowles, joined in the chorus of “No Place for Sex in Party Platform,” as reported in the Milwaukee Sentinel on April 5. The governor noted a tendency on the part of both Young Democrats and Young Republicans to become involved with philosophical issues which are not a part of government. Knowles said, “It is unfortunate that the question was raised in any respect.” The Governor deplored party splits and noted, “The homocrats against the Democrats

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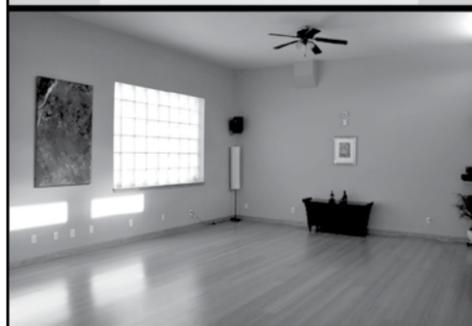
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is going a little too far." Knowles's comments were similar to earlier comments by Ody J. Fish, state GOP chairman, who said, "I doubt if the people of Wisconsin favor sex as a statewide political issue."

Conrad Goodkind from Madison and state chairman of the Young Democrats responded to the criticism of the sex plank noting, "If Democrats are for it and Republicans are against it, that might account for the fact that there are more Democrats." Goodkind noted the Democratic Party "should be able to embrace divergent views." Jim Miller, Chairman of the Fifth Congressional District Young Dem Clubs, though opposed to the sex plank, complained the newspaper articles were tinged with sensationalism. Eugene Burns of the Marquette University Young Dems, who authored the substitute language, noted that all press accounts left out the first part of the plank that affirmed, "We recognize the government has no right to legislate personal sexual ethics, therefore we favor the abolition of all restrictions on sexual relations involving consenting adults which do not violate the rights of others." Then he offered elaboration with a lengthy quote from Playboy magazine. Such an authoritative source and from a student at a Catholic university!

The New York Times joined the fray on April 10 and noted a related context of British action on the Wolfenden report, the English government's white paper on decriminalizing homosexuality. The House of Lords had adopted the recommendations in 1965, and they were pending in the House of Commons at this time. The British Labour Government of Harold Wilson would see them pass in 1967. Regarding Wisconsin The New York Times noted, "An advocate said this was the first time the issue had become an American political party plank."

In late April John Huettner, Young Dems platform committee chairman, debated on the sex plank with the president of the Methodist Wesley Foundation. Huettner, a political science senior, noted the Wisconsin Young Dems had pioneered the sex plank that had since been approved by Young Dems in Minnesota, the District of Columbia, and the College Young Democrats of America.

Senior Democrats were none too happy in 1966 with the sex plank, such as Democratic Lieutenant Governor Pat Lucey who dismissed the incident as "a flash in the pan." Yet they were to change their tune. In 1976 the state Democratic Party platform, with a very spirited debate, included the following language: "We support the extension of full civil rights to people of variant sexual inclinations, and the abolition of criminal sanctions on the private sexual activity of consenting adults." The Young Democrats of 1966 had led the way 10 years earlier.

In 1982 and 83 the legislature followed through with bipartisan votes to enact a first-in-the-nation lesbian-and-gay civil rights bill and consenting-adults legislation. Stepping-stones in the long march to equality—thanks, Young Dems of 1966. ■

Dick Wagner (rdickwagner@gmail.com), openly gay former Dane County Board Chair and co-chair of Governor Earl's Commission on Lesbian and Gay Issues, is now working on gay Wisconsin history and welcomes topics and sources.z

TAKING ART INTO YOUR OWN HANDS

Tara Ayres explores the world of contact improv, where participants combine improvisational movement and response with dance, music and physical connection.

Author's Note: Part of what I want to accomplish by profiling local artists and arts projects is to encourage people to expand their creative lives, which they might do by going to a play, a concert or an exhibit. Or they might do it by creating art themselves. We live in a culture that makes "the arts" a consumer affair: a small, rarefied group of people creates art and the rest of us consume it. Contact improv is a perfect counter-balance to that prevailing idea of art, and it's also just an enormous amount of fun!

Contact improvisation is a form that combines dance, circus arts, theater and music. It's open to anyone who wants to dance. Rather than focusing on performance, the idea is to come together and move through space, connecting and being aware of yourself and of other dancers. Anyone can do it, from the newest beginner to the 50-year veteran. And both can learn from each other, dance and create community together. There's an overlap with circus arts, aerial dance and other dance of various kinds. Some participants come from backgrounds in dance or martial arts, but many who have never danced before try contact improv. People also come from other improv backgrounds: sound, music, theater, comedy ...

Madison has an active contact improv community, with two weekly jam sessions. I spoke with **Kim Lasdon**, one of the jam facilitators, who described why contact improv is important to her:

"It's a chance to be present in each moment without knowing what's coming next. Because it happens faster than my brain can analyze, it's a way to move into that soft animal space of curiosity, and just remember that my body knows what it wants and knows how to keep itself safe. Everybody experiences it differently, but it allows me to go into the rest of my life, experiencing each interaction with each different personality as a contact improvisation. It gives me a lot of options, choice and freedom about how to interact with others from my own center."

There are open jams on Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons in Madison. The Sunday jam is facilitated, and Kim recommends that beginners start there. "Someone will bring an idea or something to work on. You'll be greeted and oriented. The facilitation rotates, and what we do varies depending on the facilitator: small dance, beginner's class, shoulder rolls," she explains.

The facilitator may say, "Lie on the ground and be curious about what your body is experiencing in that moment, coming to awareness in one's body. What movements is your body calling for? If you tap your fingers on the floor, how is that different than lifting your leg and dropping it? What is it like to surrender fully into the ground; what is it like to push up and use very small force, or very large force? If you start moving on the floor, how would it be different to move in water? What would it be like to go down a hill full of sand, or in an avalanche?"

After a warm-up exercise, the facilitator gets people up and moving through the space together. Kim describes a possible scenario:

"I'd ask the dancers to make eye contact and move with each other. Notice where you are in space; expand your awareness. Be aware of the air movement. Change levels: faster, slower. Walk shoulder-to-shoulder with someone, communicating through that point of contact. You might lead an entire dance with one finger—or an elbow. People begin dancing, having established contact and connection, and might begin sharing weight or thinking about what happens if they do x or y, or what happens if they slow down.

"Dancing with people and being involved in something that's so physically intimate can be very emotional. It makes me feel so much more grounded to have that physicality and touch. It can be very sensual, but it's safe. It's not like dancing in a bar, where there's expectation attached to the touch. Everyone who is moving his or her body is a dancer. Anyone who is participating in a creative activity is an artist."

If you're curious about contact improv, there are many videos on youtube.com. For information about the Madison jams you can call Nataraj at 608-246-2092, or visit the Madison contact improv website at <http://home.earthlink.net/~contactimprov/madison.html>. ■

Annual Theater Calendar 2009–2010

Compiled by **Tara Ayres**

	4 – 26	25 – 11/1				
Sept.	In the Beginning by Cat Capellaro and Andrew Rohn (an original musical by the creators of Temp Slave and Walmartopia) MERCURY PLAYERS THEATRE	Tales from the Dork Side BROOM STREET THEATRE				
	2 – 17	8 – 24	9 – 24	10 – 25	16 – 24	30 – 11/21
Oct.	Educating Rita (an African-American version) THE LABORATORY THEATRE	Forever Plaid MADISON THEATRE GUILD	Vin MERCURY PLAYERS THEATRE	Little Women: The Musical FOUR SEASONS THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE OF MADISON	The Smart Women's Project KATHIE RASMUSSEN-WOMEN'S THEATER	The Stops, a musical STAGEQ
	1 – 12/1	6 – 14	6 – 8	27 – 12/19		
Nov.	Troilus and Cressida MADISON SHAKESPEARE PROJECT	Dog Sees God: Confessions of a Teenaged Blockhead OUTICAST THEATRE	Carmen MADISON OPERA	The Santaland Diaries THE LABORATORY THEATRE		
	10 – 19	18 – 20	31 – 1/16			
Dec.	Tidings from the Seasonally Affected ENCORE STUDIO	The Nutcracker MADISON BALLET	Random Harvest STAGEQ			
	15 – 24	22 – 13	26 – 31	28 – 31	2/12 – 27	
Jan. & Feb.	Tarantara MADISON SAVOYARDS	Fat Men in Skirts MERCURY PLAYERS THEATRE	Rent OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS	The Turn of the Screw MADISON OPERA	Sappho in Love STAGEQ	
	5 – 4/11	5 – 27	13 – 14	19 – 4/3		
March	Two Plays: includes "The Wake of Liam Doherty" by Siobhan Edge and a playwrighting contest winner TBS. Directed by N-dig0. BROOM STREET THEATRE	Schoolhouse Rock Live! In Concert THE LABORATORY THEATRE	Cinderella MADISON BALLET	911: A collection of 4 One-Act plays ENCORE STUDIO		
	9 – 11	April 2010	16 – 5/1	27 – 5/23	28 – 6/12	
April & May	The Flying Dutchman MADISON OPERA	Help Wanted! TAPIT/NEW WORKS	Mercury Rising, a playfest MERCURY PLAYERS THEATRE	The Lion King OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS	Poona: The F**k Dog MERCURY PLAYERS THEATRE	
	10 – 19	18 – 19	7/23 – 25			
June & July	Queer Shorts 5 STAGEQ	Blitz and Blitz Smackdown: 24-hour theater! MERCURY PLAYERS THEATRE	Proud Theater: Decade 10th anniversary of Madison's Queer Youth Theater! PROUD THEATER AND BROOM STREET THEATRE			

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- The Business Alliance

Personal Shopper Bonnie Raimy on dressing Steven:

Steven's energy is palpable. Young, confident, and proud of his success, he is the perfect example of urban Madison. Making sure he is aware of current fashion trends is something that concerns him, so again, I immediately thought of JAZZMAN retailers on State Street.

This eclectic little downtown men's boutique with a European flair is where all men concerned with staying current should turn. Co-owners Paul and Craig, as well as their retail staff, are knowledgeable and friendly, which makes shopping at Jazzman an experience you will want to repeat...trust me.

In working with Steven, I was very excited to piece together an ensemble that was modern as well as semi-conservative. I chose a look that could very easily transition from office to after hours. Although some corporations don't allow denim, many do, and as long as the denim is not torn or overly faded, it can easily become upscale (sometimes more so than trousers). We went with a pair of LTB Istanbul jeans, a Ben Sherman black and white polka dot dress shirt with J. Campbell graphic tee, and a Calvin Klein black linen blazer.

Steven was initially not sure about the graphic tee on top of the dress shirt; but once on, he loved the stark black contrast against the pronounced black and white polka dots (and against his hair and skin they looked blindingly good). Adding the black blazer takes this otherwise after hour ensemble and turns it into a day-time look for the office. In addition, the graphic tee can be left off during the day for a more conservative look, and simply thrown on before heading out into the night (with or without the blazer). Complement the outfit with a pair of Steve Madden, union black leather loafers also at Jazzman, retailing for \$79).

I often hear that there simply aren't enough retail stores in Madison catering to men, and that may be true, but thankfully there are a few that keep inventory changing and stock clothing that it is not run-of-the-mill. Remember, the quantity of retailers is hardly the issue when shopping for clothing; it's the quality of retailers available that matters.

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OUR RIGHTS

"The Ties That Bind" Now Apply to Same-Sex Couples

Tamara Packard explains what the state Domestic Partnership Registry means for committed couples.

At some point in most wedding ceremonies, the officiant solemnly warns the lucky couple with something like this: "Marriage should not be entered into lightly. It is a serious commitment to bind one's life to another's." Registration of your domestic partnership under Wisconsin's new law, likewise, should not be undertaken without clear thought and an understanding of what you are signing up for. For the first time in Wisconsin history, same-sex couples are able to register their relationship with the State



For the first time in Wisconsin history, same-sex couples are able to register their relationship with the State and receive a number of significant rights and responsibilities.



and receive a number of significant rights and responsibilities. This column attempts to help couples understand generally what registration confers, what it does not provide, and how to register. While it cannot provide a comprehensive analysis of the new laws, after reading this, same-sex couples will know at least as much about the legal implications of registration as heterosexual couples typically know about the legal effects of marriage before they enter into a civil marriage contract.

If you and your partner are of the same sex, over 18, competent to sign contracts, not married or in a registered domestic partnership with another person, share a common residence, and are not closer in relationship than second cousins, you can register. The important question, though, is "Should you?" As you can see from these criteria, most roommates could register. However, most roommates would not want the legal bonds that come with registration. The rights and responsibilities conferred upon registration serve to help a couple support one another through times of crisis, preserve the life they have built together, and protect their mutual financial investments.

Upon registration, partners gain the right to share a room in a nursing home and visit one another in the hospital and other care facilities. A registered domestic partner may consent to her incapacitated partner's admission to a nursing home, hospice or other residential facility, unless someone else has been named for that purpose in a power of attorney for health care. Registered partners are entitled to take unpaid leave from work under Wisconsin's Family Medical Leave Act to care for their partner during serious illness or attend certain medical appointments with their partner.

Transfers of real estate between registered partners are exempt from the real-estate transfer fee. Similarly, transfers of manufactured home titles between registered partners are also now exempt from transfer fees. Real estate held between registered partners is presumed to be held as "joint tenants with rights of survivorship" (see this column in the July/August 2009 OL issue), though, if a couple does not wish to hold the property that way, they may title it differently. Once registered, a partner gains the ability to prevent her partner (or former partner) from testifying against her regarding any private communication that occurred between them during the partnership.

Upon one partner's death, the estate laws now provide for the surviving registered partner in the distribution of the deceased

partner's property, even when a will unintentionally excludes the partner. If there is no will, the partner receives some or all of the deceased partner's property, depending on the circumstances. For example, if the deceased partner has no will, no children and no contracts (such as life insurance or 401k documents) that leave property to others, the surviving partner receives all of the deceased partner's property. If one partner is killed due to the negligence of a third party, the surviving registered partner may pursue a wrongful death claim against the negligent party. The surviving registered partner will now receive worker's compensation death benefits if her/his partner is killed on the job and is also entitled to receive the deceased partner's unpaid wages. A registered partner may consent to an autopsy of his/her deceased partner and may make anatomical-gift decisions unless the deceased partner specified someone else for that function prior to death.

While these rights and responsibilities are significant, they are also limited. Unlike the obligations that come with marriage, domestic partners have no legal obligation of financial support. Unlike the divorce process married people are required to use to divide their property and define any ongoing

While these rights and responsibilities are significant, they are also limited. Unlike the obligations that come with marriage, domestic partners have no legal obligation of financial support.

obligations, Wisconsin has no similar process upon termination of a domestic partnership. Instead, most of the above-described rights and responsibilities dissolve instantly upon formal termination of the domestic partnership (most importantly the real estate titling presumption and the estate and intestacy rights). The new laws create no new legal connections or obligations between the "second parent" and children of the family.

If you haven't been scared away and you are ready to take on the legal ramifications of registered domestic-partnership bliss, here's how to register: Take along your social security numbers, certified copies of your birth certificates, current photo IDs, proof of residence and the filing fee to the County Clerk where one or both of you have

resided for the past 30 days. The fee varies by county; Dane County charges \$115 and only accepts cash. Both of you must go together. Complete and file the application with the County Clerk. In five days, the Clerk will issue the Declaration of Domestic Partnership (although the waiting period may be waived). Complete the Declaration, sign it in front of a Notary and file it with the County Register of Deeds. Your domestic partnership is not in effect until it is filed with the Register of Deeds. (For more information about the registration and termination processes, please see the FAQ about domestic partnerships on the Dane County Clerk's website.)

Wisconsin has thousands of same-sex couples who have already made a personal long-term commitment to one another. The new domestic partner registry provides a new measure of security to those relationships. To all of these couples, as it is said in the Blessing of the Apaches, "Now you are two persons, but there is only one life before you. May happiness be your companion and your days together be good and long upon the earth." ■

Tamara Packard is a Madison civil rights lawyer, activist and partner in the law firm of Cullen Weston Pines & Bach LLP, www.cwpb.com.

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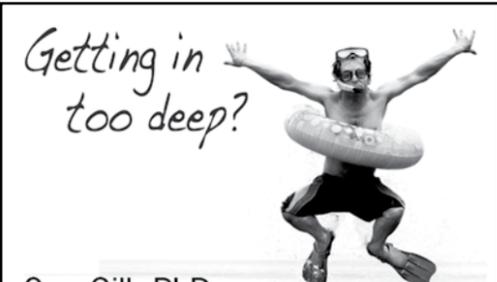


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quality of life

OUR HEALTH

Come Out to Support LGBTQ Triathletes

Don your rainbow gear and find a spot along the Ironman route! **Amber Ault** provides a glimpse into what participants go through on this grueling day.

Ironman Wisconsin, the 140.6-mile swim-bike-run endurance competition, will reappear in Madison on September 13, and there will no doubt be LGBTQ athletes among the 2,000 participants facing down the elements, the distance and the little voice in the head that says, "Enough!" If you stand on the sidelines for a few minutes, or get so caught up that you feel compelled to watch the entire 17-hour event, you will probably find yourself wondering why anyone would want to push herself so hard and so far. And then you might find



Thousands of spectators assemble at Monona Terrace before dawn to find viewing spots along the Monona shoreline for the 7:00 a.m., 2.4-mile swim start.



yourself wondering what it takes for a person to prevail in such circumstances. And then you might just find yourself wondering whether you might possibly want to get off the curb and into the race. This line of thinking could change your life.

Sheila Power, a Madison endurance athlete and realtor who holds several international titles and Ironman finishes to her name, has seen this sort of thing happen.

"I think IM WI has made a huge difference in interest and subsequent participation (in triathlons) here in Madison," she says.

"Spectators have been inspired, I believe, by the excitement and hence have gotten involved by giving it a try, loving the challenge and all it entails—the people you meet and sense of adventure—and then they gradually expand to longer distances," she says, noting that not all triathlons are 140.6 miles. "Sprint" distance events generally include a quarter-mile swim, a 15-mile ride, and a 5k run, for example, and often serve as a good introduction to the sport.

"What hooked me," she continues, after recounting a near-drowning incident at a sprint-distance race at Devil's Lake, "was the feeling of speed, anxiety/exhilaration and the feeling of accomplishment when finished—despite the pain."

Melissa Peyton, a Madison structural engineer and Ironman finisher, agrees. "Finishing Ironman Wisconsin was the most rewarding moment. It's supposed to be about the journey, but finishing felt great!" she remembers. "I was injured at mile 11 on the run, and had to walk the last 15 miles. I spent many hours," she recalls, "debating with myself whether I should stop or keep going. Dealing with that internal struggle, then finishing within the cut-off time, was an experience you can't ever replicate."

Madison is famous among athletes for the incredible spectator support at Ironman Wisconsin, a day-long fest for the non-competing crew that would make any gay party-planner or Pride organizer proud. Thousands of spectators assemble at Monona Terrace before dawn to find viewing spots along the Monona shoreline for the 7:00 a.m., 2.4-mile swim start. All day long, people position themselves along the bike course, which is 112 miles on two loops of a course from Madison to Verona to Cross Plains and around again, and then along the marathon course through downtown Madison. Spectators wear costumes and carry signs and beat drums, all to help the athletes finish their 140.6-mile, self-propelled journey before midnight. And the people on the sidelines can make all the difference.

Denise Lippa, a New York-based triathlete



Melissa Peyton

PHOTOGRAPHED BY CHRIS HOLCOMB

with ties to Madison, recounts an incident in which she was saved by strangers during a shorter-distance race. "I was so thirsty when I got off the bike," she says, "and there were no water stations for quite a while on the start of the run course. I asked some spectators picnicking by the lake for one of their bottled waters, and they were so supportive. The whole family cheered me on loudly, which brought tears to my eyes as I ran, clutching this awkward, bulky water bottle for miles, so grateful for the hydration and love it carried to keep me going."

The women I interviewed reported feeling at home in the predominantly straight sport, a place where mutual respect among athletes for the task at hand seems to trump some of the divisions of social life. Still, if you're among the spectators at our world-class hometown endurance fest, if you carry a rainbow flag or chant, "We're here, we're queer, we will endure!" it would certainly buck up the energy of the LGBTQ athletes in that sea of spandex.

For information about how to volunteer for Ironman Wisconsin and details about the race course, visit ironmanwisconsin.com. ■

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quality of life

OUR ISSUES

Therapy Shopping

Are you in the market for a psychotherapist? **Jimmy Owen** encourages you to empower yourself by selecting someone who will be a good fit for you.

Imagine walking into an unfamiliar office and sitting in a strange room for the first time. As you look around, you notice a box of tissues, a license hanging on the wall, some innocuous art and a shelf of books. You are probably sitting in a comfortable chair or on a couch, and you might get a sense of being in a living room, but you know it's an office.

This stranger introduces him/herself to you, and you begin talking—sharing the most intimate thoughts and feelings in your head. You talk in a way that feels out of the ordinary and



What measures might you take as you begin looking for a clinician? Where do you look? As an LGBT person, are there additional considerations to factor in?

our lives
 Jimmy Owen
ourlivesmadison.com
 user jimjim1013

awkward, yet comforting and safe. Then, when the time is over, you hand money to this person and schedule a time to do this all again. And hopefully, by talking to this stranger, you feel better than when you walked in the door.

This ritual happens every hour, every day, all over the world when a client comes to their first appointment with a psychotherapist. It is a process which demands blind trust, an implicit reliance that this stranger has your best interests at heart, along with the professional education and specialized training to help you begin your emotional healing.

Even after over 20 years of working as a private practice psychotherapist, I am still in awe when a new client walks into my office. I feel

privileged and honored to be handed their trust, to watch their process unfold as they share joys, pains, secrets. Sometimes the process flows easily and a synchronicity exists; other times it starts slowly and moves into a beautiful alliance. And occasionally it just isn't a good fit.

What can you do to maximize the selection process in this day and age, as you go about looking for a therapist? What measures might you take as you begin looking for a clinician? Where do you look? As an LGBT person, are there additional considerations to factor in? And how do insurance and managed care affect your selection process?

The most important thing to remember is you are a consumer and you are buying a service. You are in charge. Be proactive.

Don't know where to look? Start with your friends and colleagues. Because therapy is such a personal event, if they've had a positive experience, they'll probably be happy to give you a referral. They may also give you names to avoid. Remember that what works for one person may not work for another. Look in the local LGBT media; call local LGBT support services. Go online and look for professionals who utilize the web. This is probably the most efficient way of gaining valuable information about potential clinicians. Today, half of my referrals come from my website.

When making the initial call for an appointment, ask questions. Find out about the therapist's experience and credentialing. Are they licensed? Do they have a governing board by which there is accountability for their service? What are their fees, their hours? Are they comfortable working with LGBT clients? What kind of practical experience do they have working with LGBT people? Do they have any personal value conflicts regarding LGBT issues that could keep you from receiving the best treatment possible? As a therapist, it is my ethical and legal obligation to refer clients whom I am not equipped to counsel or with whom I have a conflict of interest. By asking these questions upfront, you can weed out clinicians who are not appropriate.

If you want a self-identified LGBT practitioner, don't be afraid to ask. The clinician may decline to give you an answer—and that is their right. It is also your right as a consumer to keep looking. There are many allied professionals

who offer a very positive and beneficial therapeutic experience, but if you want to work with an LGBT therapist, you can make it happen.

During the initial phone conversation, notice how it feels to talk with your potential therapist. If someone else does their scheduling, ask to speak directly with the clinician. Can you sense a rapport? Is she/he taking the time to answer your questions? Do you feel comfortable talking to her/him? Does he/she seem to feel comfortable talking to you?

Regardless of style or therapeutic orientation, I believe a primary factor for a successful experience in therapy is safety. When you feel safe you dig deeper; you go further inside and will work more collaboratively with your clinician. Pay attention to this.

Continue to notice these things during your initial appointment. Ask yourself, does the environment feel comfortable? Is your confidentiality being respected? If you don't want to immediately schedule another, that is OK. Remember, you are the consumer; you are buying a service. If you need to go home and contemplate, trust your gut and do so. You don't have to purchase a car simply because you take it out for a test drive. It is also OK to test out a few therapists before moving forward.

If you are going through your insurance company, ask them the same questions. You may be given a list of providers who are covered by your insurance company. Ask your insurer if they have clinicians who self-identify as LGBT and if there are any who list working with LGBT people as an area of specialization. If you can't find what you're looking for within your insurance company, you may consider looking at your out-of-network coverage. Don't be afraid to call a clinician who's not covered by your insurance company—they may be able to provide some direction or help you in finding a provider within your insurer. You may also decide the value of the relationship is more important than the insurance savings. Some practitioners will charge a lower fee for clients paying out of pocket. Don't be afraid to ask.

Finding the right therapist is a critical step to your emotional healing. Empower yourself by making a selection that reflects what you want and need. Do your homework; take your time. When you do find it, you will be able to experience the trust, truth, vulnerability and authenticity that happen between client and therapist. ■

Jimmy has been a LGBT therapist for over 20 years. In addition, he works as a Trauma Specialist for the Dane County District Attorney's office Crime Response Program. He and his partner, Jim, have 3 beagles, Dixie, Silas and Tatum. He can be found online at www.jimmyowen.com



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Whether you're looking for a scrumptious fish fry or a broad and varied Sunday brunch, the Nau-Ti-Gal delivers. The breaded, fried haddock will melt in your mouth and is served in generous portions. Or, choose the Rosemary Lemon Tilapia—a favorite of Robert von Rutenberg, one of the three brothers who own the restaurant. Make sure you have a cup of the clam chowder. This award-winning, sherry-based chowder was featured on the Food Network, and for good reason.

Be sure to arrive hungry for Sunday brunch. It's a virtual food orgy, with everything from pastries to pastas to prime rib. The French toast, seafood salad, made-to-order omelets and Key Lime pie were also standouts.

The von Rutenberg family has owned and operated the Nau-Ti-Gal since 1982. Look for Robert presiding over things and make sure to tell him you're new to the Nau-Ti-Gal. He'll make you feel right at home.

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www.amyscafe.com

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322 W. Johnson St., 257-2707
American, Pizza \$
angelicbrewing.com

Bab's French Quarter Kitchen

1353 Williamson St.,
251-1222
French, Creole \$

Bandung Restaurant

600 Williamson St., 255-6910
Indonesian \$\$
bandungrestaurant.com

Bellini Restaurant

401 E. Washington Ave.,
250-0097
Italian, Pasta \$\$\$
bellinirestaurant.com

Blue Velvet Lounge

430 W. Gilman, 250-9900
American, Tapas \$
thebluevelvetlounge.com

The Brass Ring

701 E. Washington Ave.,
256-9359
American, Burgers \$
thebrassringmadison.com

Brocagh Irish Pub

7 W. Main St., 255-2015
Irish \$\$
brocagh.com

Buraka

543 State St., 255-3646
East African \$
buraka.com

Burrito Drive

310 S. Brearly St., 260-8586
Mexican \$
burritodrive.com

Cafe Continental

108 King St., 251-4880
Continental \$\$

Cafe Costa Rica

141 S. Butler St., 356-9830
Costa Rican \$

Cafe Montmartre

127 E. Mifflin St., 255-5900
French, Tapas \$
themomo.com

Cafe Porta Alba

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441-0202
Pizza \$\$
cafeportalba.com

Cafe Soleil

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Bread, Sandwiches/Deli \$
letoile-restaurant.com

Cardinal Bar & Cafe

418 E. Wilson St., 251-0080
Lunch \$
cardinalbar.com

Crave Restaurant

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Seafood, Burgers \$\$\$
cravemadison.com

Dayton Street Grille

1 W. Dayton St 257-6000
American \$\$
concoursehotel.com/dining

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American, Burgers \$
dottedumplingsdowry.com

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Harvest

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American, French \$\$\$
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Steak, American \$\$\$
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Caribbean, Jamaican \$\$

Kabul Restaurant

541 State St., 256-6322
Afghanistani \$

Lazy Jane's Cafe

1358 Williamson St., 257-5263
Sandwiches, Deli \$

Le Chardonay

320 W. Johnson St., 268-0372
Mediterranean, French \$\$\$
lechardonaymadison.com

L'Etoile

25 N. Pinckney St., 251-0500
French, American \$\$\$
letoile-restaurant.com

Maharani

380 W. Washington Ave.,
251-9999
Indian \$\$

Marigold Kitchen

118 S. Pinckney St., 661-5559
Sandwiches, Soup \$
marigoldkitchen.com

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Seafood \$\$
oceangrillmadison.com

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23 N. Pickney St., 310-4545
Steak, American \$\$
theoldfashioned.com

Opus Lounge

116 King St., 441-6787
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316 State St., 251-6311
Greek \$

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106 King St., 260-2680
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Pizza \$
theromancandle.com

Sardine

517 Williamson St., 441-1600
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Shamrock Bar

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Sunday Brunch \$
shamrockbar.com

Sunprint Cafe

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Sandwiches, Vegetarian \$

Takara

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Tornado Club

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Steak \$\$\$
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Weary Traveler

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International \$

Wisconsin Union

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American, Sandwiches \$
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East

Bunky's Cafe

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American \$\$
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Ella's Deli

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forkandspooncafe.com

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Monty's Blue Plate

2089 Atwood Ave., 244-8505
American, Pies \$
montysblueplatediner.com

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Seafood \$\$
vrv-madison.com/nautigal

Tex Tubbs Taco Palace

2009 Atwood Ave., 242-1800
Tex-Mex \$
textubbstacos.com

Alchemy

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American, Burgers

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American, Vegetarian \$\$
bluephies.com

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831-7327
Seafood \$\$
vrv-madison.com/capbills

Flat Top Grill

538 N. Midvale Blvd., 236-4008
Asian Fusion \$\$
flattopgrill.com

Fleming's Steak & Wine Bar

750 N. Midvale Blvd.,
233-9550
Steak, Seafood \$\$\$\$
flemingssteakhouse.com

Glass Nickel

5003 University Ave.,
218-9000
Pizza \$
glassnickelpizza.com

Mediterranean

Hookah Lounge
77 Sirloin Strip, 251-7733
Mediterranean \$\$
Inka Heritage
602 S. Park St., 310-4282
Peruvian \$\$\$

Jordan's Big Ten Pub

1330 Regent St., 251-6375
American, Burgers \$
jordansbigten.com

La Hacienda

515 S. Park St., 255-8227
Mexican \$

Madeleine's Patisserie

3742 Speedway Rd, 441-0909
Bread, Pastries \$
madeleinesmadison.com

Mickie's Dairy Bar

1511 Monroe St., 256-9476
Breakfast, Burgers \$

OUT Restaurant

1262 John Q Hammons Dr.,
203-8338
American, Bar & Lounge
oecmadison.com

Tex Tubbs Taco Palace

2701 University Ave.,
231-3473
Tex-Mex \$
textubbstacos.com

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Every gay person I met told me they had recognized it at a very young age—I hadn't...

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Sara Colopy's coming out revealed that it's not how we got here that matters—It's the love we find along the way from our family, friends—and ourselves.

Am I gay? Am I bisexual? Or am I straight and just really confused? These questions consumed my every thought just a little over four years ago. It's almost surreal to think that such a short time ago, I was in the middle of a quickly fading marriage with the man I thought I'd spend the rest of my life with.

I grew up in Zanesville, a small city in east-central Ohio on the edge of the Appalachian region of the state. I once thought that Zanesville was a great place to grow up. It was slow-moving, safe and full of good-hearted people. As a child, I didn't recognize the rampant prejudice among the locals. People commonly talked about driving through the "colored" part of town, and when *The Birdcage* was released, my own relatives laughed about the "fairies" in the movie.

It's no wonder that I didn't even consider that I might be bisexual or gay until I was 25 years old. It's actually ironic that the same place I thought had protected my years of youth actually sheltered me from discovering who I was. I never denied my feelings for women. In fact, I hadn't thought about it at all. You have to know you have a closet in order to be in it—I had never even walked past the door...

Sure I was a bit of a "tomboy" growing up—I'd come home every day covered in dirt from playing in the woods, and my parents had to hold me down to get a dress on me – I could (and probably still can) throw an impressive tantrum. However, I always enjoyed the company of the opposite sex and had boyfriends regularly from the time I was in first grade until I met my husband.

Several clues did exist had I been looking for them. Many of my girlfriends, I realize now, I felt strong intimate feelings toward—much stronger than people usually have for their friends. However, I never recognized these feelings for what they were. By the time I was in high school, my family had moved to Wisconsin. I went to undergraduate and veterinary school at UW-Madison and was finally exposed to people with rich, diverse backgrounds. I was intrigued by my gay and lesbian classmates and often gravitated to them out of pure fascination. I was deeply in love with my husband (whom I had met in veterinary school) but never felt comfortable with myself when we would go out with other straight couples. The conversation and lifestyle seemed so foreign and unnatural.

OUR START

When we moved to North Carolina for my internship, the stress of our busy lives took a toll on our marriage. There is a large LGBT community in Raleigh, and it was in the midst of my turmoil that I began to discover the person inside myself I had never met before. Two women, both lesbians, befriended me and became my support system. I became captivated by their lifestyle and the way that I felt when I was in their world. For the first time in my entire life, I truly felt content in my surroundings.

My first relationship with a woman was a jolt to my system. Although I experienced these amazing feelings of excitement and intimacy, I was too obsessed with understanding the events of my life that had led up to this point. I wanted to know whether these feelings I had for women had led to the destruction of my marriage, or if the destruction of my marriage had led to the feelings I was experiencing now. Every gay person I met told me they had recognized it at a very young age—I hadn't...

I returned to Madison for my residency and tried to hold onto a long distance relationship with my first girlfriend. However, my fixation with defining my life turned into severe depression. I needed time on my own to deal with my grief and sort out my sexuality, and so I ended the relationship. I came out to my parents and sister shortly after moving back, the hardest part of which was just mustering up the courage to do it. All of my family and close friends were more supportive than I could have hoped for, and with time, I let go of my obsession with labeling myself. I realized that I didn't need to understand exactly why things had happened the way that they had, nor did I need to categorize myself in order to find happiness. I know now that I fall in love with people for who they are, and although I feel much more of an intimate connection with women, I believe I'm probably just floating around somewhere in the middle the Kinsey scale along with most other people.

Three years ago, I met and fell in love with an amazing woman – my partner, Robin. In July, we celebrated our one-year anniversary of the vows we spoke at the peak of Whistler Mountain. Through time, I have become an active member of the LGBT community in Madison and am appreciative of organizations like the Madison Gay Hockey Association for allowing me to meet wonderful friends and people I consider my family. Although my life was quite rocky for awhile, I really believe that everything we experience in life contributes to the people we become. I am thankful for the course my life has taken, as I can't imagine a life without the deep satisfaction and happiness I now know is possible. ■

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