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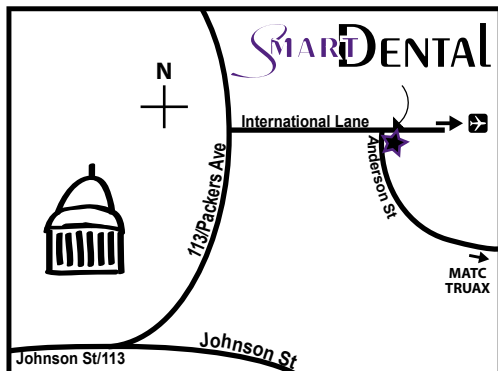
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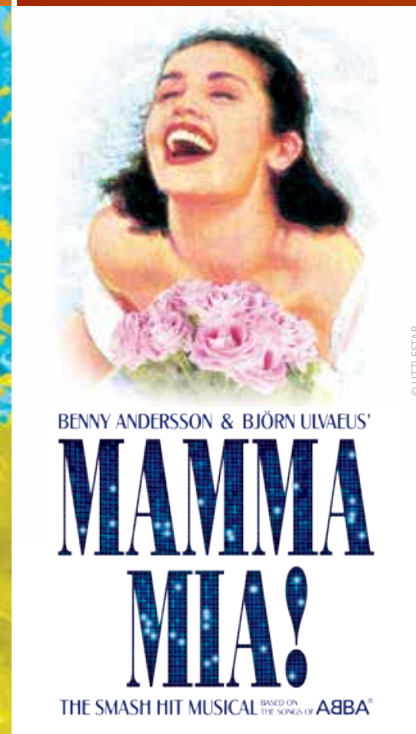
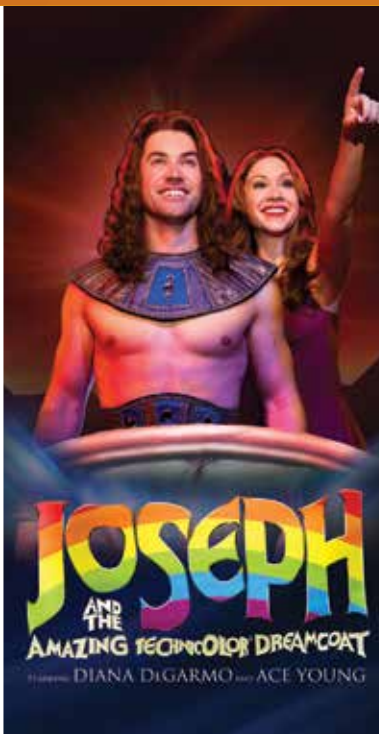
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**did you hear?**

**Charity bowling event raises funds for New Harvest Foundation**

Organizers of the MILMAIDS bowling charity event would like to thank everyone who came out to show their support this year. Overall, the event raised \$5,145 for the New Harvest Foundation. With special thanks to Dino and Jason from Woof's for bringing in 25 bowlers, Deb and Cindy from Milwaukee who helped get people registered, and to Dave from Five Nightclub who put on a great buffet.

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## publisher

**What is worth your time?**

After I finish reading something, I always measure it's value by asking myself if that was worth the time it took to read. Too often when I get lost in my newsfeed on facebook, that answer is no. But when I sit down to read the stories and the personal narratives that come together to bring this magazine to life, I feel reassured that I'm spending my time well. With every issue I learn something about our LGBTQ culture and community. I learn something about the place I call home. And I almost always end up learning something about myself, too. This issue is no exception. Reading Michael Dix's cover narrative, I was moved by the authenticity of his storytelling. He candidly shares his vulnerability around topics that have touched many of our lives but aren't often spoken about so publicly. He helped reaffirm me that even after great pain, great happiness can still bloom.

I also valued what Alexander Einsman had to say about smartphone apps like Grindr and Scruff, too. Plus, Tamara Packard's progress report on marriage equality both in Wisconsin and nationally helped give me a sense of what to expect and when. And that's just a sampling of what you'll find in these pages. There's quite a lot more that will help you build a stronger connection to the things that tie us all together. And to me, that makes it well-worth the time spent.

**Patrick Farabaugh**  
Publisher

## contributors



**Tamara Packard** is a partner in the Madison law firm Cullen Weston Pines & Bach LLP, where she practices civil litigation, focusing on employee rights. Packard graduated from Oberlin College in 1990 and from the University of Wisconsin Law School in 1994 and is a Fellow in the Litigation Counsel of America. She has had the good fortune to be in-

involved in recent key civil rights litigation, including defending Wisconsin's Domestic Partnership Registry, challenging the 2006 "Marriage Amendment" to the Wisconsin Constitution, and challenging the Voter ID law. She co-teaches the Sexual Orientation and the Constitution seminar at the UW Law School and was President of the Board of Directors of the Fair Wisconsin Education Fund while Wisconsin's "Marriage Amendment" was debated and adopted. In June, Tamara and her same-sex fiancé will be legally wed.



**Daryl Sisson** is the co-owner of the Daisy Cafe & Cupcakery with his wife, 30-year Madison east-sider Kathy Brooks. Daryl's extensive work experience in the retail industry (Marshall Field's), food service (national restaurant group Restaurants Unlimited), and information technology (Microsoft) have given him a broad exposure to business trends and practices.

Daryl and Kathy are also mosaic artists and supporters of local art, as well as great fans of all of the great restaurants (and desserts) Madison has to offer.

**Dane Buy Local** Business Spotlight

Featuring businesses that give back to the communities they serve

**Dane Buy Local turns ten!**

Colin Murray, Executive Director

[DANEBUYLOCAL.COM](http://DANEBUYLOCAL.COM)

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As a nonprofit, Dane Buy Local helps promote and support many locally owned businesses. Diversity is important to DBL, including LGBT-owned businesses. We are very pleased to have a number of LGBT owned businesses as members.

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As a guy who could barely hit a ball when I first joined, I was greeted by people helping me up and teaching me how to be a better player.

**Net Worth**  
**Kurtis Hopp** found a tight-knit community and a way to give back in Madison's volleyball scene.

Photo by Ian DeGraff

**C**ommunity: That's what I was looking for when I attended my first volleyball match with the Madison Gay Volleyball league. I left a life of routine to venture out on my own as a gay man in his 20s when I took the leap and moved to "the big city" (as I called it). It was one scary task for this small town boy. I had visited Madison before, and knew of its close-knit LGBTQ community, but was finally ready to throw myself into it.

Since coming out I had always been involved in the community. After all it had done for me and others around me, I felt a pride and a wanted to give back and help others. Moving to Madison meant starting over with a lot of that though.

I wanted to get a foothold in this new community so I decided if there was an organization or function happening, I wanted to check it out.

One of the first things I did was look into local LGBTQ sports organizations. Being someone who recently found himself back on the road to a healthy lifestyle after being overweight, it was a perfect match!

After talking with some of the new people I had met, I decided to tag along to check out their volleyball league. Sitting on the sidelines and observing the matches and the fun people had from just being together brought a smile to my face. You had everything from beginners who had never played to athletes who were pros and playing with a well organized team. What brought them together were the initial friendships they made, and what kept them coming back was the community they developed. That initial impression from my first visit was so amazing that I gathered friends, formed a team, and registered us that week.

Throughout the season I made many friendships and found myself with the good foothold I was looking for when I took the scary jump to the big city. I also managed to be elected team captain, which put me in a place of leadership.



**Tim Lom** is Our Athletes editorial facilitator and a member of the Madison Minotaurs rugby club, Wisconsin's only International Gay Rugby Association and Board team. He's excited to help various members of the sports community have their voices heard and their stories told.

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Since the league's creation (well before my first year of playing), it has changed venues, formats, board members, and more. What remains the same throughout is that the league itself is open to all who wish to participate. They do not discriminate based on orientation, gender, age, etc. If you register and want to play, the board will do everything in their power to make sure you find a team fit for your skill level. There are currently two divisions: one for people who want to play competitively and one for people just looking to have fun or who have never stepped foot on a court and want to learn.

After years of seeing players come and go and seasons pass, I decided to take that leadership role and try to do something to show the community what volleyball brought to me and what it could bring to them. With Madison Capitol Pride suffering, I decided that organizing a tournament might help bring something revitalizing to the weekend's festivities. If I could help make just one person's transition into this community a bit easier, then I wanted to try.

With the help of a few friends and volunteers, we set up contacts within the league in Madison and the sister league in Milwaukee and started to advertise and organize the tournament. We wanted an event where all were welcome and a place that had a safe, competitive feel. The response we got to the invites we sent was amazing! People were just as excited for a community event as we were. That first year we put together a nonprofit event in a park on a sunny day, where all community members were welcome. There were music, spectators, games to be played, and medals and trophies to be handed out. Most importantly though, there was love and laughter.

We are now heading into the fifth year of the Madison Pride Volleyball Tournament and have grown so large we needed to hold it at a paid venue that is large enough to handle the event and its participants. I could not have dreamed of the ripple effect that one man's idea could have created. We have business sponsors, people traveling from different states, and so much community that it is overwhelming. People that had never played before because they were too shy felt so welcomed that they wondered why they hadn't come sooner. They saw a community coming together just to show support—and love. I can relate. As a guy who could barely hit a ball when I first joined, I was greeted by people helping me up and teaching me how to be a better player.

Some people are scared to try something new, like playing a sport they have never played before. I was too, but what helped make it easier was seeing others make mistakes, laughing with them, then being taught how to improve their skills. The people teaching them and helping them were their friends. I hope to continue sharing my experience with others in the LGBTQA community for years to come so that others might find that same sense of community too. ■

**did you hear?**



**FLYY program offers expedition for LGBTQ teens this summer**

Queer-identified youth will have the chance to go on a 25-day backpacking expedition this summer, with Nyle Biondi serving as co-lead. The focus of this particular expedition will include skills, discussions, and lessons about issues that all teens face as well as issues commonly experienced within the LGBTQ community: personal identity (coming out and disclosure, gender identity and expression), community/friendship, and healthy relationships and behaviors. FLYY provides a safe and supportive environment for growth, discussion, and discovery. For more information, contact Jessie Kushner at [info@flyyexpeditions.org](mailto:info@flyyexpeditions.org)

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Chaz Ingraham (left) and Trevor Bass (right).

PHOTO BY MICHELLE SIEBERT LARSON

## A Dynamic Duo

Two straight actors take on iconic gay roles in Middleton Players Theatre's *Rent* and *A Chorus Line*.

Call it fate. Call it destiny. But when Middleton Players Theatre set its 2014 season, *Rent* and *A Chorus Line* were not the productions the organization had first chosen to do.

"We had originally planned to do two completely different shows," said Thomas J. Kasdorf, Co-Artistic Director and Music Director. "But due to different circumstances, we had to rearrange our shows and finally settled on *Rent* and *A Chorus Line*."

Loosely based on Puccini's *La Boheme*, Jonathan Larson's *Rent* is the rock opera mega hit that took New York by storm in the mid-1990s. Over the course of a year, it follows a group of impoverished young artists and musicians struggling to survive and create in New York's Lower East Side, under the shadow of HIV/AIDS. One of its central characters, Angel, is a high-fashion, take-no-prisoners street performer and drag queen.

*A Chorus Line* is the ground-breaking 1970s musical conceived by Michael Bennett with music by the late Marvin Hamlisch. It tells of the achingly poignant ambitions of professional Broadway gypsies to land a job in the show and is a powerful metaphor for all human aspiration. Standing among the many hopefuls is the character of Paul, a young man struggling with being gay in the 1970s and gaining strength and comfort in who he is and the acceptance of his family and those around him.

The characters of Angel and Paul represent two individuals in drastically different scenarios. In *A Chorus Line*, Paul's world is filled with a lot of fear and injustice. Paul's story shows how life and profession can be drastically affected by a person's sexuality. In contrast, the character of Angel in *Rent* lives in a world that has come a long way in acceptance of gays, lesbians, and cross-dressers too.

Playing the role of Angel in *Rent* is Verona native Trevor Bass. Trevor was last seen on the MPT stage in last year's production of *Les Misérables* and most recently was seen as Matt in Four Season's 2013 production of *The Fantasticks*. Chaz Ingraham, who is no stranger to the Madison theatre scene, plays the role of Paul in *A Chorus Line*. Chaz was first seen by MPT audiences in *The Rocky Horror Show* in 2008. Since then he's been seen in *The Producers*, *Chicago*, *Into the Woods*, and *Les Misérables*.

But what makes playing these iconic gay roles into a particularly interesting challenge is that the actors both identify as straight. Their process of presenting these two characters may be more difficult than one

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might think. "For me, playing a role like this requires a lot of respect for the character," said Ingraham. "But it also requires a high level of vulnerability. I have to find a way to go to a place (for the character) that is raw and open. I can't hide behind a façade. I have to put everything on the line, for lack of a better phrase. I have to do that. I have to do it for Paul."

For Bass, creating his own personal portrayal of Angel is about honesty and integrity. "Playing a role, playing any role, is about finding the truths and applying them to the character," said Bass. "It's about pushing yourself. And for this role, it's about pushing myself to a level that allows me to connect with the role on a very personal level. Angel makes no apologies and takes no prisoners. She's bold, she's daring, and she's unafraid to be exactly who she is."

"The dichotomy between the two characters is incredible," said Matt Starika-Jolivet, Co-Director with MPT. "Paul is so scared to be honest and open, not only with himself, but with those around him. It takes every bit of his being to open up about who he is. Whereas Angel is the complete opposite, she's out and she's proud. She has absolutely no qualms about who she is."

**Paul is so scared to be honest and open, not only with himself, but with those around him. Whereas Angel is the complete opposite, she's out and she's proud. She has absolutely no qualms about who she is.**

While the two shows have yet to open, both Bass and Ingraham are already hard at work. "I'm hitting the music over and over again," said Ingraham. "*A Chorus Line* is a very demanding show. I'm doing vocal coaching and dance workshops. You name it, I'm doing it."

"I'm spending a lot of time looking at videos of past performances and reading up on the character to get a good feel for who Angel is," said Bass. "I've also been reading up on the AIDS epidemic and learning about what it was like for people suffering from this disease in the '80s and '90s."

And along with the usual preparations of character development, the two are looking into more unusual ways to prepare themselves. "I'm going to local drag shows and even have plans to go out in drag," said Bass. "I think just learning to walk in heels convincingly is going to be a big challenge for me."

"I just feel so blessed to be a part of this," commented Ingraham. "I think these shows are going to be the best things that have ever come out of MPT and audiences are going to just be blown away."

*Rent* opens on June 27 and runs through July 5, and *A Chorus Line* runs August 8 through August 12 with both shows offering matinee performances. Tickets are now on sale and can be purchased through [brownpapertickets.com](http://brownpapertickets.com). Season ticket discounts are available. For more information on these productions and on Middleton Players Theatre, you can visit their website at [middletonplayers.com](http://middletonplayers.com). ■

### did you hear?

**Local, LGBT-owned business honored with national awards**

Local video production crew **Hinckley Design & Production** won two American Advertising Awards earlier this year for their work on pieces for **Lands' End** and the **Mad Rollin' Dolls** roller derby league. Founded and owned by out musician, athlete, and A/V pro Natalie Hinckley, the business has grown to be one of the most reliable and professional outfits in the Madison area.

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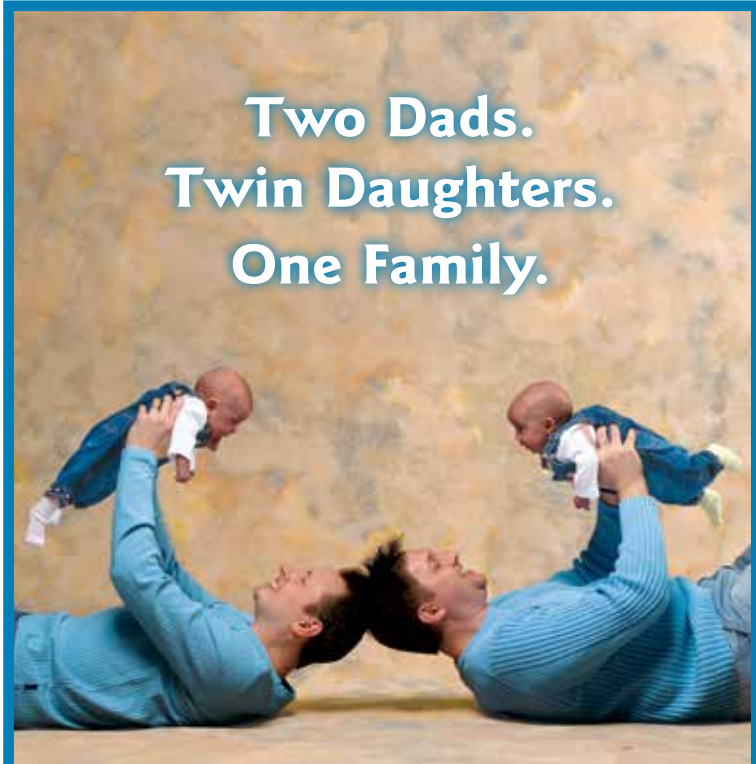
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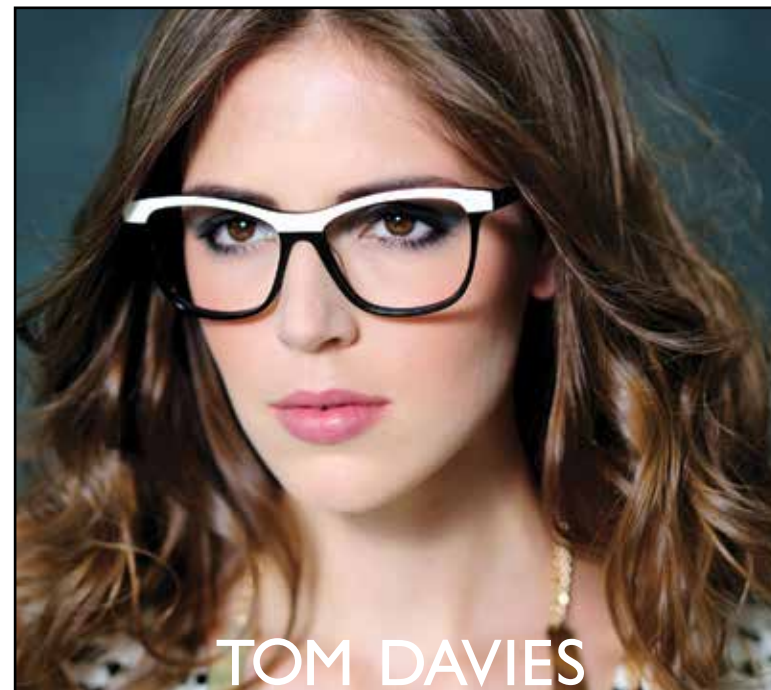
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**community** OUR STORYTELLERS

**The Closet** By Louis Loeffler

I've been staring at the closet in my bedroom for the last ten minutes, sitting at the computer waiting for some writing inspiration to strike. Opening the closet door does not help; I just see clothes in there, some hung neatly, others waiting for one of those "cleaning" moments I have when I'm trying to avoid work.

As a child the closet door was secured nightly when I went into my bed, ensuring that whatever monsters that lived there could not get out (I've since learned after watching Pixar's Monsters, Inc. that my door-securing was pointless). As I grew into adulthood, I learned that the actual monsters in the closet were of my own making. I also kept this closet locked down tight.

The idea of monsters being in the closet let me place my "secrets" and fears into the closet—a place where I can and could hide things from others as well as from myself. After all, who would want the monster of being attracted to men, wanting to explore their bodies, kiss them and be held by them, just as I saw happening in countless opposite sex scenes in movies, television, and real life? No, these thoughts needed to be stored in a place where this monster could not come out.

Other fears were placed in the closet along with sexuality. Fears I would be perceived as inadequate in a job, a failure in school, perhaps not a real friend to those I knew, or a poor lover. Yet a closet can only hold so much without overflowing, especially one that, like the monsters in my childhood, seeks to exist in the dark.

Over the years, as I shed light onto my closet fears, I find they disappear. Coming out as a gay man, I had lost some family and friends. Yet in the process I not only gained new friends, I discovered a part of me that is strong and confident. Having the ability to be free and open with many has given me a new type of closet, one that I store hopes and ideas in. A closet that prefers to be open instead of locked away.

I am still dealing with my fears closet, unwrapping one at a time. My most recent fear, which I removed and am working through, was quitting a job which I felt was strangling me. Currently I am looking for a new job, yet the letting go has been, as in other confrontations with my fears closet, the greatest gift I give to myself. I find myself more and more using the words from Frank Herbert's novel *Dune*:

*"I must not fear. Fear is the mind-killer. Fear is the little-death that brings total obliteration. I will face my fear. I will permit it to pass over me and through me. And when it has gone past I will turn the inner eye to see its path. Where the fear has gone there will be nothing. Only I will remain."*

With that in mind, goodbye closet of fear, and hello to my open closet of hope. ■

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Photo by Rolando Cruz

Louis Loeffler has a bachelor's degree in physics and mathematics and a master's degree in instructional technology. He has taught physics, mathematics, and computer science and has been a technology coordinator for school districts and an assistant professor of instructional technology. His greatest source of joy is his two grown children.

**did you hear?**



**Transgender candidate elected to Appleton city council**



Gypsy Vered Meltzer became the first openly transgender person to hold public office in the state of Wisconsin after winning a seat on the Appleton city council in the Spring elections on April 1. Meltzer defeated Barney Lemanski with a vote of 295 to 199. With dreadlocks and 50-plus tattoos, Meltzer, who identifies as a man, says his looks and gender identity are worth celebrating, but that he'd rather the focus be on the issues. "It's important to get more young people involved in politics. As someone who's part of various subcultures, I want to show everyone that the door's open, come on in and be part of local government."

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## community

### Marching With Pride

John Quinlan talks with Outreach Executive Director Steve Starkey about Outreach's plans to host the Pride Parade.

OutReach, Madison's LGBT community center, is stepping up to set the stage for Madison's 2014 pride celebration on Sunday, August 10, with a parade tentatively scheduled for 2 p.m., followed by a Capitol Square rally at 3 p.m. This year's parade route will take the event down Williamson Street for the first time. An open invitation is being extended to the community's bars and other organizations to put together associated events, such as a weekend block party being planned by WOOFs.

"We thought that when we don't have a parade, that the community really suffers for it," says Outreach Executive Director Steve Starkey. He noted that Outreach had been approached to take the lead for the weekend by several community leaders—including *Our Lives'* Patrick Farabaugh, PFLAG's Nancy Jones, and Fair Wisconsin's John Smallwood—in the wake of the disappointment that followed last year's decision not to hold a parade.

Starkey sees this as an important time in our local struggle for LGBT rights, when the visibility and public education that comes with a parade are more crucial than ever. At a time when Wisconsin may soon be surrounded by states that embrace same-sex marriage, there are also other motivations for making a powerful statement here. This is a place where the nation's first statewide gay rights law passed in 1982, but where the embrace of challenges, like turning back the 2006 passage of an anti-gay Constitutional Amendment, demand a call to renewed action.

"Governor Walker's statement that he 'didn't see a gay rights movement for gay marriage' in Wisconsin must not go unanswered," observes Starkey. "I think that Fair Wisconsin, other activists, and certainly Outreach, have promoted gay marriage and informed the community about what's happening locally and nationally. I think there is a strong gay rights movement in Wisconsin, particularly in Madison and Milwaukee, but also statewide. If he's not seeing it, he's just not looking, and that's just one reason why the visibility that comes with a parade is important."

While gay marriage is presently front and center, Starkey said it's important to remember that our struggle for equality is far from complete in many areas. Rights like second parent adoption and statewide protections for transgender people still elude us, he says. In recent years, Outreach's mission has turned increasingly toward a focus on economic justice and efforts to advocate for institutions that are culturally-sensitive to LGBT people's specific needs. For Outreach, that means countering the disproportionate incidence of homelessness in LGBT communities and meeting the special needs of older LGBT community members. These are also reasons for our community to march on August 10, he says.

"Despite the stereotype, not everyone who is LGBT is affluent with lots of disposable income," Starkey says. He notes that the downturn in the economy that has hit communities of color especially hard (includ-

ing LGBT people of color) has also had a disproportionate impact on folks who face the added consequences of both sexism and homophobia.

Starkey points out that many people in our community don't have the support of their families of origin to the same extent as their heterosexual counterparts. "So that's why our created families are so important," he says, "and that's why it's so important for all of the groups and individuals in our community working to advance LGBT rights come together in a spirit of solidarity and celebration at a pride parade."

It was 25 years ago—on May 6, 1989—that Madison hosted its first major march for LGBT rights, an anniversary that will be marked later this year by a gathering of original march organizers still being planned. Despite the unseasonable cold (it snowed that morning), almost 8000

**PRIDE PARADE INFO AUG 10**

- 11:00 Setup starts.
- 12:00 Vehicles and floats should arrive.
- 1:00 Staging begins at Central Park.
- 2:00 The parade will step off.
- 3:00 The rally and entertainment will start at the Capitol Square.
- 5:00 The event will end.



people turned out for a parade led off by dykes on bikes, that also included supportive churches, student groups, businesses and allied social justice organizations, and children from families in all forms marching side-by-side with their parents.

The hundreds of volunteers who came together to make that weekend possible were never able to coalesce in quite the same way again. About 3500 people, half the original number, showed up two years later in October 1991, for an event planned on a similar scale.

Waning interest in pride weekends was likely further explained by community energies that were now being applied in a growing diversity of new projects and organizations. For the majority living an increasingly comfortable existence made possible by the fact that Madison's LGBT citizens have had great success in weaving ourselves into the larger fabric of the community, these were factors that tended to diminish the significance of an annual pride event in the minds of many.

And yet Starkey returns to the reasons why he and others at Outreach just couldn't stand to let the tradition of an LGBT pride parade die. As with the feminist movement, and other civil rights movements, he believes that many young people have no idea of the path that's been laid out for them, through the history we honor each year at pride.

"We've come a long, long way, and I think that people who are twenty-something or thirty-something don't always know that. It's important that they learn about this history, because it helps them figure out the way forward," he adds. "While we've come a long way, it's clear we still have a long way to go. It's still vitally important for us to come together at times like August 10's pride weekend, to celebrate and chart the course ahead together." ■



John Quinlan is a longtime LGBT community activist and journalist. He is a past co-chair of GALVANize, which produced the 1989 march, and a former director of Outreach.

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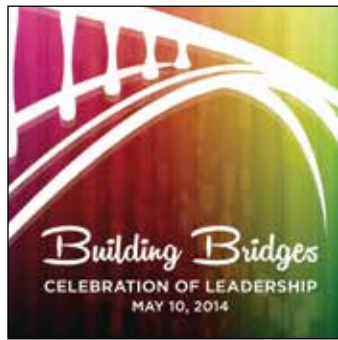


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### Cultural, Social, Service, and Nightlife listings



#### GSAFE's Celebration of Leadership May 10, Monona Terrace

The annual awards ceremony and fundraiser for the Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE) returns for an evening that will include chances to meet and greet allies and advocates working statewide to ensure a positive school environment for all youth. [gsafe.org](http://gsafe.org)



#### PrideFest Milwaukee June 6-8, Milwaukee

Milwaukee's most fabulous festival roars to life with entertainment, food, vendors, and plenty of sightseeing. This year features Big Freedia, along with Macy Gray, Lisa Lampanelli, Sandra Bernhard, Chad Michaels, Mary Lambert, and Steve Grand, among others. [pridefest.com](http://pridefest.com)



#### Fruit Fest June 14, Williamson Street

This year's queer block party features a power line-up of performers, including headliner Debbie Gibson, God-des and She, Dev, Irene Keenan Jr., Hillary Barnes and Sandy Eichel, along with plenty of other acts, games, drag shows, dancing, vendors, food, and the Fruit Loop 5k run! [fruitfestmadison.org](http://fruitfestmadison.org)

### ORGANIZATIONS

A representative sampling

**AIDS Network**  
600 Williamson St., Madison (608) 252-6540  
[aidsnetwork.org](http://aidsnetwork.org)

**Alianza Latina**  
[facebook.com/alianzalatinamadison](http://facebook.com/alianzalatinamadison)

**Bowling Out Loud**  
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**Dairyland Cowboys & Cowgirls**  
[dcandc.org](http://dcandc.org)

**Fair Wisconsin**  
203 S. Paterson Street, Madison (608) 441-0143  
[fairwisconsin.com](http://fairwisconsin.com)

**Frontrunners/Frontwalkers**  
[personalpages.tds.net/~tmcdurg](http://personalpages.tds.net/~tmcdurg)

**Gay/Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE)**  
122 E. Olin Ave., Madison (608) 661-4141  
[gsafe.org](http://gsafe.org)

**Gay Softball League**  
[badgerlandsoftball.com](http://badgerlandsoftball.com)

**Gay Volleyball League**  
[madisongayvolleyball.com](http://madisongayvolleyball.com)

**Hermanos Latinos**  
[sneal@aidsnetwork.org](mailto:sneal@aidsnetwork.org)

**Lez Talk Yahoo Group**  
[leztalkmadison@yahoo.com](mailto:leztalkmadison@yahoo.com)

**Madison Gay Hockey Association**  
[madisongayhockey.org](http://madisongayhockey.org)

**Madison Minotaurs Gay Rugby**  
[minotaursrugby.org](http://minotaursrugby.org)

**New Harvest Foundation**  
[newharvestfoundation.org](http://newharvestfoundation.org)

**Out Professional and Executive Network (O.P.E.N.)**  
[openmadison.org](http://openmadison.org)

**OutReach Community Center**  
600 Williamson St., Madison (608) 255-8582  
[lgbtoutreach.org](http://lgbtoutreach.org)

**PFLAG - Parents, Families and Friends of Lesbians and Gays**  
(608) 848-2333  
[pflag-madison.org](http://pflag-madison.org)

**Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus**  
[perfectharmonychorus.org](http://perfectharmonychorus.org)

**Proud Theater (LGBTQ Youth)**  
[proudtheater.org](http://proudtheater.org)

**StageQ - Madison's Queer Theater**  
[stageq.com](http://stageq.com)

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

**Wisconsin Rainbow Families**  
[wiraainbowfamilies.com](http://wiraainbowfamilies.com)

event also honors Second Harvest Food Bank of Southern Wisconsin. [aidsnetwork.org](http://aidsnetwork.org)

**Courtney Act, May 9, Plan B** Part of an ongoing series of tour stops by RuPaul's Drag Race contenders, Plan B is proud to host the "fishiest queen ever to grace" the popular TV show. The night will also feature DJ Amos on the decks and performances by the Honey B's. [planbmadison.com](http://planbmadison.com)



**Mad Rollin' Dolls Championships, May 10, Veteran's Memorial Coliseum** The four roller derby home teams compete for first and third place finishes, respectively, in what's sure to be a knock-down, drag-out fight to the finish for flat track glory. Proceeds from the bout will benefit the River Food Bank, and an after party at the High Noon Saloon is open to all. [madrollindolls.com](http://madrollindolls.com)

**OutReach Garden Party, May 22, 7356 W. Caledonia Rd., Edgerton** OutReach holds its annual garden party at the home of William Wartmann in Edgerton, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. [lgbtoutreach.org](http://lgbtoutreach.org)

**OPEN Breakfast, May 22, Harvest Restaurant, 21 N Pinckney St., Madison** Christopher Krimmer, Attorney and Partner at Balisle & Roberson, S.C., will discuss the current ACLU Marriage Equality case and LGBTQ marriage equality issues in Wisconsin and throughout the nation. Registration and Networking 7:30 a.m. Speaker and Breakfast 8:00 a.m. [openmadison.org](http://openmadison.org)

**Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus presents "Naked Man," May 30 & 31, First United Methodist Church & Plymouth Church UCC** In this collaborative concert, featuring chamber orchestra, "Naked Man" refers to being open and "emotionally naked." It's about the lives of gay men, about honesty, about what we deal with still, how we have survived, and how we celebrate and move forward. "Naked" means real, it means integrity, it means unflinching. It's about all of Life, in all its ups and downs, moods and joys, triumphs and tribulations. [perfectharmonychorus.org](http://perfectharmonychorus.org)

**Fair Wisconsin Education Fund Madison Leadership Awards, June 1, The University Club** The Fair Wisconsin Leadership Awards are the organization's signature event supporting Fair Wisconsin Education Fund. Members of the LGBT community, allies, activists, and policy makers gather to recognize those who have made significant contributions to the advancement of LGBT equality in Wisconsin. [fairwisconsineducationfund.com](http://fairwisconsineducationfund.com)



**Mad City Vegan Fest, June 7, Goodman Community Center** This annual celebration of veganism is filled with great food, inspiring speakers, awesome raffle prizes, and a host of vegan-minded exhibitors. The event is free and open to the public. Whether you're a vegan, vegetarian, flexitarian, or omnivore, Vegan Fest has delicious food samples and helpful information on how you can protect animals, the environment, and your health through vegan choices. [veganfest.org](http://veganfest.org)

**Queer Shorts 9, June 13-21, Bartell Theater** This playfest is a unique event, bringing together experienced directors, actors, and stagehands with folks who haven't been on stage (ever or in years) to learn the ropes, have fun, and create a couple of weekends of great theater. If you've been to Queer Shorts before, you know what a romp it is. If you've never been to Queer Shorts, don't put it off: we're only planning to continue through Queer Shorts 10. [stageq.com](http://stageq.com)

**National Women's Music Festival, June 26-29, Marriott Madison West Hotel & Conference Center** This year's installment of the four-day music festival will feature performances from Catie Curtis, Beth Kille, Elvira Kurt, Edwina Lee Tyler, and a whole host of other music and comedy acts. Workshops on everything from song writing to feminism to spirituality will also be included in the schedule. People of all gender identities and sexualities are welcome. [wiaonline.org](http://wiaonline.org)

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- July 18:** New Harvest Foundation Dinner
- July 31-August 3:** Wisconsin AIDS Ride
- August 10:** OutReach Pride Parade
- September 12:** OutReach Banquet
- October 12:** GSAFE's Walk/Run/Eat

our lives

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**OUT at the Symphony, May 2, Overture Center** A unique evening blend of music and festivity offered by the Madison Symphony Orchestra will be a fantastic night of great live classical music in Overture Hall with an exclusive after party at Fresco. The event will present attendees the opportunity to connect with maestro John DeMain, the MSO, and members and friends of Madison's LGBTQ community. [madisonsymphony.org](http://madisonsymphony.org)

**Families in the Midwest conference, May 2-4, Sheraton Madison Hotel** Families in the Midwest is Family Equality Council's new annual destination event for parents who are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, or queer (LGBTQ), their children, extended families, prospective families, and friends in the Midwest. There will be family activities, fun, and programming for all ages. Family Equality Council will provide opportunities to build community among families with parents who are LGBTQ and learn about issues facing our families today. [familyequality.org](http://familyequality.org)

**Sexual Ethics & Biblical Interpretation, May 3, First United Methodist Church** Dr. Jennifer Knust will speak on her book, Unprotected Texts: the Bible's Surprising Contradictions about Sex and Desire, at this annual installment of the Lyons Lecture series at First United Methodist Church in Madison. Dr. Knust is a professor in the Department of Religion at Boston University and is a specialist in the literature and history of ancient Christianity with a particular interest in the transmission and reception of sacred texts and in the importance of gendered discourses to the production of an early Christian identity. [firstunitedmethodistmadison.org](http://firstunitedmethodistmadison.org)

**AIDS Network Red Ribbon Affair, May 9, Overture Center** Leigh Mills and Christine Bellport host this annual red carpet fundraiser for AIDS Network, featuring appetizers and desserts by Catering a Fresco, cocktails, a silent auction, and a lavish buffet dinner option. The



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## community

### OUR EVENTS

March 30 | AIDS Network's "Pink" Camp Bingo at the Sheraton



Photos by Eric Baillies

March 27 | ACLU "Love Will Win" Fundraiser at HotelRED



Photos by Eric Baillies

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## Marriage Equality Documentary Screening in Madison to Honor Local Activist



Christie Herring will bring her film, **The Campaign: The Documentary** to Madison for a special screening on **June 26** at the **American Family Insurance Auditorium**. The movie followed the No on Prop 8 Campaign in California and the volunteers behind it—including Hannah Johnson LeBlanc.

Hannah graduated from the UW with a degree in costume design and had plans to move to Hollywood, but a stint working for Fair Wisconsin changed her life. Hannah instead dedicated herself to working for marriage equality in the state, eventually making the hoped-for move to the Golden State to help work as a field organizer for the No on Prop 8 campaign.

Tragically, Hannah was killed in a car accident in May of 2013, just a month before the California Supreme Court ruled Prop 8 invalid. The screening is dedicated in her memory.

"Hannah was one of those people with so much passion for social justice, and so much optimism for the cause, that news of her passing... was all that more devastating," wrote friend and AfterEllen contributor Erika Star. "Among the important stories told in The Campaign is the one of an extraordinary ally to the community."

There will be a welcome presentation at 6:30 p.m., followed by the screening at 7 and a reception with Hannah's friends and family at 8. The public is welcome. Ticket info and more at [fairwisconsineducationfund.com/tcd](http://fairwisconsineducationfund.com/tcd).

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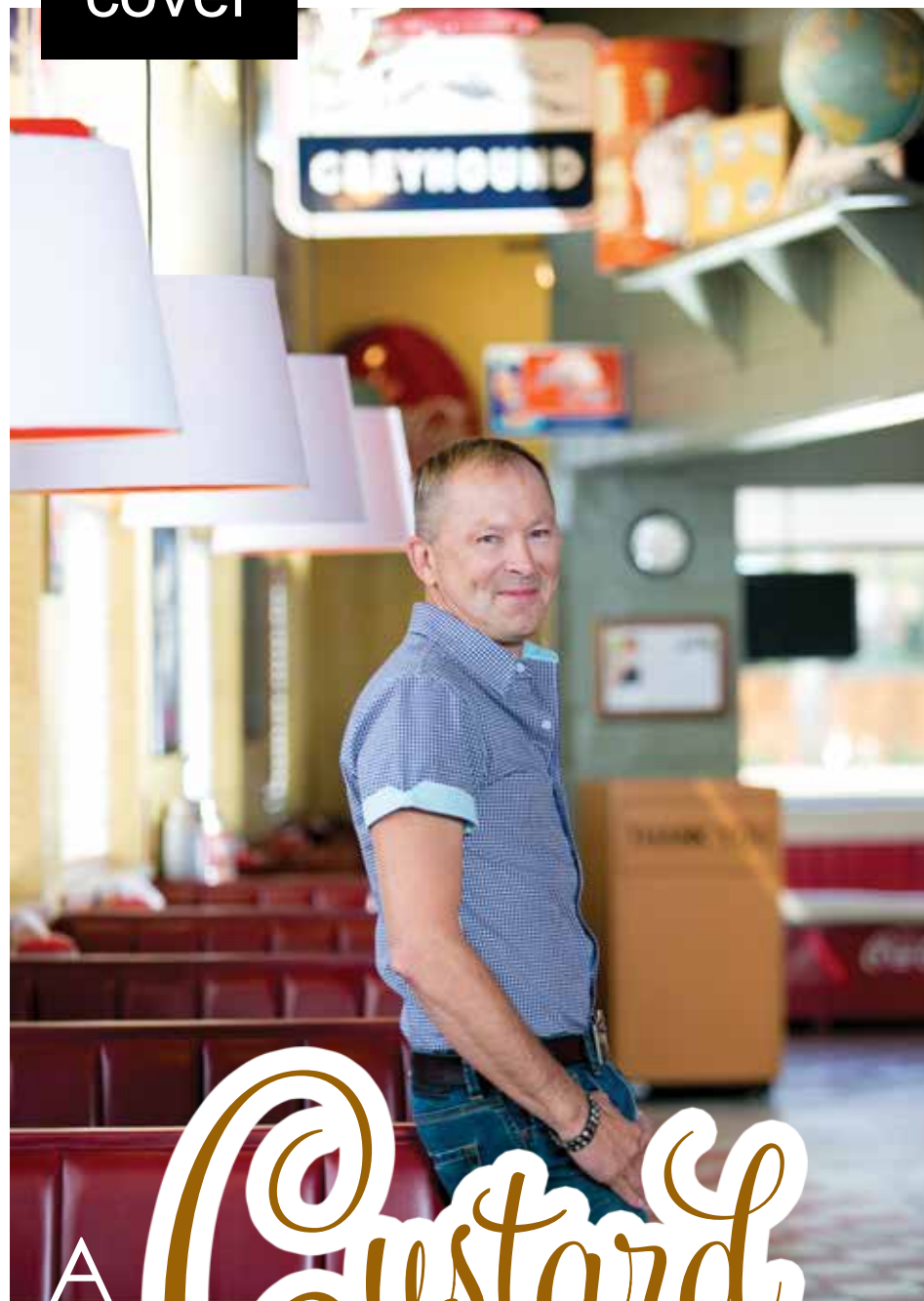


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cover



# A Custard KINDA GUY

Self-proclaimed "custard guy" **Michael Dix** of **Michael's Frozen Custard** opens up about his often tumultuous journey toward self-love and sweet rewards.

**a**s a longtime, gay resident of Madison, I knew Patrick Farabaugh, publisher of *Our Lives*, by reputation. When he asked me to write the cover article for this issue, I wanted to tell him, Patrick, you must be kidding. I'm a custard guy, not a writer!

I asked what he wanted me to write about, and his reply was that I should write anything about my life that I thought his readers would find interesting, informative, and entertaining. Well, my little squirrel brain started to go into overdrive. I thought to myself, "What can I write that would interest or be a positive contribution to Madison's LGBTQ community?"



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## Encountering Drug Addiction

I could write about the growing crystal meth problem in our community, specifically among gay men. I have some personal, firsthand knowledge because my last life partner became addicted to meth in the twelfth year of our relationship. He was about to turn 50, and I had thought that only young adults turn to that s\*\*t. Talk about the destruction of one personal relationship—not to mention the lives of a significant number of persons in our community.

Here was a man I'd known intimately for 12 years, a college-educated person, taking an incredibly addictive substance for the euphoria and increased sexual pleasure its use produces. When he finally admitted that he was taking crystal meth, I did a Google search to find out what ingredients are used in its manufacture, and I was shocked: drain opener! You must be kidding me! Why would anybody want to smoke or inject such a toxic substance and do more damage to their mind and body than I could have imagined? I also learned that, because of meth's highly addictive nature, its powerful (but short-lived) high, and the permanent changes it makes to the brain's neurochemistry, a meth addict's life is almost always unalterably changed for the worse—forever. I discovered that statistics show that only about one in ten persons addicted to methamphetamine are able to permanently stop using the drug. And this scourge is happening in our community, right here in Madison, as well as ruining the lives of gay, straight, and bi men in other communities across the country.

## Surviving Domestic Abuse

Perhaps I could also write about domestic violence in same-sex partnerships and marriages, including mine? I have firsthand knowledge of this so-often unreported crime. In my case, I was too scared to call the Madison police when my second life partner started beating me up,

## [FOOD & DINING] WHAT'S TRENDING

### Rediscovering Old Indulgences



**THE OLD FASHIONED**  
JENNIFER DEBOLT, GENERAL MANAGER

We've seen a lot of customers consuming high-end bourbons and whiskeys. Also, with the growth of Wisconsin-based distillers, many are discovering the great liquors produced here. We've also noticed a high demand for gluten free products and have made changes to accommodate those needs. Breweries are coming out with gluten free beers in the state as well.

Something that has not changed is that, overall, people just enjoy comfort food and drinks that remind them of growing up or of their parents/grandparents. The classic cocktails are coming back into fashion, some with a twist to the original recipe and some straight from the recipe book. Eight years ago we would rarely see a 21-year-old drinking an Old Fashioned, but now it's the thing to do.

### Collaboration for a Better Taste Future



**L'ETOILE & GRAZE RESTAURANTS**  
TORY MILLER, EXECUTIVE CHEF AND CO-OWNER

I'm seeing exciting developments in collaboration between chefs and seed breeders and farmers, making the connection of seed to farm-to-table more possible.

UW professors and local chefs have come together to begin the process of breeding food for flavor and the future of taste. There has also been great collaboration between local restaurant chefs through the creation of the Madison Area Chefs Network (MACN). All of these relationships could prove vital to the strength and growth of our local food system.

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## WHAT'S TRENDING [FOOD & DINING]

### The Death of Baconmania



**CHOCOLATERIAN**  
**LEANNE CORDISCO, CO-OWNER**

I predict the death of the baconmania. I believe the pendulum is shifting away from the culinary (let's have it for breakfast, lunch, dinner, dessert, and cocktails) and non-culinary (let's put it in lip balm, on bandaids, clothing, keychains, and perfume) exploitation of bacon end of the spectrum and moving toward the middle ground. I'm glad the United States went bacon crazy—it raised our collective knowledge of our palates. Sweet and salty do play very well together. Fat adds flavor. Umami exists. These are the lessons bacon taught us, and now the challenge for cooks from all walks of life is to find new examples of that kind of synergy.

### All Together Now for Great Cheese



**FROMMAGINATION**  
**KEN MONTELEONE, OWNER/FOUNDER**

Cheesemakers and other food artisans are partnering to create amazing, one-of-a-kind American Originals. An example of this is a cheese called Willi. Willi made its debut at the 2013 American Cheese Society Competition where it took second place for American Made/International Style cheeses.

This cow milk creation was a collaborative effort on behalf of several of Wisconsin's most respected cheesemakers: Master Cheesemaker Bob Wills (Cedar Grove Cheese Company), Cheesemaker Chris Roelli (Roelli Cheese Haus), Cheesemaker Bill Anderson (Creme de la Coulee Artisan Cheese Company), and Cheesemaker Willi Lehner (Bleu Mont Dairy) for whom the cheese is named.



thinking they'd do nothing and take no action to make it stop, except to let me continue living in our home with this guy throwing me across the room like I was a rag doll. I remembered stories about Jeffrey Dahmer and about his victims. Of course, I didn't think my partner would cut me up into tiny pieces, but my fear for my life was very real. Because, again, the man I loved was a college-educated man, working on his doctoral degree, and I was a very successful business man. And there I was, too scared to be able to even cry out for help. For a number of reasons, I stayed in that relationship way too long before I worked up to the fact that I was living with an abuser. I wish I'd known then about the resources available in our community to LGBTQ victims of domestic violence and other forms of abuse. Making these resources better known and available to men and women in Madison is a vital concern.

### HIV/AIDS and Loss

Or maybe I could address what I see as the growing indifference by younger gay men here in Madison to using safer-sex precautions? I employ quite a few young gay men in my restaurants and, in conversations at breaks or meals with some of them, learned that few of them were even aware of basic facts about HIV/AIDS or about prevention and safer-sex practices. One of them actually told me, "Even if I get HIV, all I have to do is take a pill, and I'll be fine." Really? That's what many younger gay men today think and believe: "I'll just pop a pill and any sex-related diseases will vanish." I couldn't believe what I was hearing.

As we continued our discussion, my employee mentioned that he didn't personally know anyone who'd "died of AIDS." This young gay man, so blissfully ignorant, didn't even know that no one "dies of AIDS," but rather from AIDS-related illnesses.

I actually watched my beloved John wither away and die in our bed at home of this disease. I think that if younger gay men today had to watch a lover or close friend die as a result of contracting HIV, as I did, they'd think twice before engaging in unprotected sex.

Now, most of my newer employees didn't know until recently that I'd lost my first life partner, John, to AIDS in 1993. And that with me, he'd been a co-founder of Michael's Frozen Custard in 1986. By 1992, there was only one medication for HIV/AIDS (AZT) and clinical trials had just begun for the first "cocktail" (drug combination treatment). It wasn't until two years after John's death that the first protease inhibitor was made available to persons with HIV/AIDS. Before then, gay men here in Madison, and around the country, were dropping like flies.

I actually watched my beloved John wither away and die in our bed at home of this disease—a disease which is totally and absolutely preventable. Watching John die as he did has left an indelible mark on my soul and is a memory that I won't forget; it haunts me to this day. That is why, ever since his death, I have been an active and vocal proponent of educating people, especially teens and young adults, about safer-sex practices. I think that if younger gay men today had to watch a lover or close friend die as a result of contracting HIV, as I did, they'd think twice before engaging in unprotected sex.

As an aside, following John's death, I learned from a friend to whom he'd confided in on his deathbed that John had known he was HIV-positive and hadn't told me—we'd had unprotected sex for two years. I felt so betrayed and, yes, angry at the man I'd loved with all my heart, that he could do this to me. But, by the gift of God, I never sero-converted

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## WHAT'S TRENDING [FOOD & DINING]

### Looking to Localize



**CAPITOL CENTRE MARKET**  
MITCH EVELAND, OWNER

Customers are focused now more than ever on purchasing products that are produced close to home. We are constantly reviewing our inventory mix to match this interest. Recently we added Colectivo Coffee, a local roaster from Milwaukee. We also added a local dairy, Lamer's, who still deliver fresh milk in a returnable glass bottle. These and many other local products score big with our customer base.

### Relearning to Love Fats



**WILLY ST. CO-OP**  
BRENDON SMITH, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS

Two trends we find really interesting are the increased popularity of aronia and full-fat dairy. Aronia, for those who don't know, is a kind of berry (grown in Wisconsin by Bellbrook Berry Farm) that is extremely high in antioxidants. Most people don't eat them fresh—they're pretty tart—but use them in smoothies or in baked goods as you would use cranberries. We sell them frozen and, when in season, fresh, and use them in a few smoothies in our Juice Bar.

At least part of the trend we're seeing with grass-fed butter, whole milk, full-fat cream cheese, cream-top yogurt and other high-quality dairy that doesn't skimp on the fat seems to stem from recent research that suggests maybe saturated fats are good for you after all. The rise in interest about the Weston A Price and Paleo diets have played into this trend as well.

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and am HIV/AIDS-free to this day; I definitely had angels watching over me. It took me many years to learn forgiveness. I no longer blame John; we're all human and suffer human shortcomings and failings. I don't let the past rule my life today.

### Youth and Coming Out

I thought, "Why don't I tell about knowing that, from an early age, I knew I was 'different' from the other boys?" Even though I didn't have a word to describe what I was feeling, I knew I liked and was sexually attracted to boys more than to girls. In high school I dated a girl but, somehow, it just felt all wrong. I think I was 16 or 17 when I learned the word to describe who I was and what I felt and told my girlfriend that I was gay.

I was tormented all through my childhood and adolescence because I was "different"...because I was gay. I was called "fag" and beaten up by the other boys in the neighborhood and by my male classmates in school—even by my own brothers. I was beaten so badly that, as a result, I became diabetic at the age of 12. I was hospitalized in Madison at one point for a month before tests showed that I had Diabetes insipidus—an incurable form of the disease for which I must take medication, twice daily, for the rest of my life and which, as anyone who must take medication for a chronic disease knows, is not always an easy or convenient thing to have to do to stay alive.

### Opening Michael's Frozen Custard

I could write about my life's great work: how at the age of 25 I started one of Madison's long-standing and popular dining places, Michael's Frozen Custard. Yup, you guessed it: I'm the Michael people wonder about when they read the chain's name.

I didn't go to college after graduating high school but instead immediately found work in a local business for several years and then as a forklift driver in Pewaukee. While working in that position, on a visit to Madison in 1985, I met the man who would become my first life partner, John, and knew I wanted to move to this great city and make my life with him here. But I soon learned that some jobs were hard to find. In the mid-1980s it seemed that you needed a college education to find a job even as a forklift driver because so many UW students remained in town after graduation.

John and I had to overcome a number of odds against starting our very own business from scratch:

We needed to decide what kind of business we wished to open, and I had no knowledge about business or where to begin. Neither of us had the money to start a business, and we had no location for one either.

I hit on the idea of using my grandma's recipe for homemade frozen custard, which all us kids in our family loved and helped our mom out making in the kitchen of our home in the country, even going so far as getting ice in winter from the frozen lake nearby to put into the custard maker. Then John and I did our homework, and we learned a few business basics. Luck was on our side, and we were able to arrange a business loan from a local bank to get things started. Finally, faith in the certainty of our dream was rewarded by discovering, quite by chance, a building for lease that we could afford on Monroe Street, the first of what would eventually become four locations of a chain of restaurants.

After a lot of sweat, labor, and not a few tears, Michael's opened—to our great joy and excitement—on August 22, 1986 at 4 p.m. By 5 p.m. we had to close due to a fire caused by a faulty fuse panel in our lovely, newly-opened restaurant! There would be more sweat, toil, and tears of frustration before we could re-open again...this time permanently.

### Reconciling the Past, Looking Forward

Looking back on my life, there seemed to be roadblocks at every juncture, similar to those I faced starting and growing that business: I



could tell you a hundred similar stories over the past 28 years back to the hurdle that fire caused. And so many personal struggles to face and overcome: trying to forget the anguish that I felt as a gay kid growing up in a hostile, heterosexual-dominated society was hell; the physical beatings I received from brothers and other kids that left me with a physical disability, as well as emotional scars that I still carry; John's death 20 years ago last September and my 20 years of unresolved grief; my second life partner's descent into addiction, as well as beatings that ended our 12 year relationship and with it, killed my belief that I could ever find love again.

Through all the struggles and challenges I've been through up to this point in my life, I have somehow never completely given up; providentially there have been intermittent spells approaching something like happiness of the kind I'd known with John. I am confident that I have now, for me, found the means of unlocking the door to finding genuine and lasting happiness. And a key to that process (which is a feat in itself) has been learning forgiveness.

**Michael's opened—to our great joy and excitement—  
on August 22, 1986 at 4 p.m. By 5 p.m. we had to  
close due to a fire caused by a faulty fuse panel in our  
lovely, newly-opened restaurant!**

Shortly after my second partner and I separated and I ended our relationship, I knew that I had to make some major changes in me and in how I was living my life. So I sought professional help, got into counseling, and worked on all those "demons" that had haunted me for so many years. I also went online and searched for "meditation in Madison, WI" and found the Magnificent Living Institute, run by Mary Olsen. I'm so grateful I did; that chance online "hit" on Mary's Institute has profoundly changed my life for the better. I now believe that everything positive and good I need in life will be provided at the right time and in the right place.

I began attending Mary's monthly evening meditation classes. I purchased all the guided meditation CDs and really dove into meditating every morning at home. Slowly, an unbelievable transformation started to take place within me. And one day, my soul just opened up, and a new Michael emerged. Finding my rainbow took way too long for my liking, but I'm so happy that I found something great at its end—happiness.

Early on in my meditation practice, I began to identify all the negative people in my life who had brought me no pleasure or joy. So I began, instead, to actively surround myself with positive people, and to practice positive thinking. Today, I only focus my attention on those things I need

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## WHAT'S TRENDING [FOOD & DINING]

### Hyper-Local Microbrewing



#### DAISY CAFE & CUPCAKERY DARYL SISSON, OWNER

Each October we feature six "Oktoberfest" cupcakes that use local beers as ingredients. We started with Madison-area breweries like New Glarus, Tyrannena, Capital Brewing, and Lake Louie—great brewers, for sure! But they are from outside of the city proper. But last October, we were able to feature six cupcakes using beers from microbreweries within just a 3.2-mile radius of our restaurant on Atwood Avenue! On the near-eastside, we have Next Door Brewing, Ale Asylum Brewery, One Barrel Brewing, Karben4 Brewing, House of Brews, and the downtown Great Dane Pub and Brewing Company. The strength of all Madison-area microbreweries keeps increasing and, meanwhile, Madison's near-east side has achieved its own micro-brewing center of gravity.

### Less Meat, More Eggs!



#### WILLALBY'S CAFE NATHAN PRINCE, OWNER

Willalby's is pretty straightforward in offering standard breakfast classics, so there's not too much excitement going on around here. However, I did design my menu to de-emphasize meat, and it seems as though, within the past year, more and more customers are taking advantage of all the vegan and vegetarian options. It could just be the neighborhood, but also I think that whole "bacon craze" is winding down a bit. I'm also excited over the exonerated of eggs during the past year, from little heart attacks on a plate to actually being understood to be relatively healthy.

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to be doing and do only what brings me great joy. Life is too short to be lived in the "should haves."

I've learned that it isn't necessary to use any man-made chemical (legal or illegal) to find happiness. For me, happiness is within the self, and every person contains the inner power to activate it. The willingness to seek and find that beauty and joy is a conscious choice I make each day.

**We humans are like seeds, scattered on this planet.  
Some take root, sprout, grow, and flourish.  
Some remain dormant their entire lives, so stuck  
in fear that they can't even sprout. And still others  
sprout, only to realize that too much time was wasted  
in worry and indecision, and so they wither and die.**

Even though life often seems like a great struggle, I am reminded that there is also great beauty in life: in the sun that rises each morning and in the stars that sparkle in the night sky. Happiness must be sought out by smiling and saying "thank you" to the clerk behind the counter or by telling a loved one "I love you." I express my joy and love especially to Hunter, my chocolate Lab, and Cody, my French bulldog. I'm rewarded by the very special, unconditional love that only a pet can give in return.

We humans are like seeds, scattered on this planet. Some take root, sprout, grow, and flourish. Some remain dormant their entire lives, so stuck in fear that they can't even sprout. And still others sprout, only to realize that too much time was wasted in worry and indecision, and so they wither and die.



### On-the-Job Support

**Jake Power** found more than a job when he joined the team at Michael's Frozen Custard while in high school—he found acceptance.

Working at Michael's Frozen Custard was a liberating experience for me. It was an environment in which I could be myself without fear of judgment or retribution. Although I was out to my friends before starting work, I applied to the company fully expecting to hide my orientation. Wisconsin is a state that protects LGBT\* people from workplace discrimination, but I had no intention of making my sexual orientation known to my coworkers. To me, it was a touchy subject; I did not want to alienate myself from my peers during my first job. I always felt as if I should apologize for who I am, guilty of causing disharmony between myself and those less tolerant.

This shameful feeling faded quickly, however, when my manager, Lily, gave me a brief history of the company: Michael Dix had started the famed frozen custard shop in his early twenties with the help of his late partner, John. She spoke of Michael with such esteem and admiration that I immediately felt welcome. It was then—my very first day at work—that I knew I chose a workplace that was inviting to all.

Michael's openly celebrates equality and diversity when other companies merely pay lip service to society's marginalized groups. From the rainbow decor to the endless electronic music, it takes pride in being different. To me, its welcoming quirkiness was a reflection of my own personality.

Looking back at my time at Michael's, I realize how much it helped me grow as a person. I evolved from a shy and apprehensive teenager into a confident and contented young man. I am now two years through university and have started a social organization for LGBT\* athletes. My accepting and non-judgmental colleagues at Michael's cultivated my self-assured personality, without which I would never be the individual I am today.

Thank you, Michael, Lily, Claudia, and everyone at MFC. ■

Sometimes when at work or while shopping in a store or just walking down the sidewalk here in Madison, I realize that that no one is smiling. Why is that? I walk around most of the day with a smile on my face. Seriously! Most people who see me must think I'm nuts—maybe reading this, you do too! Let me suggest something to you though: try walking around, wherever you may be going or doing, with a smile on your face. You may be surprised to see that people you pass smile back. Do it regularly and see if your mood doesn't change.

I'm so grateful for having a business that has, over 28 years, enjoyed some success and has become a part of the great city Madison is. I have employees (past and present) who are so incredibly great that their devotion and work over the past 28 years bring tears to my eyes. I have close, personal friends who love and support me without condition. And I welcome every person who will, in some way, touch my life today and tomorrow.

I began this article by asking myself what I could write that might interest, or somehow contribute positively to, our Madison community. I rambled on a lot about my personal history and struggles as a small business owner. Maybe what I really hoped to say all along, by sharing my life with you, was simply this:

Life is too short for me to waste a day of mine not enjoying the "why" of my existence, which is that life is meant to be lived in joy and in loving. Even though it brings struggle and sometimes tears, I must make time for fun and laughter. By no means is my life perfect; "perfect" doesn't exist. Neither does "tomorrow."

Today, I've learned patience. When the time is right, the Universe will open, and I will receive all that I wish for and need. Today, I intend to make a difference in the world in which I live. Today, I'm here to laugh and spread my joy of living in this world.

Today, I'm here to be Michael. ■



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member profile



**NAME:**  
Travis Rickert  
**TITLE:**  
Services Operations  
Supervisor  
**EMPLOYER:**  
CDW

Travis works as a Supervisor in Services Operations for CDW, the leading IT solutions provider. Travis serves on the board for the LGBTQA business resource group at CDW as the Vice-Chair and previously the Director of Communications. In addition, he also is involved in the CDW's recruiting team "Campus Ambassador Program" traveling to various college campuses enlightening students on CDW's diversity and inclusion practices. Outside of CDW, Travis is a member of OPEN, sits on the board of New Harvest Foundation, and sings in the Choral Arts Society Chorale. Currently Travis is working with Chicagoland employers which have LGBT business resources groups to come together and network for increased diversity and inclusion practices support.

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feature

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Sweet TOOTH

A look at the sweeter side of Madison's culinary scene.

ah, desserts! There are so many places they fit into our lives; whether for when you dine out, for dinner parties at home, weddings, bridal showers, baby showers, office parties, a special birthday gift...desserts are necessary. Whether the occasion is big or small, desserts can add a memorable touch.

The proliferation of excellent cookbooks covering every imaginable cuisine and the rise of TV channels like the Food Network have made the wide world of food styles much more accessible. Meanwhile, shows like Cupcake Wars and DC Cupcake have brought prominence to



Harvest

the sweeter side of food. So where does Madison stand in the balance between great savory food and great sweets?

According to the Wisconsin Legislative Audit Bureau, Madison has "the most restaurants per capita of any city in the United States." Lucky for us! With that comes any number of terrific dessert options. But desserts don't have to come exclusively in a restaurant setting: Madison has varied and wonderful dessert options for your night out at a restaurant, your office shindig, or any personalized event you can dream up.

At a Restaurant

We mostly think of the best desserts as restaurant creations. Here are some terrific restaurant desserts that you'd most likely eat:

For some of the most elegant restaurant desserts you'll find in Madison, think of **Harvest** (21 N Pinckney St). They feature seasonal desserts that can top off any of their fine-dining offerings. In fact, they update and re-invent their food so often that I had to work directly with their Pastry Chef, Lindsay Wehmeyer, to find a dessert that would definitely be on the menu while this issue of *Our Lives* is on the stands. She volunteered their Tropical Carrot Cake. Since it isn't available yet, I asked Lindsay to describe it in her own words: "The cake itself is moist and oh-so-tender, and the carrots brighten the crumb to a beautiful shade of orange. The cake is dotted with roasted macadamia nuts and shredded coconut, which give it a buttery, nutty, rich flavor, setting the smooth tropical tone. The unseen hero in this cake is the super ripe pineapple, finely diced so it is captured in every bite. This bright flavor is complemented with a compote of rum-roasted, vanilla-scented pineapple, accompanied by candied macadamia nuts that are loosely piled on top of the cake with a few chunks falling in to a pool of orange creme anglaise." Yum! And that's just indicative of the many creative desserts that Harvest comes up with throughout the year.

Madison is known for its lakes, and the von Rutenberg family owns three Madison restaurants—**Mariner's Inn** (5339 Lighthouse Bay Dr), **Captain Bill's** (2701 Century Harbor Rd, Middleton), and **Nau-Ti-Gal** (5360 Westport Rd)—with water views. A lovely setting is a wonderful complement to a great dessert! Between the three restaurants, they've been operating for more than 100 years, so they've clearly figured out how to please generations of Madisonians. At Nau-Ti-Gal, the dessert list is short but, well, sweet! Their Mariner's Cheesecake is a family recipe dating back to 1966—48 years of popularity speaks for itself. The Peanut Butter Pie is a rich and creamy layering of peanut butter and chocolate mousse on a cookie crust. And their Betty's Key Lime Pie—again from a family recipe—strikes the exact sweet-tart balance you'd expect from this classic dessert.

The **Wise Restaurant & Bar at the HotelRED** (1501 Monroe St), on Madison's very-near-west side, is a stylish restaurant and cocktail bar. The Wise offers breakfast, lunch, dinner, weekend brunch, as well as des-

[FOOD & DINING] WHAT'S TRENDING

A New Restaurant Row



**CARGO COFFEE**  
LYNN LEE, CO-OWNER

One of the things I enjoyed about living in the Castro District of San Francisco was the great variety nearby when going out. Now Williamson Street in Madison is growing into a restaurant row, with new options all the time for dining and drinks. I am especially excited for a (yet to be named) lounge set to open early this summer, located at 1380 Williamson. Owned by Josh Swentzel, Hastings Cameron, and Gilbert Altscul, they bring their combined "knowledge of flavor, ingredients, spirits, and beverages" and intend to serve "innovative culinary cocktails, craft beer, small grower-producer wine, and housemade non-alcoholic beverages" while retaining approachable prices.

Rise of Food Cart Culture



**FRIED & FABULOUS**  
STEVEN LAWRENCE, OWNER

Street food isn't just a downtown thing anymore, with dozens of carts fanning out all across the city for neighborhood dinners. Let's Eat Out, Madison is an independent group of carts with regular meet-ups around town, while the city does Meet and Eats. Either way, outstanding sandwiches, salads, tacos, dumplings, sliders, and more can probably be found in a neighborhood near you this summer. It's really exciting to see such a popular downtown phenomenon expanding throughout the city, bringing new options to food deserts, and offering new opportunities for small business owners to get started.

Dinner is served!

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Event Planning Essentials Through Food



**SHERATON HOTEL, MADISON**  
ERIC BORCHERT, DIRECTOR OF CATERING

Two areas of increasing attention in event planning are sustainable meetings and healthy living. Ecological impact, or sustainability, focuses on planning with less waste in mind. It also impacts food selection by focusing on where ingredients were produced—farm-raised or wild, for example—including how the ingredients were nurtured, how the livestock was raised, or if an ingredient is organic. Health trends impacting food selection have brought quinoa and ancient grains to the plate. More meeting planners are planning meals with a “flexitarian” (someone who enjoys vegetarian meals but occasionally consumes meat) in mind. Catered food service for events has been trending to small plates, tapas-style.

Local Food is Nutritious Food



**MADISON ORIGINALS**  
AMY JOHNSON, EDITOR

Restaurants, grocers, and consumers are seeking products from local farmers and producers in the pursuit of a healthier lifestyle. Our efforts to consume more nutritious food obviously benefits us personally, but our conscientious purchases also support and strengthen current farmers and producers and encourages more to follow their similar passion. In the production of Madison Originals Magazine, we have certainly noticed an increased interest from readers for more specifics on the food we display in each issue. We now label our food images so readers know exactly what to ask for and where they can get it.



serts all day long. For those looking for a throwback, sumptuous option, try the Espresso Pot Du Crème—who could resist a “rich and thick mousse-like custard with Alterra Toro espresso beans and decadent chocolate”?

For a Mediterranean spin on desserts, try **Bunky's Café** (2425 Atwood Ave). At the 2012 Madison Originals Dueling Chef's competition, their dessert bested every savory dish in the field. Try any of their Mediterranean classics like Tiramisu, Cannoli, and Baklava. Bunky's also prides itself on gluten-free and vegan food and desserts.

So what if you would rather drink your dessert (or what if you just want a delicious and not-too-sweet cocktail for any reason)? Stop by **Plan B** (924 Williamson St) and try their “Kamchatatini.” Now, I'm a martini guy and usually a martini purist, but this creation made me expand my field. It's a knock-out! A flavorful and creamy combination of Absolut Vanilla, Irish Cream, and RumChata with a dash of cinnamon on top, this is a well-conceived cocktail. Not too rich and not too sweet, it has a silky mouth-feel and the flavors are beautifully balanced.

Take It Away

Many Madison restaurants offer desserts on their menu for dining in and also feature take-away, catered, or custom desserts.

The **Daisy Café & Cupcakery** (2827 Atwood Ave) made a splash as Wisconsin's first establishment to offer gourmet cupcakes. In less than five years, they've sold more than 370,000 of them. That's a testament to a lot of cupcakes for weddings, bridal showers, office parties, wedding showers, and birthday parties. And that's not even the half of it, literally—more than half are sold to customers dining at the Daisy, where they serve a breakfast/lunch menu every day and their lunch/dinner menu Tuesday through Saturday nights. There's plenty of cupcake competition in Madison now, but the Daisy keeps their story interesting by rotating about half of their cupcakes on at least a monthly basis. And they're creative—their monthly flavor themes have included cupcakes based on children's books and classic adult novels, music genres, Earth Day awareness, holiday song lyrics, and many more fun concepts. I know of no other cupcake place in the country as conceptually inventive as the Daisy. Gluten-free and vegan cupcakes are offered daily (as are numerous gluten-free and vegetarian café dining options), and the bakers can also customize any cupcake or cake order with very little notice.

**Chocolaterian** (2004 Atwood Ave) is relatively new to Madison. With their name, it would be easy to think they just make chocolates, but there is so much more. The décor is stylish and comfortable, and they offer lighter lunch and dinner fare like paninis, quiche, and soups, plus beer and wine and live music on weekends. And they actually have one of the broader selections of baked goods and confections in the city—in-



cluding their famous Christine's Butter Toffee (featured on the Oprah Winfrey Show and at the 2011 Emmy's), the Ugly Cookie (a chocolate chip cookie enhanced with pistachios, cocoa nibs, and Christine's Butter Toffee), and Badger Bait (a fudgy brownie topped with buttercream frosting and encased in rich chocolate ganache). Their desserts include multiple gluten-free and vegan options daily.

If you're looking for fast and casual, Madison has three **Michael's Frozen Custard** locations. Beyond burgers, dogs, and fries and such, Michael's has shakes, malts, and sundaes made with their frozen custard—a great add-on to any meal. Plus, the near-eastside location (3826 Atwood Ave) offers about 50 flavors of pint-sized to-go frozen custard every day (the other two locations also offer pints to go, but fewer options). With so many choices, one's personal taste is the best way to pick flavors, but classics like Moose Trax, Cookie Dough, and Bavarian Thin Mint are among the favorites.

Another casual option for desserts is **Java Cat** (3918 Monona Dr). They take pride in their coffee and bakery—deservedly so—and their gelato is a standout. I've had gelato in Florence, Italy, where they certainly know their craft, and I think that if I were blindfolded, I wouldn't be able to tell the difference. Java Cat offers 12 flavors of gelato daily.

Sweet Gifts

Finally, here are two options you can take out or give as gifts.

The accolades for **Gail Ambrosius Chocolatier** (2086 Atwood Ave) are too long to list! Besides a constant stream of local praise, they've been acknowledged by the Food Network (“the best little box of chocolates in the nation”) and Martha Stewart and Bon Appetit Magazines, among many others. Start with their acclaimed salted-caramel chocolate truffle and work through a broad selection of “classic,” “adventurous,” and “tea-inspired” truffles after that. We're finally digging out from winter, but if you're looking for an excellent cocoa drink, Gail's own hot chocolate mix has also staked out its place as a favorite.

Finally, let's not forget our furry friends! For dogs, the pet store **Bad Dog Frida** (2094 Atwood Ave) features cupcakes in pre-packaged containers and small cakes that can be “personalized” for your canine friend. In summer, they even sell ice cream for dogs! The aforementioned Michael's also offers frozen custard for dogs.

So to go back to the original question: “Where does Madison stand in the balance between great savory food and great sweets?” Well, we've barely scratched the surface here—there are any number of other wonderful restaurants, chocolatiers, bakeries, and other dessert spaces in Madison. Lucky for us! And as Bad Dog Frida and Michael's show us about the importance of desserts—they're so good, they aren't just for humans anymore! —Daryl Sisson



Better Together



**GAIL AMBROSIUS CHOCOLATIER**  
GAIL AMBROSIUS, OWNER

This year it seems everyone is into pairing foods and beverages. The choices are endless: beer and chocolate, chocolate and cheese, cheese, beer, and chocolate, etc. When you get a pairing that really works, each component of the pair will bring out the best in the other. You will taste more with the pair than you would with each on its own. Not only is pairing a lot of fun, but the combinations that are winners seem endless. Go ahead and experiment, you may not hit that great pair every time, but you will have fun trying!

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# NEW HARVEST FOUNDATION

## New Harvest Foundation

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## Annual Dinner Fundraising Event

July 18, 2014  
Goodman Community Center  
6pm Cocktails and Silent auction  
7pm Summer Inspired Dinner

Join the New Harvest Foundation for its annual dinner fundraiser on Friday, July 18, 2014 at the Goodman Community Center in Madison. Help celebrate our grant winners for the past year and keep the ball rolling as we continue to raise money to give it back.

## Support Us

You can make a secure donation on our website or contact us for information about planned giving. Please consider joining one of our committees, volunteering at an event, or becoming a member of our board.



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Our History by Richard Wagner

## Hints of What's Hidden

Novelist Edward Harris Heth and 1950s bromance in the Welsh Hills of Wisconsin.



From an early age, Edward Harris Heth was on track for literary success. Destined for fame and a larger stage, Heth was a Wisconsin boy who returned to his roots to write, entertain, and live the lifestyle of a country gentleman. As a gay man who lived with his partner of many years before Stonewall, his writings give just hints of same-sex love—though necessarily camouflaged.

While still a student at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, Heth was published as a young writer in the book *Wisconsin Writings 1931: An Anthology*. The editors sought to publish “future great writers of America” and felt drawing on students from the university scene would uncover some. They chose the University of Wisconsin because it “is one of the most progressive” with a “yeast of radicalism” at work “with resultant original thinking and freshness of point of view.” The editors noted that among the “literary minded undergraduates at Wisconsin,” that “Edward Harris Heth, it should be said in passing, has already been published in *The American Mercury*.” Dr. S. I. Hayakawa of the Department of English assisted the editors in collecting Wisconsin manuscripts. In an introductory essay, Professor Paul Fulcher notes the college writer often tends to a fault to write in the fashion of the literary gods of day and lists Oscar Wilde as one such god from the past.

Heth’s 1931 contribution was a story titled “A Party for Ginevra.” It was set in the post-World War I expatriate scene in Paris. The narrator, a young man, is taken in hand upon arrival by a friend of another good friend. The first night they are in the city they go to a night club where another man, Steve, “put his arm around me” and his “drunken fingers were toying with my ear.” The narrator notes he “looked angry when I moved away, so I laughed and tried to look friendly.” Among the many persons he meets at the club is Ginevra, 30, from Syracuse who is a plain looking woman who does needlepoint. He also meets Bennie who, though 21 or 22, looked “like a little boy.”

Later in the evening our narrator, after learning they were both from Chicago, says about Bennie, “Then I wanted to put my arms around him because I suddenly understood that he was lonely. Let me put my arms around you, Bennie, I thought, because I know.” A little later in the evening, “Bennie went on, and then he put his face close to mine.

It was so close that I could hazily see my reflection in his soft dull blue eyes. His eyelids were thin, delicate, and his lashes were very long, of a rich dark color.” He invites Bennie to tea the next day—to which he has also previously invited Ginevra.

The dinner “party” centerpiece of the story was supposed to be for Bennie and Ginevra because, after a whirlwind courtship following the tea, they were to be married. It gets late in the evening but Bennie does not show and Ginevra is left at the party, almost a metaphor for her being left at the altar. Finally the narrator takes a cab to Bennie’s room and finds him asleep, looking “like a deserted baby left on an orphanage step.” The narrator, not wanting to wake Bennie, returns to the party. So the young writer from Wisconsin has set his story in a decadent Paris where he describes intimacies between men that would seem out of place in America. Despite the women around, he turns down



**Walking down Madison Avenue after his decision to return to Wisconsin, he recalls a bar: “It was only when the men inside kept looking at me that I knew I had tears in my eyes. But this was a mist of happiness.”**

offers of hetero sex, and the party for a planned marriage is a fizzle. Here are glints of a young homosexual who reveals a little loneliness and seeks/ finds male companionship in a guarded way.

After graduating from Wisconsin, Heth used his writing skills in an advertising career in New York. He continued to write fiction with several novels published in the later 1930s. A 1945 novel about his gambling father and Heth’s own upbringing in Milwaukee, *Any Number Can Play*, was a critical success. It later proved a financial success too. It was made into a 1949 movie starring Clark Gable and Alexis Smith. In the prudish times, the movie poster advertising “MGM’s Virile Romantic Drama” also bore a notice reading, “Not Suitable for Children.”

In a semi-autobiographical 1953 book *My Life on Earth*, Heth talks of his love for the time he spent in New York as “full breathless New York years.” He describes parties “though they were only that hurried apartment variety, with the host rushing out for a bottle of whiskey and a bag of pretzels.” His remembrances of New York included

Bleeker Street in the bohemian (and gay) Greenwich Village. Recalling the city and walking down Madison Avenue after his decision to return to Wisconsin, he recalls a bar: “It was only when the men inside kept looking at me that I knew I had tears in my eyes. But this was a mist of happiness.”

But New York had taken its toll. The diagnosis was nerves, blood pressure, and hypertension. Heth chose not to seek the solace of the Connecticut countryside like many New Yorkers but went instead back to rural Waukesha County where his grandparents had once farmed. After some time in the country, his option was to go back to New York in advertising but only at half salary.

Originally, Heth did think the sojourn away from the city would be temporary. His moroseness was reflected in the line, “I had begun to think I would never find adventure again.”

Then he records, “For a year I had tried to keep neighbors from bothering me. Until, in the second spring, Bud Devere dropped by. He was young and burly, and grinned when I opened the door.”

“Bud Devere, that second spring, persisted in being a friend.” The text of *My Life on Earth* describes the fictional Bud’s determination. “He came up for evening sessions of talk—uninvited, mostly, which did not bother him, and often unwelcome, which also did not seem to trouble him.” The attractiveness of his personality was that he was not one of the static, rural types. Bud knew “the last corners of the earth, and not only because the Army took him there but because when he was there he took the time to absorb what he saw—a trick he seemed to have appointed himself to teach me. Even at home again, he didn’t have to go far to enjoy the full prickly excitement of travel.”

Among the rural joys of discovery was an incident while out on a drive: “Bud raced the car along a few hundred feet. Then stopped, jumped out, leaped down a bank to a creek and came back with a dripping handful of watercress, like a merman dragging wet seaweed.” The romantic image of a “merman” switches the gender of the usual trope of the sexy mermaid. The episode ends with Bud shoving a “fistful in my mouth. It was cool and damp and spicy and tasted fresh as spring itself.”

This rural bromance continues with an impromptu swim in a nearby lake. After Bud urges the narrator into the water with him, he finds redemption from the old fear that had gripped him.

“And once we were splashing in the water the frightening lapse of life filled in—you could feel the heart start to beat again. The cold water, too, made the nerves stop throbbing. Afterwards we stretched out on the lake’s gravelly edge.” The lyrical moment continues: “Bud was stretched out flat on his back, his arms flung apart. I knew he was thinking the same thing, feeling the same way.”

That narrator’s solace was significant for “you knew up ahead was all you ever wanted or needed—home, safety, comfort, someone who loved you more than anything else in the world. All your

life you keep looking for this road again.”

Over the years, the narrator’s single status drew comments. The contractor who built his house asked, “Why did I need a kitchen the size of an old farmhouse kitchen, with a fireplace in it? Good humouredly, but with an admixture of wonder, he kept asking what a wife (I didn’t have one, I reminded him. ‘Ought to,’ he answered) would say to a kitchen where you had to walk a mile each day, traveling from the cupboards to the stove and back again.” Other neighbors “said I must be going to get married or why’d I have a sink and stove and so many cupboards and everything put it.”

The neighbors actually had another example of this lifestyle, and one also with culinary expectations. Quite nearby in the Welsh Hills was Ten Chimneys, the rural retreat of theater greats Alfred Lunt and Lynne Fontanne. Alfred, who was also from Wisconsin, had polished his culinary skills at the Cordon Bleu in Paris. In fact, Heth, in his later published 1956 cookbook *The Wonderful World of Cooking*, admits to trading recipes with his neighbor. Ten Chimneys had many theater visitors including gay playwright Noel Coward. And some have never been too sure about Alfred himself.

*My Life on Earth* is most often referred to as semi-autobiographical about Heth. And while he did build a house in the Welsh Hills, he lived in it with his male partner, a well-known ceramist named William Chancey. Since this was the 1950s, a time of witch-hunts against radicals and gays,

he could not write openly of a domesticated gay couple in the country. In the last part of the book he brings in a late appearing fiancée for the narrator to marry. Shades of the early story revisited.

One wonders whether Heth, as a literary person, was giving clues in applying the name Bud Devere to the country friend. Certainly Heth knew Melville, as he mentions Captain Ahab of *Moby Dick*. Was he using Melville’s Billy Budd character from another story as the naming source for his own supposedly “fictional” character? The bachelor Captain Vere who felt strongly attached to the young sailor condemns Melville’s Budd to death. Are the two literary relationships linked? Especially as sailor Budd’s first name was Billy, the diminutive form of the William of Heth’s own partner Bill.

In his later years Heth, though still doing literary work, was known more for his folksy country cooking. Naturalist Euell Gibbons wrote an introduction for the second edition of the cookbook. Ed had a show on Wisconsin Public Radio telling tales of the Wisconsin countryside. The home known as The House on the Hill burned down while Ed and Bill were out of town. Though the house was rebuilt, after his partner committed suicide, it was sold. Heth moved into an apartment in Milwaukee and died April 26, 1963. In a period when his own gay life could not be openly chronicled, Edward Harris Heth provided glimpses of how gay men searched for love and intimacy and guardedly expressed that search in his writings. ■

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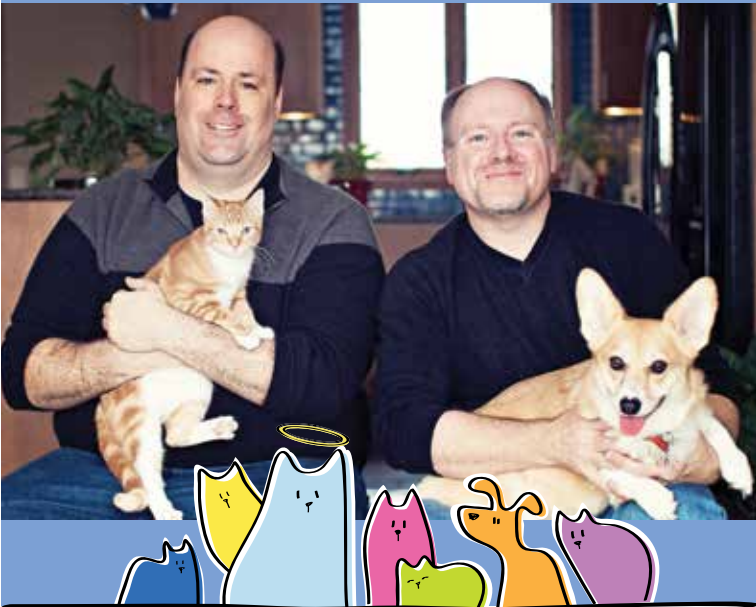
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### OUR PETS

Last summer a man came to the UW School of Veterinary Medicine's teaching hospital for help with his dog's ear infection. He had no money and unfortunately was turned away from our door. This sounds harsh but is hardly unique to this hospital. We can do amazing things with veterinary medicine, performing life-saving heroics, but clinics need to stay in business to keep providing care.

I like to say that I became a veterinarian to help people. It provokes a bit more conversation than the stereotypical "I love animals" response, but it's not just a conversation starter. It's the truth. Although we are trained to treat ear infections, lymphoma, and trauma, treating a pet's illness saves a relationship. An important one. When I was young and struggling with orientation and gender, animals were the first ones to accept me, and that had a profound impact on my ability to accept myself. Animals look past the struggles, identity, and flaws of their people and simply connect. Anyone who's had a pet knows this. We provide for each other.

But where can we turn when we can't provide for our pets? When we have to make the choice between feeding our friend and feeding ourselves? When the cat we've had for years suddenly needs intensive medical care and we just last week lost our job? When we form a bond with a pet through mutual hardship and resources are thin from the onset? When our dog's ear hurts and we have no money?

Well, now there is somewhere. Wisconsin Companion Animal Resources, Education, and Social Services (WisCARES) aims to help the human-animal bond thrive rather than suffer in situations where it is most needed. Established by the UW School of Veterinary Medicine, UW School of Social Work, and other partners, WisCARES approaches health holistically for people and pets. This goal is always at the forefront of the conversation—to ensure the bond between a person and their pet is positive and enriching instead of a barrier to care for either one.

This July, WisCARES is hitting the streets with mobile services to help homeless residents provide food, basic medical care, and safe pet supplies to their pets. By 2015, we aim to expand services to other qualified residents and open a brick-and-mortar facility, a place where veterinarians and social workers work in teams to give pets primary care services and help people access medical care. A place where animals can stay while their people gain access to their own housing or other needed services. A place where student training provides veterinary medical students with valuable clinical experience.

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### READER SPOTLIGHT

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# LGBT Campus Center

The **LGBT Campus Center** at **University of Wisconsin-Madison** is featuring UW alums making a difference in the LGBTQ community. Each of these proud Badgers have reinvested their UW educations and experiences towards making the world a better place for LGBTQ people to live, work, and learn. To learn how you can be involved with the LGBT Campus Center and reinvest in your community, visit [lgbt.wisc.edu](http://lgbt.wisc.edu).

## Alumni Spotlight



**Greg Reed**  
BA, Political Science '83  
MS, Real Estate '88

How have you stayed connected to the LGBTQ community in Madison as a UW Alumnus?  
As a Letters & Science Political Science undergrad (BA 1983)

and Business school grad (MS Real Estate Investment Analysis 1988), I participated in UW-Madison's Ten Percent Society events - one of the few campus forums in the 1980s for the LGBTQ community. Through frequent trips back to campus for Wisconsin Real Estate Alumni Association conferences, presentations to real estate classes, family visits as a native Madsonian and Badger football games, I stayed abreast of LGBTQ campus activities. Most recently, through the UW Foundation, I found out about the LGBTQ Campus Center and met with Gabe Javier in November 2013.

I hope to meet with LGBTQ students and faculty during my future campus visits. In addition to being an internal advocate as co-chair of Moody's Corporation's LGBT and Allies Employee Resource Group, I am a subcommittee member of the Best Practices subcommittee of OPEN Finance ([www.openfinancenyc.org](http://www.openfinancenyc.org)), a Federal Club member of the Human Rights Campaign ([www.hrc.org](http://www.hrc.org)) and Campaign Board member of the Victory Fund ([www.victoryfund.org](http://www.victoryfund.org)).

### What is one piece of advice you have for graduating LGBTQ Badgers?

Whether or not you are already "out" to family and friends, you have only just begun to "come out"! Even though I have been "out" at each employer since grad school, I encountered varying degrees of acceptance at each firm. Being "out" at work hurt my career prospects at a former employer but ultimately it has become a non-event for me working at a firm that fosters an inclusive work environment. Even now, I continue to encounter situations on a regular basis where I am "coming out" to new colleagues and clients. During the ongoing "coming out" process throughout your career, be your authentic self. Be honest to yourself about who you are and in your dealings with others - it will go a long way toward safeguarding your reputation.

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# quality of life

## OUR INTERSECTIONS

### The Intentionality of Wedge Politics

GSAFE co-director **Kristen Petroshius** explains why LGBTQ and race issues must go hand-in-hand.

Several months ago I received an email that I had imagined would come sooner or later: A GSAFE supporter informed me he was no longer going to support our work because we seemed to be losing our focus on LGBTQ youth. Because we had talked about the murder of Trayvon Martin and Stand Your Ground Laws as an alarming safety threat to the lives of young Black boys and masculine people (including Black LGBTQ youth) and talk openly about race and white privilege in all of our work, we were seen as not being LGBTQ enough.



**White LGBTQ organizations often shy away from connecting LGBTQ rights and racial justice, many people of color-led organizations fail to include LGBTQ people and issues in their organizing, and many LGBTQ people of color avoid engaging in either community because of the pain that is often experienced in those spaces.**

At the same time, all of our work continues to focus on building the leadership of LGBTQ students, developing Gay-Straight Alliances, trainings educators on creating safe and supportive schools for LGBTQ youth, and advocating for policies that help ensure all

LGBTQ youth can thrive in all Wisconsin schools. Our name is "Gay Straight Alliance for Safe Schools." There is nothing about us that is not LGBTQ. Yet somehow, particularly with white people, there is some kind of perception that talking about race causes us to not be "as" LGBTQ.

While these moments and patterns are frustrating, they are not at all surprising. Such binary either/or thinking is precisely the agenda promoted for decades now by the power elite, those in power who are devising strategies to maintain power and privilege for wealthy, white, able-bodied, cisgender, heterosexual people. It's such an intentional divide-and-conquer strategy, it even has a name - wedge politics. Wedge politics are strategies intended to have a divisive effect on one's political opponents by emphasizing issues that polarize opinions along racial or other demographic lines. Wedge politics have been used to prevent Black women from obtaining the right to vote along with white women during the Suffrage Movement, to prevent Indigenous people from exercising their treaty rights by pitting predominantly white environmentalists against Native Americans, to prevent Proposition 8's repeal in California, and to create a divide in countless other examples of movements throughout history.

The hard thing to recognize is that we all play into wedge politics. White LGBTQ organizations often shy away from connecting LGBTQ rights and racial justice, many people of color-led organizations fail to include LGBTQ people and issues in their organizing, and many LGBTQ people of color avoid engaging in either community because of the pain that is often experienced in those spaces. While we have different reasons for responding in the ways we often do, it is important to realize that we are all doing exactly what the power elite wants us to do.

In 2012, the Human Rights Campaign exposed the National Organization for Marriage's multi-year plan to stop marriage

equality in the United States. The following passage appears in NOM's 2008-2009 board update:

"The strategic goal... is to drive a wedge between gays and blacks - two key Democratic constituencies. Find, equip, energize and connect African American spokespeople for marriage; develop a media campaign around their objections to gay marriage as a civil right; provoke the gay marriage base into responding by denouncing these spokesmen and women as bigots..."

"The Latino vote in America is a key swing vote, and will be so even more so in the future, both because of demographic growth and inherent uncertainty: Will the process of assimilation to the dominant Anglo culture lead Hispanics to abandon traditional family values? We must interrupt this process of assimilation by making support for marriage a key badge of Latino identity - a symbol of resistance to inappropriate assimilation."

Despite some clear stereotypes and assumptions in their strategy, NOM's document clearly shows the intentionality of their strategy to drive a wedge between communities of color and white LGBTQ people.

Thus, many white LGBTQ people continue to talk about gay marriage as "the new civil rights issue" despite the fact that the racial civil rights struggle continues today and that these are different though interconnected issues. Having your people forcibly removed from their homeland, enslaved, raped, tortured, lynched, segregated, imprisoned, and impoverished for over 300 years through the present is not the same as marriage discrimination. Continuing to talk about LGBTQ rights as civil rights is incredibly disrespectful and marginalizing of the history and struggles of Black people. Yet many of us continue to use this very language fed to us by the power elite, perfectly using the wedge they have built for us.

At the same time, many heterosexual, cisgender people of color talk about LGBTQ issues as "a white people thing," denying the real histories of LGBTQ and Two-Spirit people of color throughout the world and the ways colonization and Christian domination have been used to erase these histories. While there may be different words or cultural understandings of LGBTQ and Two-Spirit people in different communities, we have existed and continue to exist in all communities, in all countries, across all time. Yet many of us

"Cisgender" is a term that describes people whose gender they were assigned at birth matches their internal sense of being male or female. People who are not cisgender are transgender.

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## quality of life

continue to use this very language fed to us by the power elite, perfectly using the wedge they have built for us.

Recognizing the strategy of the power elite does not let us off the hook for falling victim to their tactics. We must look as deeply inward as we do outward to build effective solutions to the complex problems our communities face. If we will ever gain liberation for anyone, it must include full liberation for all of us. This requires us to understand the wedge strategy used to divide us so we can be conscious of the moments it seeps into our psyches. This requires us to be as intentional and strategic as the power elite around race and LGBTQ issues in our social change work, rather than just defaulting to what is comfortable, convenient, or reactive. This requires us to respect the intentionality of segregated spaces for people to develop their identities but not accept default segregated spaces that result from a lack of thoughtfulness and strategic thinking. Perhaps most important, this requires that we learn to really understand that all of these issues are interconnected and that we can understand this not just intellectually but on emotional, spiritual, and physical levels as well.

**Continuing to talk about LGBTQ rights as civil rights is incredibly disrespectful and marginalizing of the history and struggles of Black people. Yet many of us continue to use this very language fed to us by the power elite, perfectly using the wedge they have built for us.**

Whether the issue is tuition equity for immigrant students, the use of Native American mascots in schools, the excessive use of exclusionary discipline such as suspension or expulsion against Black students, or the disproportionate tracking of youth of color and trans\* youth into special education—let us center racial justice, LGBTQ rights, disability rights, and youth leadership into all of our work, not as separate issues but as different parts of the whole.

As GSAFE has moved along in our journey in becoming a multiracial, racial justice organization, the overwhelming majority response from donors has been one of support. New donors have come to us and said they would not fund us unless we

## OUR INTERSECTIONS

were centering racial justice. Larger, national foundations are coming to understand that LGBTQ movement-building efforts are not strategic or effective without intersectional thinking. Our sister organizations in other states are looking to GSAFE's process as a model for how the work can be done. Such institutional shifts in political thought and funding priorities are critical to our ability to implement the work we know needs to be done. The next piece of work is for us to pull deeply from our psyches new ways of thinking in which we can engage complexity and understand how race and LGBTQ issues are always intertwined.

Have you seen wedge politics in your community? What issues or alliances would you like to see the LGBTQ community build? What will your next step in this journey be?

Note: I recognize in this article moments of sensitivity where I speak to certain dynamics that can play out in communities of color, yet I am a white person. I hesitated to name these at all due to my internal voice of "who am I as a white person to speak to that?" At the same time, not naming those dynamics would have felt too simplistic and would not move us forward in recognizing the full complexity of these issues. My apologies if I have caused any harm by doing so. ■

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## Relationships in the Grindr Era

Alexander Einsman explores whether digital gaydar really brings us together... or keeps us apart?

**G**rindr, Scruff, and other GPS-based social networking apps for gay men have increased access and exposure to both friendships and hookups all across the globe. Instead of making eyes at someone or striking up an in-person conversation to gauge interest, we can now simply browse photos of nearby guys on our smartphones. Statistics recently released by Grindr show that there have been more than ten billion app downloads from the United States



know there are other members of the community all around you, accessible with just a couple taps on a smart phone. There is also the opportunity to make new friends and seek potential mates for a dating relationship. For people in the market for single-serving sex, Grindr offers a way to make that happen.

While the accessibility and anonymity of Grindr provides the opportunity for increased connection, in some ways it can also simultaneously create disconnect from ourselves and the very community in which we seek to be connected. A virtual identity is most often a representation of who we want to be, not who we really are. This can lead to an entire virtual community of people who are not real, which can be a pretty lonely place. Many people create a profile that they can't live up to in person—further perpetuating their own insecurity and negative self-image. And when we get into the habit of lying to ourselves, it becomes easier to lie about other things, including sexual health and relationship status. Even though the app is free, it's important to consider the other potential costs.

The dissonance between real and online identity also helps to create a larger context of criticism and negativity projected onto others. This online playground isn't always a fun place. Expressions of internalized homophobia, overt prejudice, and micro-aggressions based on race or ethnicity, disabilities, body type, weight, age, and appearance further marginalize both ourselves and members of our own community.

### Managing Your LTR with Grindr

The excitement generated in response to the "buzz" of a Grindr message can feel great in the moment; however, it can just as quickly shift to a sense of rejection if the person on



**A virtual identity is most often a representation of who we want to be, not who we really are. Many people create a profile that they can't live up to in person—further perpetuating their own insecurity and negative self-image.**

and more than 190 other countries. More than 38 million chat messages and three million photos are exchanged daily on Grindr.

But how do these mobile technologies affect gay individuals specifically and the gay community as a whole? And, perhaps more important, how are the latest technological advances affecting the types of relationships we are seeking?

With such widespread global and local popularity, it's clear that these GPS-based apps offer certain benefits to users. There's something kind of magical about digital gaydar, particularly because it can sometimes be hard to tell if the guy you are into is also into guys. It can feel less lonely to

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the other end loses interest or stops responding. The pleasurable feeling we get from sexual attraction and excitement is caused by dopamine, a neurotransmitter that activates our brain's pleasure center. Dopamine feels good, and because we are creatures of habit, we seek more of it—sometimes impulsively. Relying too much on Grindr for dopamine doses can activate a compulsive drive to stay online, to the point where it consumes free time and interferes with sleep, work, friends, family, and other relationships.

The average Grindr user spends 90 minutes each day using the app, which equates to 45 hours per month. That's a full workweek, plus five hours of overtime. We are continually distracted by the glowing screens on our devices, not only from the people around us but also from ourselves and our real-world relationships, even though those same devices can also make our lives and schedules easier to manage.

**Relying too much on Grindr for dopamine doses can activate a compulsive drive to stay online, to the point where it consumes free time and interferes with sleep, work, friends, family, and other relationships.**

The seemingly instant gratification of relationships in these online virtual communities comes with the reality that those relationships may be based on misrepresented and mistaken identities. It's important to wonder if your online identity is really who you are or if it's a guise that keeps you from forming the type of relationships you want. Some people develop a false or exaggerated online persona as a defense mechanism in reaction to past hurt or rejection. Embracing authenticity in who you are and what you want is an act of vulnerability that is uncomfortable at first but can ultimately lead to healing and strength.

Remember, easier doesn't necessarily mean better, and moderation is key. Relying only on digital gaydar can mean you might be looking down at your phone at the very moment the man of your dreams walks by attempting to make eye contact but is unable to penetrate your fixed stare on the glowing screen of your Grindr-vibrating smartphone. ■

**Alex Einsman** is a licensed marriage and family therapist at Atlas Counseling. He holds a Masters of Science degree in Marriage and Family Therapy from Edgewood College.

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## The Tide is On the Side of Equality

Tamara Packard explores the changing landscape of opposition to and support for marriage equality nationwide and right here in Wisconsin.

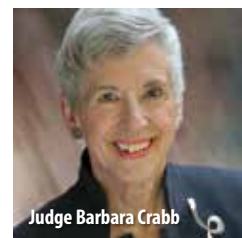
As of this writing, same-sex couples may marry, and their marriages are honored, in 17 states and the District of Columbia. That total is up by five in the past nine months, and Illinois will make it 18 in June.

On the other hand, 33 other states have either a law or an amendment to the state constitution prohibiting marriage equality. That number is likely to fall in the coming months, and the number of states with marriage equality will correspondingly rise. This is because since the United States Supreme Court struck down Section 3 of DOMA in June 2013,

present in Wisconsin: a Marquette University poll in March showed that 59 percent favor repealing our “marriage amendment”—that is about the same percentage of those who voted for it eight years ago. The same poll showed that 48 percent favor marriage equality, and 24 percent support civil unions. A poll commissioned by Fair Wisconsin and just released as this issue goes to press found 51 percent in favor of marriage equality and vastly improved acceptance of gays and lesbians over the last nine years. This growing acceptance is particularly notable among seniors, Republicans, and men who did not go to college.

Clearly, a wave of marriage equality is sweeping the nation, and Wisconsin is part of it. On the litigation front, 26 of the 33 marriage bans are being challenged in court, including here in Wisconsin. Earlier this year, Virginia Wolf, her partner Carol Schumacher, and seven other Wisconsin couples represented by the ACLU brought a lawsuit against Governor Walker and other governmental officials to challenge the constitutionality of Wisconsin’s anti-marriage amendment. Like the challengers in the other 25 states, the Wisconsin couples (known as “the plaintiffs” in legal parlance) seek a ruling directing the State of Wisconsin to provide same-sex couples with marriage equality: to allow us to marry here and to honor our marriages. They also seek a ruling that Wisconsin’s marriage evasion law, which makes it a crime to leave Wisconsin in order to form a marriage that is “prohibited” or “void” here and then return, is unconstitutional. The case was filed in the federal trial court located in Madison and has been assigned to Judge Barbara Crabb.

The *Wolf* lawsuit is off to a good, though rocky, start. Within weeks of filing the lawsuit, the plaintiffs asked Judge Crabb for an interim order that would have allowed marriages between same-sex couples to begin in Wisconsin immediately. Judge Crabb explained that if she granted such a request, it likely would not have significant practical effect because it probably would be put on hold while the State appealed it, as has happened in similar challenges in other states. Thus, ultimate resolution of the lawsuit, and hence access to marriage equality, would be further



Judge Barbara Crabb

delayed. Instead, she suggested that the plaintiffs withdraw their request and in exchange offered to put the lawsuit on a fast track. The plaintiffs agreed to follow the suggestion, and a final decision in the case is expected before the end of the year.

Next, in March, the State filed a request asking that the lawsuit be dismissed right away. While that is unlikely to happen in its entirety, it is possible that a resolution to the challenge to the marriage evasion statute will come quickly and positively. When the State asked the judge to dismiss that part of the lawsuit, it took the position that when Wisconsin same-sex couples marry in other states, they are not entering into marriages that are “prohibited” or “void” in Wisconsin, but instead are “merely” in marriages that the state does not recognize. Thus, those couples are not violating the marriage evasion statute and are not exposed to criminal prosecution. Hopefully Judge Crabb soon will formally agree with this interpretation of the statute, and law-abiding couples who travel elsewhere to marry will be able to return home without fear of serving jail time.

Finally, Fair Wisconsin and its Democratic allies in the state Legislature are to be commended for the effort to repeal Wisconsin’s “marriage amendment” earlier this year. As noted above, public support for the amendment has fallen drastically, as citizens come to recognize their gay and lesbian neighbors as deserving of the ability to marry the person they love. Unfortunately, that sentiment has not reached the extremists in the Legislature, where a vote to start the repeal process failed in the Senate with all Democrats voting in favor and all Republicans voting against. It is now clear exactly who considers us to be undeserving of equal protection under the law. ■

Tamara Packard is a Madison civil rights lawyer, activist, and partner in the law firm of Cullen Weston Pines & Bach LLP, [www.cwpb.com](http://www.cwpb.com).

### The ACLU Lawsuit’s Named Couples

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The State filed a request asking that the lawsuit be dismissed right away. While that is unlikely to happen in its entirety, it is possible that a resolution to the challenge to the marriage evasion statute will come quickly and positively.

resulting in federal recognition of our marriages, eight “marriage amendments” have been ruled unconstitutional by federal trial courts, though those rulings are on appeal. Notably, no such amendment has been upheld by a court since the DOMA ruling.

Public opinion is also shifting. Eight years ago a strong majority of Americans did not support marriage equality, and Wisconsin citizens voted to soil our constitution with a “marriage amendment” of our own. Yet over the past few years, poll after poll has demonstrated growing support for the freedom of same-sex couples to marry. The trend is even

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**Eat, Drink, and Be Mary**

In a profile of Milwaukee's rollickingly queer food and entertainment joint, **Hamburger Mary's** brings the fun with the feast.

**H**amburger Mary's is a burger joint with a one-of-a-kind menu and entertainment. Known for her open-minded atmosphere and eclectic drag shows, Mary's has become a staple of the LGBT community since her establishment in San Francisco in 1972 and now with 12 locations across the country. Milwaukee proudly boasts its own, and she has taken the city by storm: a very sparkly, meaty storm.

Vegetarians and dieters run for cover, Mary likes her menu like she likes her men: big, bold, beefy, and well-oiled.

Seriously, I hope you like meat, because this lady knows how to serve it. Meaty-Meatloaf anyone? The stars of the Mary's menu are the gourmet half-pound burgers. With your choice of beef, turkey, chicken breast, kobe/wagyu beef, or a particularly delicious bone tossed to the vegetarian/vegans in their black bean patty. No need to really leave your leaf-oriented friends at home, though the stuffed burgers may give them nightmares. Mary leaves little to the imagination and goes straight for the taste buds. Chorizo and bacon stuffed burgers, burgers topped with chili, onion rings, and almost always with Mary's special sauce.

If weight loss is your goal, Mary's might not help, but she will take good care of you on the nights you're feeling naughty. Throw caution to the wind, embrace your burlesque-style curves, and eat an order of Deep Fried Twinkies all by yourself. Maybe the Mary Tyler S'mores or Deep-Fried Snickers with Ice Cream is your true calling; either choice, you're going home a little fatter and a lot happier.

Not quite ready to ditch the diet? The Skinny Dipper (artichoke and spinach) is so good even the meat lovers will devour it. Lettuce wraps and fresh salads with house-made dressings will leave you feeling trim and guilt-free.

Boi's night out just got unzipped: Pull your friends out and try a Fuzzy Tea Bag (sweet tea, peach, and pink lemonade cocktail) or Drag King of Queens (shot of Southern Comfort, Amaretto, and cranberry juice). Goils night out? Try the Karen Walker (dirty martini) or a Pretty in Pink (raspberry and pink lemonade cocktail). House-infused spirits will lift yours: Ginger-Vodka, Pepper-Lime-Vodka, Cherry-Bourbon, and, the meaty lady wouldn't let you down, Bacon-Vodka. Let's say that

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**The more uncomfortable you look, the more likely you will be chosen by the performer of the night for special attention.**

As the host of one of Mary's drag shows and a long-time drag king, I have a word to the wise: the more uncomfortable you look, the more likely you will be chosen by the performer of the night for special attention. This is most certainly an invitation to bring your easy-to-blush friends. They will have never-saw-it-coming time, and you will feel like a genius for pranking them so well.

On any given show night, your grandmother would have thought it a seedy and vulgar hole and that is exactly why you should be there. The atmosphere matches the décor: Big, bold, in-your-face fun, Mary's knows no other way. The queens will motorboat, the Kings will thrust, the audience will blush like they have never blushed, and everyone leaves fat and deliriously happy every single time.

Want to bring the kids? Earlier shows are kid-friendly, but past 9:00 p.m. anything goes: an important distinction between Saturday's 8:00 p.m. "Dining with the DIVAS" show and "Dirty DIVAS" at 9:30. Check out Hamburger Mary's website for a complete show schedule, including Ham-Bingo (always for a good cause) and Mary-Oke, giving you the chance to take the stage.

Upbeat music, five televisions, one stage: Hamburger Mary's is not a restaurant, it's an experience. And she really doesn't care what anyone thinks; she knows she is fabulous. Just like you, hunty. ■



Legal Assistant by day, drag king by night, **Colin Acumen** is a proud member of Milwaukee's Miltown Kings and hosts a monthly show, Mary's Kingdom, the second Tuesday of every month at Hamburger Mary's.

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Photo by Roberto Amezcua

I grew up thinking it was the most normal thing in the world. I thought everyone had gay family members. I remember being really surprised when I learned that Aunt Rose and Aunt Becca weren't married. It never occurred to me that it was possible that people who loved each other as much as they did wouldn't be married.

It only came to light when I was older that it wasn't because they didn't want to, but because they couldn't. I didn't understand it fully, and a part of me is still bewildered at the thought.

That's when I knew something had to be done. Of course, in fourth grade, I didn't have any clue what I could do to help. Lucky for me, my older brother was there to teach me. He told me about the Gay-Straight Alliance (GSA).

Two years later I joined the Black Hawk Middle School GSA. The organization was started in the 2010-2011 school year by students with the help of social worker Sherie Hohs and Spanish teacher Matthew Mulligan. In just three years, our little community has grown from only 10 members to over 30.

Thanks to our incredibly diverse, rainbow-spectrum mob, we are able to take part in and organize a number of school-wide, small group, and even inter-community events. For example, one event that we are currently planning for is the annual Day of Silence. Day of Silence is a nationwide event during which participants wear a rainbow ribbon if they are choosing to remain silent all day, or a purple ribbon if they support the cause but opt to speak, in order to raise awareness for the people in our community who feel like they have to stay silent about who they are. We also hold Ally Week and No Name Calling Weeks to educate students on the issue of bullying, including within the LGBTQ+ community. Among other things, we frequently hold assemblies, including multimedia presentations featuring information on upcoming GSA events.

Just within our GSA, we work to raise awareness among members and to plan various occasions, not to mention doing our best to support everyone in our GSA. For instance, we thought that it would be really cool to fly the rainbow pride flag during No Name Calling Weeks. Thanks to the cooperation of our school principal, Sean Storch, we were able to do just that. I feel truly lucky to be a part of such a welcoming school environment. Weekly meetings often consist of sharing LGBTQ+ and personal news, problems and solutions within our school, and thinking ahead. I try to always find at least one thing to share regarding news from around the world, nation, state, or even just within the school. When I come to GSA, I really feel at home. It feels like a truly safe place where I can be myself: nothing more, nothing less. From the outside looking in, we seem like just a crazy bunch of teenagers, ranting about problems. But we're more than just that; we are a family that fights for what we believe.

Thanks to By Youth For Youth (BYFY), our GSA recently received a grant that we plan to use in many ways, the first of which is simple: supplies. We advertise the GSA with posters all over the school, and this grant will help us get more poster paper, markers, tape, etc. The second use deals with the education piece of what we do. We plan to buy books for "classroom libraries" in order to make teaching lessons involving LGBTQ+ material easier. It will also give students the opportunity to self-educate on the same topics. The third way we plan to make use of the money is through what we hope will be a lasting reminder of acceptance, a welcoming environment, and safety throughout our school. We would like to commission an artist (or a couple) to make

a mural involving diversity, community, and all the colors of the rainbow. Finally, we want to make sure there are enough resources to continue running the GSA for years to come. We feel that keeping GSA alive is the most important part, so that everyone, regardless of race, gender identity, sexual orientation, or any other factor can be part of a welcoming and safe community. Beyond that, it will have to be up to future leaders to decide. ■



Black Hawk Middle School flying the rainbow flag

## Growing Up with the Rainbow

Nicole Campbell got involved in her middle school GSA to support people like her aunts and to help build a more inclusive future for all her peers.



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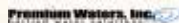
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