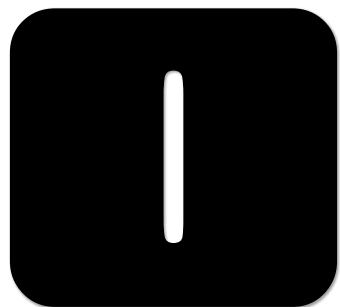


our lives



SPECIAL ISSUE

YOUTH & FAMILIES

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November/
December
2014

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

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Rhonda Lanford
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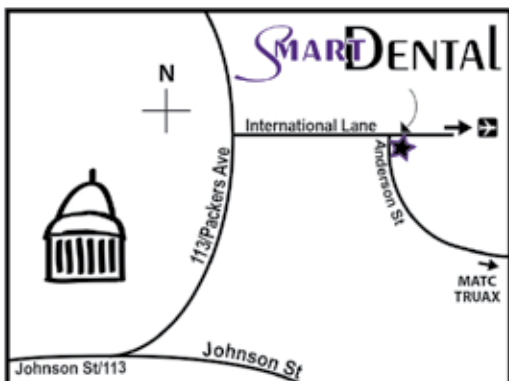
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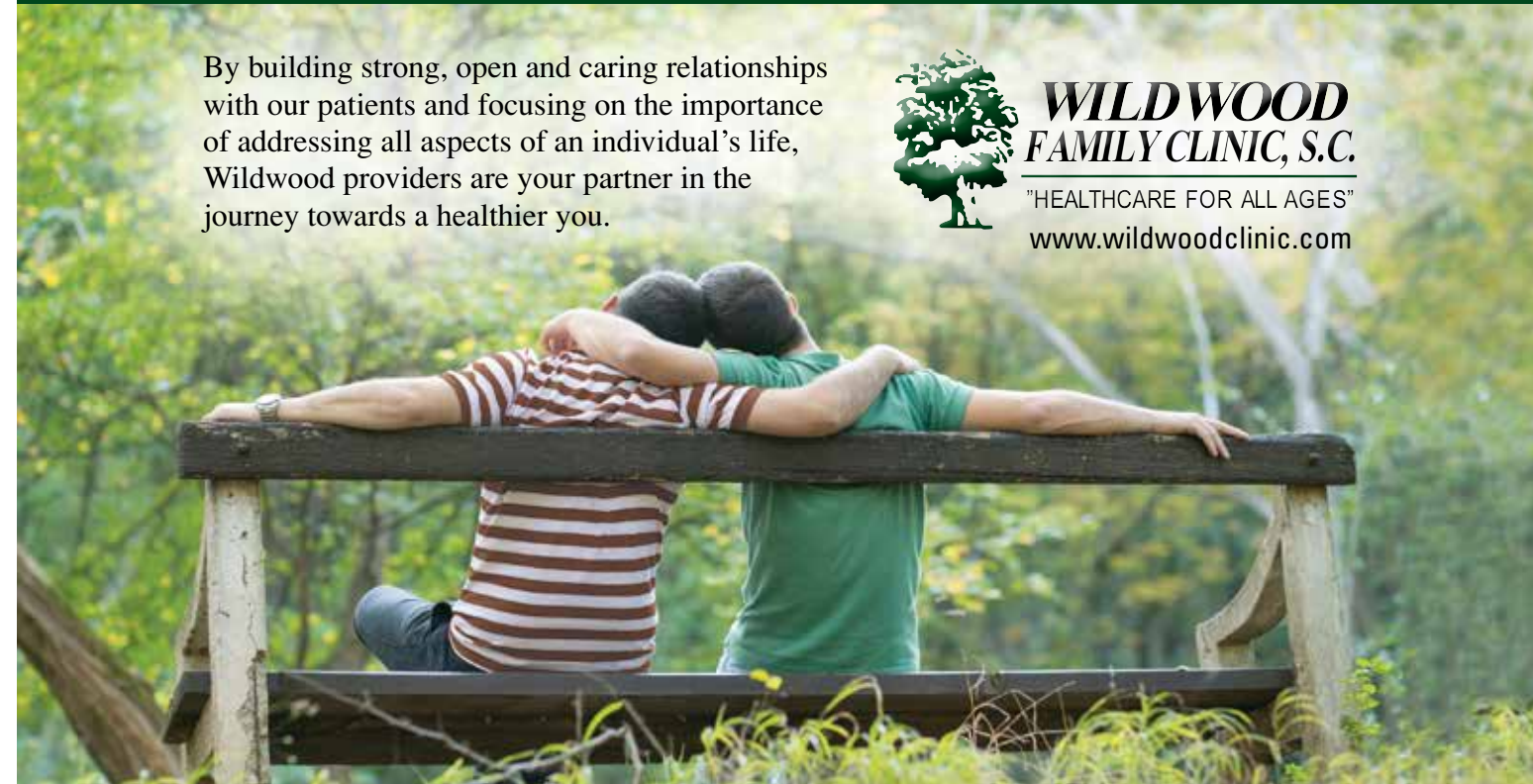
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“Let’s make no mistake about this: The American Dream starts with the neighborhoods. If we wish to rebuild our cities, we must first rebuild our neighborhoods. And to do that, we must understand that the quality of life is more important than the standard of living. To sit on the front steps—whether it’s a veranda in a small town or a concrete stoop in a big city—and to talk to our neighborhoods is infinitely more important than to huddle on the living-room lounge and watch a make-believe world in not-quite living color.”

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Madison’s LGBT&XYZ Magazine

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EDITOR’S NOTE EMILY MILLS

WE ARE FAMILY

THE QUESTION HAS BEEN ASKED many times: what makes a family? Different people with different agendas across different eras have answered in various ways, but I think every definition has a core of commonality: family are the people who make up your direct world, and, ideally, they are the ones that know you the best, support you, love you, and make your journey through life less lonely and far more interesting. You do the same for them in return.



Sometimes family is blood, and sometimes we choose our families. This is especially common in the LGBTQ community, as many of us have had to find support elsewhere when it wasn’t available at home.

A community can be a family too. It takes a village, after all, to raise a child—even one that’s matured into adulthood. The simple fact of the matter is we need each other.

I see these various approaches to the same idea reflected in the pages of this issue, from stories of community activists to examinations of what it means to be part of a particular family that enjoys more opportunity and security than others. Our cover feature by Judge Rhonda Lanford is a deeply personal history that runs the gamut of emotions and experiences and highlights the important role that different families play in our lives. It’s an incredible read, and I’m so grateful to her for sharing it with all of us.

Family means having each other’s backs, even when—especially when—things are hard. Even in our more enlightened times, when legal same-sex marriage is sweeping the nation, there are still families forced to live their truths in professional closets, as told in an anonymous reader’s story. It’s crucial to remember that this is still the necessary reality for too many of our friends and relatives.

You’ll notice that I have an article in this issue too, exploring the local Dane County chapter of the Salvation Army’s relationship with the LGBTQ community and the surprising misconceptions they face. I went into it with some strong preconceived ideas about who and what they are as an organization and came out of it with a completely different picture. I hope you’ll give it a read and some serious thought because theirs is a story of family too, and of doing whatever we can to provide a soft spot to land for those who’ve fallen through the cracks.

We can’t choose the families we’re born into—some of us luck out, some of us decidedly don’t—but we can choose how we build the families with whom we walk through this world and what kind of work we do along the way. Will we support each other, even when we don’t entirely understand where the other is coming from? Will we keep open eyes, ears, and hearts for our close friends and the strangers who are, after all, part of our human family? The holiday season is always a good time to reflect on these ideas and take real actions to follow through on those notions. I hope we all take that time and approach the New Year with renewed drive and purpose. ■

FEATURED CONTRIBUTOR



DANIELLA ECHEVERRIA is a designer, illustrator, and web designer in Madison, WI. She’s currently working at designCraft Advertising designing and developing websites for local businesses. You can also find her tweeting at @khumuz or on her website, khumuz.com.

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What is your connection to the LGBT community?

I have been an out and proud member and advocate for the LGBTQ community since coming to Madison to complete my undergraduate degree in 1990. I believe that my sexual orientation is an important aspect of my humanity and life experience. As such, it informs my professional experience at work and my personal relationships with family, friends, and neighbors. My partner, Tony Jamieson, and I live on the Near East Side with our four-year-old son, Chance. We actively patronize Dane Buy Local, LGBTQ, and Straight Ally-owned businesses whenever possible. Likewise, we believe it's important to contribute to organizations that work for the advancement of LGBTQ people and causes both locally and nationally.

Do you do anything charitable or that gives back to the local community?

UW Credit Union believes in giving back and doing our part to make a difference. In 2013, we provided 200 free financial seminars that reached more than 8,000 people on topics ranging from budgeting to homeownership. Plus, to set students on the path to financial success, we've recently partnered with UW – Madison to create and implement a series of financial capabilities courses. In addition, we award annual scholarships to high school seniors who attend University of Wisconsin system schools or Madison College, demonstrate financial need, and who are dedicated to community service.

UW Credit Union also strongly believes in supporting organizations that serve basic human needs. We give to Habitat for Humanity, United Way, American Family Children's Hospital, MadREP, GSAFE, Forward Community Investments, and more. We understand that by giving back, our communities will continue to flourish for generations to come.

Did You Know

WISCONSIN GETS OWN CHAPTER OF LGBT BAR ASSOCIATION

A recently formed chapter of the national LGBT Bar Association aims to bring together lawyers, judges, other legal professionals, law students, activists, and affiliated LGBTQ legal organizations around the state with the hopes of promoting justice in and through the legal profession for the LGBTQ community.

Martin Price, one of the chapter's founding members, notes that the group will be holding an event in Madison on November 14 from 6–8 p.m. at the Shamrock Bar & Grille, and anyone interested in the group's mission is welcome to attend. The chapter aims to hold social gatherings on the second Friday of each month, alternating between Madison and Milwaukee for locations. For more info, visit lgbtbarwi.org

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Tackling Life, Head-On

Katie Jayce found a home and fulfilled a dream by joining the rough and tumble world of women's tackle football.

WHEN I TALK TO PEOPLE ABOUT playing women's football, it usually begins with a variety of questions: Is it powder puff? Do you play on that lingerie league? Is it flag football? The answers are no, no, and no.

Madison Blaze Women's Football is a full contact team that is part of the Independent Women's Football League (IWFL). I never imagined I'd actually get the chance to fulfill my dream, especially at this level of competitiveness and professionalism.

My love for sports started at a very young age. I was always involved in activities ranging from soccer and basketball to powerlifting. While those sports allowed me the active lifestyle I craved, it still wasn't my dream. Every Friday night I would attend my high school football games thinking, "I could do this, and even better than the boys!" I never gained enough confidence to try out, but it was always in the back of my mind. As I continued into young adulthood I took my love for sports into the classroom and graduated from Winona

State University with a degree in Recreation and Tourism. Shortly after, in the summer of 2010, I made my big move to Madison to intern for the Badger State Games. As an intern, I was part of the event operations team, and we organized and conducted the Summer and Winter Badger State Games. This experience opened my eyes to a variety of sports and showed me the level of competitiveness and athleticism that would make me want to stay in the Madison area.

After my internship ended it left me looking for ways to meet new people and continue living an active lifestyle. I joined the Badgerland Softball League and became a part of the infamous Pretty Pink Princesses. I also gave hockey a shot with the Madison Gay Hockey Association. As luck would have it, a friend of mine told me about an all-women's football team and encouraged me to try out. I was excited to finally make that thought in the back of my mind become a reality.

The day I showed up for tryouts I didn't know what to expect. Being in an unfamiliar situation, I was naturally nervous and shy. My football knowledge was very minimal and stemmed mostly from watching the Packers crush their opponents on Sundays! From the moment I left tryouts I knew I'd be back for more, and I was right. I was immediately pegged as a tight end because of my height and ability to catch the ball. I also found more playing time on the d-line at defensive end.



TIM LOM is an editorial facilitator for Our Athletes 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.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY BETH MCCONNELL

After getting a taste on both sides of the ball, I found my passion is at offensive tight end. This position would not only help shape me as a person but also my confidence on the field.

In my first year as a women's football player, everything happened in slow motion. The concepts a male might have learned in pee wee football I was learning as an adult. One of the biggest challenges was overcoming the mental aspect of football. I quickly learned that mental toughness was just as important as the physicality of the game. Lining up against five linewomen all looking to crush anything in their paths is very intimidating. As I gained better technique, became more aggressive, and rid of any doubt in my mind, the tables soon turned. My confidence soared as I was starting to make technically sound tackles, blocks, and catches. After each practice, chalk talk, and game I continued to grow. Scoring my first official touchdown was something I will never forget and made everything come full circle.

Joining The Madison Blaze was the best decision I could have made because of what it continues to teach me. I just completed my third season and have been able to grow in many areas of my life. Playing football requires a great deal of focus and commitment, which has allowed me to become a well-rounded, improved individual. Not only has football helped me grow as a person, but also it has allowed me to meet an amazing group of women with the same drive as me. We are a close-knit group that works together on and off the field for each other. It truly is a family; I know that they will always be there for me whether I am at the top of my game or on the bench with an injury. Not only have I met many friends, but I also met my wife, Staci. Having Staci there to support me 110% makes playing football even more amazing.

Every season the Madison Blaze puts in the blood, sweat, and tears to get to the top. At the end of our 2013 season we became the Midwest Division Champions. This past season we upgraded to the two time

The concepts a male might have learned in pee wee football I was learning as an adult. One of the biggest challenges was overcoming the mental aspect of football.

Midwest Division Champions! The Madison Blaze took the next step in the 2014 season and also became the 2014 Founders Bowl Champions. The Founders Bowl title has extra meaning because the teams were selected by the IWFL. The best part about playing for the Madison Blaze is no individual won games or made huge plays. We did it as a team, and we are all champions!

Being a woman football player is one of my best accomplishments and something I will continue to do as long as I can. If you want to join me on the field and share in the pride of being a Madison Blaze player, come to a tryout for the 2015 season, look for information on Facebook and our website, and GO BLAZE! ■

DID YOU KNOW

PFLAG UPDATES ITS NAME AND MISSION

PFLAG National and all chapters have discontinued using "Parents, Friends & Family of Lesbians & Gays" as the words to their acronym and will simply be known as PFLAG. They've also added the following tag line to further identify their organization and its mission and to be more inclusive and welcoming: "Parents, Families, Friends & Allies United with LGBT People to move equality forward!" For more info, visit pflag.org

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Acting with Pride

Executive Director **Brian Wild** reflects on the past, present, and future of Proud Theater.

IN MAY OF 2014 I had the good fortune to meet Paul and Carol Esser. As I quickly learned, they were both active in the Sun Prairie United Methodist Church, a church that had recently approved a statement saying they were open and welcoming to all people without regard to sexual orientation or gender identity. The couple felt it was indeed time to bring queer organizations to their city, especially those designed to assist and empower youth.

I'm happy to report that, thanks to their efforts, a chapter of PFLAG recently had its first official meeting in Sun Prairie, boasting an incredible attendance of 38 people, and on its heels will be a new chapter of the organization I serve, Proud Theater.

In today's world this may not seem strange in the slightest to me. In fact, communities reaching out to LGBTQ organizations like PFLAG or Proud Theater are no longer an anomaly and are rapidly becoming the norm. But 15 years ago...

In 1999, Proud Theater became one of a handful of queer youth theater troupes in the United States and was one of the only troupes of its kind not located on the East or West coasts.

Ah, 15 years ago. 1999. The dawn of a new Millennium rapidly approaching, the 6 billionth person populating the Earth born in Bosnia, Bill Clinton winding down his eight years as President of the United States—and a 13-year-old girl decides that queer youth indeed have a voice and need to use it, loud and clear. Proud Theater is born.

Proud Theater started with three young people and a dedicated group of adults who worked to create theatrical pieces based on the realities of their lives growing up queer or queer-supportive. The process was simple enough: the youth were encouraged to talk about the issues that affected them, find the thematic threads in the stories they told, improv those themes together to flesh out the ideas, and then work to create theatrical pieces based on the universal truths the youth discovered in the process.

Of course, starting a queer youth theater project like Proud Theater was a radical idea for the time, even in a city like Madison, and the mere thought of expanding outside the "77 square miles surrounded



PHOTOGRAPHED BY CALLEN HARTY

by reality" was, at best, a dream. In 1999, Proud Theater became one of a handful of queer youth theater troupes in the United States and was one of the only troupes of its kind not located on the East or West coasts.

The first performance of Proud Theater was in the summer of 2000 at the M.A.G.I.C. Picnic in Madison, where the youth practically had to yell their words across multitudes of drunken spirits and loud voices. They could barely be heard as they acted their hearts out and told their story, and to be honest, it was as if many in the queer community simply didn't care beyond the amber liquid that filled their 12 oz. plastic cups.

Three youth. Big hearts. Determined love.

Fifteen years later things have thankfully changed—and the LGBTQ community understands the power the youth wield and weave through the tapestry of their stories. From the early days when marriage equality, safe sex, and HIV were at the forefront, to today, when bullying, intergenerational connections, navigating multiple identities, and gender fluidity seem to rule the cosmos, Proud Theater shows no signs of letting up.

Currently there are three vibrant chapters of the group in Wiscon-

sin—Madison, Wausau, and Milwaukee—and yes, I said Wausau, my hometown and the true Gateway to the North Woods. Growing up there, I never imagined something like this ever being part of the central Wisconsin fabric, a sentiment that is echoed in the multitudes of adults who see the Wausau group's work and find themselves wishing they, too, had access to something like this when they were growing up queer.

So what's next for Proud Theater? In recent months, we launched a new version of our group, Proud Theater Beyond, serving 18–24 year olds in the Madison area, and in a couple days we will, by invite, be speaking to members of the Sun Prairie community about starting their own PT chapter. Three days later we will be meeting with people in Steven's Point to discuss the very same thing. Along with recent inquiries from Appleton, Marshfield, and Kenosha, you can clearly see that the need for what we do is stronger than ever.

We are still an all-volunteer organization, but the reality is that in order for us to serve youth in other parts of the state, we will need to move into the next phase of our evolution as a fully funded and staffed social justice organization. That is what we are actively working on now.

Fifteen years later Proud Theater is still going strong. We are giving voice to the voiceless. We are giving youth hope. We are creating the queer leaders of tomorrow. We are literally saving lives.

We are your community.

We are Proud Theater—each and every one of us. ■

DID YOU KNOW

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The policy was changed and passed by the Janesville School Board to ban discrimination based on gender identity and expression, and it includes accommodations that "may include, but not necessarily be limited to, use of the restroom designated for the gender with which the student identifies, use of the locker room designated for the gender with which the student identifies and reasonable access to other single-sex designated school facilities and programs."



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Families Connect

Kim Simes and the Family Equality Council work to lift up the voices of children in the fight for marriage equality.

JUST LAST YEAR, the US Supreme Court struck down Section 3 of DOMA and returned marriage equality to California. Today, 30 states and the District of Columbia allow same-sex couples to legally wed, and the ban on same-sex marriage is being challenged in every state in our country. We are witnessing a historical moment in the fight for marriage equality, and at the heart of the overturning of several same-sex marriage bans this past year are our children's voices.

In the Supreme Court's ruling, there was nothing more telling than Justice Anthony Kennedy's remarks about the harms children of same-sex parents endure. Back in August, 7th Circuit Court Republican Judge Richard Posner—a Reagan appointee—also expressed concern about the injustices children of same-sex couples experience. The source of both judges' points, and the credited factor in the overturning of the marriage bans, were the Voices of Children Amicus Briefs filed by the Family Equality Council. The briefs not only brought to light that same-sex couples are successfully raising the next generation, but also that the ban on marriage indicates to children with same-sex parents that their families aren't legitimate. Through the use of children's personal stories, the briefs unveiled the inequality children of same-sex couples feel, simply because the law won't acknowledge what they already know: love makes a family.



In my lifetime, I never thought I'd get a chance to marry my partner. So long before the possibility of legal recognition, she and I committed our lives to each other, like many of our same-sex peers. We now have two wonderful daughters, Sanibel (6) and Brennan (10), and my home state of Wisconsin has just been added to the list of states with marriage equality. The thought alone makes me well with tears. The reality that our family will now be legally and equally recognized under the law is one that comes with great happiness. However, each day I go to work, I am reminded that the LGBTQ community does not universally feel the joy I'm feeling, and I am reminded that there is still much work to be done. Until every person in every state has the ability to marry the one they love, we will continue this work. Until lived equality matches the legal equality, we will continue this work. Until every young person is safe in their school, we will continue this work.

As the Midwest Regional Manager at Family Equality Council, I work daily to ensure that LGBTQ parents and their families are able to connect and celebrate as well as support each other. We work to promote both their lived and legal equality, and we host annual events across the country. Our largest event—Family Week—drew over 500 families this year alone. Families joined us from almost every one of the 50 states, affirming our presence across the country and my personal commitment to fighting not only for my own family but also for all LGBTQ parents and their families.

Family Equality Council events provide opportunities to bring families together to celebrate, and I am extremely proud of our programs. The Outspoken Generation™ empowers children with LGBTQ parents to use their voice to speak out and dispel myths and misinformation about their families. Their voices are resounding in today's amicus briefs

PHOTOGRAPHED BY IAN DEGRAFF

and in local communities across the country, leading the charge for equality for our families.

Although we know that love makes family and full marriage equality seems impending, twenty states do not recognize same-sex marriage. In November, we have another opportunity to raise our voices about our families during National Adoption Month. With LGBTQ parents and their children living in all 50 states, it is especially vital to ensure legal recognition of parent-child relationships for those who live in states without marriage equality. Through our Allies for Adoption campaign, we will use the voices of our children to further express the extensive measures many LGBTQ parents must go through to legitimize their own parental rights.

As a lesbian mom, raising two daughters in a country where my ability to protect my own children varies state-by-state, adoption was the way we chose to form our family. November's Allies for Adoption campaign serves as an important opportunity to highlight our family values and educate our country about the lack of protections LGBTQ families endure. Through the voices of our families sharing our personal stories, we will continue to inch closer to full equality for all LGBTQ families.

For more information on The Outspoken Generation™ and Allies for Adoption visit: familyequality.org/outspoken. ■

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The Revolving Door Closet

An anonymous local reader tells the story of his family and the times when going back into the closet became necessary for professional and emotional survival.

MY PARTNER IS AN elementary school teacher. He has been an elementary school teacher during our entire almost 16 year relationship. The schools have changed, the cities have changed, the grade levels have changed. One thing has not changed: there has never been nor is there now a picture of me anywhere in his classroom.

The lack of such a picture is not due to his feelings toward me and our relationship. He simply wants to avoid potentially negative issues at work. While the issue of a gay elementary school teacher might not even raise an eyebrow among some, there are others who may not be so understanding. After all, he may try to recruit their child into the homosexual lifestyle! It would take only one disgruntled student or parent to make a fuss and serious problems could arise. You may have noticed that I am also not using even his first name in this article.

Yes, we do live in Madison—wonderfully accepting Madison. However, my partner does not teach in Madison. As a non-native Wisconsin resident, I've noticed over the years how Madison is a very unique "bubble" in the middle of a much less liberal state. In other words, one does not need to venture far to find a much less prevalent attitude of acceptance when it comes to LGBT people.

Initially, this was going to be the subject of my article: my partner the teacher and how he is in the closet in his classroom. However, I think there's a much bigger issue than that. As many huge strides as LGBT people have made in terms of acceptance, we still have a long way to go. And until we get to that time when LGBT people can be "out" anywhere and anytime, we often find ourselves dealing with what I am calling "The Revolving Door Closet."

My partner is out to his family, his friends, and even his fellow teachers and administration. But in his classroom, he's closeted. He might resist me saying that, but I think we are in the closet any time we do not feel comfortable with people knowing that we are gay.



Did I mention that we have a daughter? We do! She came into our lives when she was fewer than five months old. She is now almost 13. She is a wonderful human being, and our lives are so much richer for having her in them. She is also quite shy and never wants undue attention drawn to her. She has always been very comfortable with having two dads (it's all she's ever known), but she also knows that this is far from "the norm."

I know that my partner is not alone in dealing with the "revolving door." I know this because I too still deal with it from time to time (more often than I would like).

My friends, my family, my boss, my coworkers, and pretty much anyone who matters to me know that I am gay. I'm as open as I can possibly be in most situations. However, my work sometimes takes me to communities outside of Madison, outside

of that safety bubble. There are occasions when I have removed the ring I wear on my left hand—the one placed there over 13 years ago during our union ceremony. Why do I do that? Often I give presentations about communication and the topic of how attendees' home lives relate to their work lives. I remove my ring to avoid questions that might come up about my "wife."

Do I enjoy removing my ring? Do I enjoy not mentioning my life partner? Does he enjoy not having pictures of his partner or current pictures of his daughter in his place of work? The answer, of course, is a resounding "no!" We do those things—we jump back into that revolving door—to avoid awkward situations. Does it feel phony, disingenuous, and untrue sometimes? Absolutely!

You know, right after I typed that we do these things "to avoid awkward situations," I realized that it's so much more than just that.

I was relatively late coming out when I did so in my late twenties. As many of you probably also experienced, it was not without difficulty; however, it felt so freeing to fling that closet door open. No more "just haven't met the right girl" or "too busy for a relationship." At last, I could be my true self.

Could I really, though? Can any of us ever truly be? I don't know the answer to that.

I do know that being gay bashed certainly can serve as a reminder that it may not always be safe to be completely out. When I was in my late twenties, I was ambushed while sitting in my car. I was, I thought, flirting with another young man who was standing beside his car. I was in a park—the only place in my Kansas hometown where I had heard people like me could meet one another. As fate would have it, the other young man must have been the lure. Suddenly fists were coming at me through my car window. I heard things like "Get the faggot out of the car!" I must have been punched in the face 10 to 15 times. They tried

very hard to get me out of my car or at least get the keys so I couldn't drive off. Somehow, as I was being pummeled, I was able to close the window, start the car, and get the hell out. My face looked like I had been in a particularly rough boxing match. If they had gotten me out of the car, I'm not entirely convinced I would have survived the night.

Naturally I have lived my life since that time quite differently in terms of being out. I'm out when I feel I am in a safe place. That really makes me no different than my partner. Even though he doesn't necessarily fear gay bashing, his reasons for jumping into that revolving door closet are just as valid. He fears negative repercussions from students and their families for both himself and our daughter.

I worry sometimes. I worry that we are sending a message to our daughter that being gay is something that has to be kept hidden. My hope is that she sees us being open and affirming about it often enough that it makes up for those times when we are not. In speaking with her, we have always been open and honest with her about who we are as gay men, but more important, who we are as human beings. We have also been honest in telling her that there are people in the world outside our home and especially outside of Madison who would not accept our relationship and certainly would not accept us as her parents. Have I mentioned that she is an amazing girl who is becoming an amazing young lady? She is. She gets it. She has always known that she has two parents who love her unconditionally, and she has always loved us (even when we remind her to brush her teeth or lose our patience when she moans about homework).

So...the Revolving Door Closet. Is there a solution? For anyone? It's part of our lives, and we do the best we can to navigate those waters. We have a good life...a really good life. I'm sure many of you who identify as LGBT take those occasional trips into that closet as well. It may not be fun to be in there, but at least we always know that a trip back out is in the very near future. There was a time in this world when no one was ever out of the closet, so we have come a long way. My partner and I will probably not be around to see a time when even a teacher in rural Alabama can proudly display a picture of his husband or her wife without fear of repercussions. But that time is coming—it is most definitely coming! My hope is that our daughter will see that time. ■

DID YOU KNOW

HEALTH INSURERS BEGIN ADJUSTING TO SAME-SEX MARRIAGE IN WISCONSIN

With the Supreme Court decision not to hear the marriage equality cases in states like Wisconsin leading to the legality of same-sex marriage, health insurers are having to adjust to the new reality. A response from Dean illustrates those changes: "Dean Health Plan will hold a one-time special enrollment period in December for all same-sex couples who were married in states where same-sex marriage was legal on the date of marriage. This includes the couples married in Wisconsin in June 2014, as well as marriages that occurred in Wisconsin on or after October 6, 2014. If the marriage date was more than 30 days ago, then the couple is eligible for the December special enrollment period described above and the effective date of the spouse's coverage will be January 1, 2015. No late enrollee penalty will be applied. If the same-sex marriage occurred within the past 30 days, or occurs in the future, the couple will be eligible for a qualifying event (marriage) that will allow the subscriber to add his or her spouse to our plan within 30 days of the event. The spouse's effective date of coverage will be determined as described in the subscriber's Group Member Certificate. For questions or clarification, please contact your Dean Health Plan account manager."

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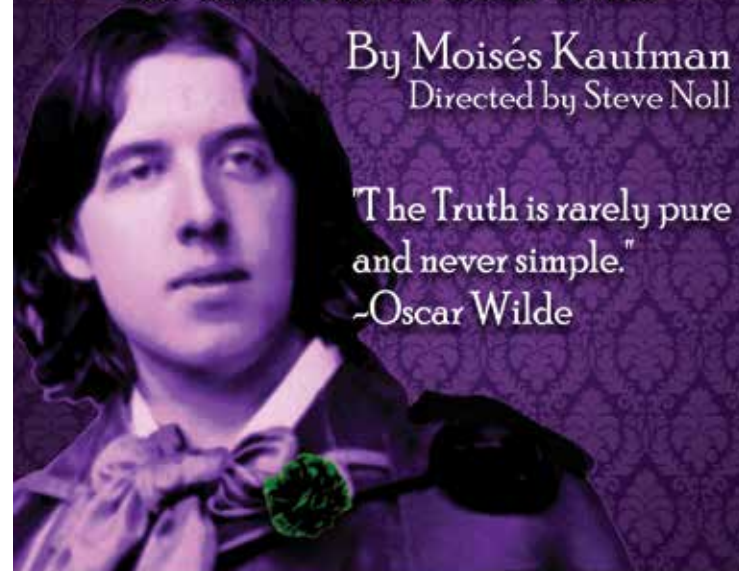


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Justice Warrior

Caroline Werner interviews **Carrie “Chaos” Riddle**, a working class grandmother who has dedicated herself to volunteering on behalf of the most vulnerable among us.

I MET CARRIE (CHAOS) RIDDLE, a 50-year-old lesbian grandmother who works for the City of Madison as a snowplow driver, among other things, a couple years ago at a workshop on homelessness in Madison. Last winter, she “mothered” me through an intense, emotional, traumatic experience, healing a big part of my family history.

I came to admire Carrie for her protective, loving nature, her inner strength, her energy, and her resilience. I also learned a lot about the positive work she does in our community.

You do a lot of volunteer work. What inspired you to work on behalf of the homeless? I was a homeless runaway as a teenager. When I was single with my kids, and with no child support, I would switch housing when the rent went up and I didn’t have money for the security deposit. I’d be homeless for at least a month with two kids, a dog, and a cat. I was labeled a “bad” teenager, so I had a lot of experience. I knew the resources.

I got involved with the first Occupy group on East Washington Avenue. I did not like what was happening there. It turned into a place



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“Everybody has the right to not freeze to death at night. Stone Soup volunteers don’t care what your issues are. You have the right to see the next morning.”

with a lot of drinking and drugs. I stepped out of it.

A little while after the East Washington group dissolved, another one formed, got kicked out of their location, moved to land in front of the Dane County Human Services building off Northport Drive, and then were forcibly moved to Token Creek. From going out to Token Creek, at Christmastime, I saw that kids were falling between the cracks.

I think you started up Santas Without Chimneys.

Why did you start that? How long has it been operating?

The Toys for Tots program is a great program, but homeless parents had no transportation or time to pick up stuff. So we started Santas Without Chimneys. We served 100 kids in the first year, 300 in the second year. There are over 1,000 homeless kids in the Madison School District. I organized the first Santas Without

Chimneys activity in less than two weeks.

How did you get volunteers to help with Santas Without Chimneys so quickly?

I’m a member of the Autonomous Solidarity Organization (ASO). I help with the ASO Brat Fest. I know I can always get the help of the ASO members. Feeding State Street Families (FSSF) is a sister organization to Stone Soup, another group I started. FSSF serves the homeless on the streets. They can receive in-kind, tax-deductible donations. If I ever have to, I can rely on FSSF to help me with Stone Soup, especially with sleeping bags, hand warmers, etc. A list of needs and a wish list are on the Stone Soup Squad web page.

This year you may be serving even more children. I understand you learn about them and their wishes through the schools and Dane County Human Services. Because we’re moving into the winter months and the holidays are coming up again, I’m wondering if you want more people to be involved in either Stone Soup or Santas Without Chimneys? We can always use help, either with donating and/or delivering. A lot of people tell me they really appreciate and enjoy the experience. **ED NOTE:** Anyone interested in contacting Chaos can do so through Caroline’s email address: cwerner@ourlivesmadison.com

Why and how did you start up Stone Soup, and what is it exactly? What do you tell people when they tell you you’re “enabling” the homeless? I pretended I was homeless one winter. The first time, I’d forgotten a sleeping bag. A homeless guy offered me some of his blanket. Another time I went out, it was New Year’s Eve and one of the coldest nights of the year. I had two sleeping bags in the trunk. Two other people needed bags, so I gave them mine. I went to the store and bought \$60 worth of cheese and crackers to celebrate the New Year. I also ran around all night giving guys hot tea and ended up with hypothermia. That is how Stone Soup was born.

You’ve told me that people have told you that you’re enabling the homeless to stay outdoors by feeding them and giving them supplies. Everybody has the right to not freeze to death at night. Stone Soup volunteers don’t care what your issues are. You have the right to see the next morning. Some of these guys are not allowed in shelters, so how are we enabling them? Some of them are banned [from shelters] for life.

I managed to get a couple people into rehab. Stone Soup helped get six people off the streets last winter.

This summer I was contacted by the Veterans Administration outreach street team. They asked me to help them serve the veterans I find. So now I’ll be doing a “warm hand-off” of the veterans to their street team.

I received an award from the AFL-CIO for my work with Santas Without Chimneys and Stone Soup, which I shared with all the people who helped because without them it wouldn’t have been possible.

Carrie, I met you because of my interest in LGBT homelessness. And I know you as more than a rebel. Your knowledge and energy as a Druid got me through a very difficult event in my life recently. I experienced your nurturing qualities. How does your spirituality help you live your life? I worship nature, if anything. I believe everybody has worth. So if you look at my commitment to homeless people, they have worth. I just listen to them, and that’s important. I want to know what they’re thinking and feeling. I see the injustices. The earth is screaming for help, and I hate bullies so I’ll stand up and fight for the earth. ■



CAROLINE WERNER has a Master’s Degree in Social Work. She did case management with Dane County seniors before retiring. Now she is a part-time LGBT Senior Advocate for the OutReach LGBT Community Center, funded by the City of Madison.

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Out At Last

Madisonian **Rosalee Eichstedt** reflects on her relationship with her newly out bisexual dad and how it impacted her own path toward self-acceptance.

TWO YEARS AGO I moved my 80-year-old father to Madison to care for him. We have always been close, we are so much alike, and we have the same ridiculous sense of humor. Care-giving for him deepened our friendship, and about six months in some of the questions from my childhood started creeping back into my mind.

My whole life I felt like something was off. As a child, I knew my family was different, but I just couldn't put my finger on what it was. I remember asking questions and not being satisfied with the answers I received. It hit me one night as I was driving home from his apartment.

I turned the car around and went back. I opened the door and without hesitation asked, "Are you gay?" As the words fell out of my mouth, a sense of calm came with them. I felt as if all of my childhood questions were finally answered.

"Well...I wouldn't say I'm straight."

That night started a conversation that he had been waiting his whole life to have. Over the last year and a half my father has shared with me things he has never told anyone: Stories from the 1940s and the neighbor boys. Stories about married men in the factory where he worked for 34 years. Stories about the lovers my mom and dad shared. Stories about Bobby—these are my favorite stories. Bobby was one of the great loves of my dad's life. The unrequited love story that had a span of 10 years before my dad took a chance and, one night, kissed Bobby.

One of the major question marks from my childhood was a fight my mom and dad had over going to say good-bye to Bobby. My mom didn't want me to go, but my dad insisted. There are very few times that my dad stood up to my mom. He usually let her have her way.



Not this time. Bobby was dying, it was the late eighties, and my mom was afraid it was AIDS.

I questioned my dad about his love for my mother and the other female lovers in his life. He has been married to three women, and I wanted to know where they fit into all of this. He assured me that he had loved my mother and was attracted to her. He explained his attraction to women and that it never felt quite right for him to say he was gay. Gay just didn't seem to fit. In conversations since he has said, "gayish," "slightly gay," "Aren't we all a little bit gay?" and most recently "bisexual."

Through the honesty and bravery of my father sharing these things with me, I started to question my own sexuality. As I was questioning my feelings, I started going on dates with women. I started to picture my life with a woman. I started telling friends, and I noticed myself having trouble explaining what I was feeling. What does it mean if I'm not a lesbian, but I'm in a lesbian relationship? I started saying some of the same things my dad had said.

"I'm kinda gay. Gayish." "Well, I wouldn't say I'm straight."

At first I was beating myself up for nearing 30 years old and just figuring out that I might not be straight. How did I not know? Then one day I was talking about all of this, and I had a flash of a memory. I was about four years old, having a play date with a friend in a tent in my backyard. She told me about a new game. We took our clothes off, and she lay on top of me. My mom came to check on us, and when she saw what we were doing, she lost her mind. I had never seen her so upset. She was yelling and screaming and shoving our clothes back on. She marched us over to my friend's house in total silence, which was way scarier than the yelling. I don't remember what was said, but I know she shamed us. I believe that is why it never occurred to me to be anything other than straight. I didn't know why the game in the tent was wrong, but I knew it was wrong. The shame of that day closed me off from questioning and opening my heart to the possibility of being bisexual.

The conversations with my dad have helped to heal both of our hearts and to end the shame we have both experienced. This past year I have thought about writing this hundreds of times. The more we talked about it and the more I thought about it, I knew it was important. Society wants bisexuals to choose, pick a side. People will assume you are gay but just not ready to admit it. If you fall in love with a person of one gender, people will assume you that you are no

He usually let her have her way. Not this time. Bobby was dying, it was the late eighties, and my mom was afraid it was AIDS.

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In the interest of preserving a supportive, grassroots community and sport, and in the interest of respecting the privacy and dignity of every individual who participates or wishes to participate in roller derby, MRD has moved to create, pass, and now implement a non-discrimination policy that is more open and inclusive to those people who identify as transgender, genderqueer, transmasculine, transfeminine, agender, etc. The policy also does not set minimum standards of femininity or require doctors' notes or proof of hormone levels. Read more at madrollindolls.com

longer bisexual. Part of why I wanted to write about this was to tell my truth and to tell my dad's truth. I wanted to add two more faces to what it looks like to be bisexual. I wanted my dad, at 82, to be free. I didn't want this or the fear of being found out hanging over his head for one more day. ■

This piece, in longer form, originally appeared on Rosalee's blog, The Grey Ghetto (thegreyghetto.com), and is rewritten and printed by and with the author's permission.

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NOVEMBER 22

Wanda Sykes

ORPHEUM THEATER Wanda Sykes has been called "one of the funniest stand-up comics" by her peers and ranks among Entertainment Weekly's 25 Funniest People in America. Her Own special "Herlarious" aired in July, highlighting female comics. In 2010 she won a GLAAD award. madisonorpheum.com/event/sykes

DECEMBER 5-20

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ORGANIZATIONS

A representative sampling

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

Alianza Latina facebook.com/alianzalatinamadison

Dairyland Cowboys & Cowgirls dcandc.org

Fair Wisconsin 203 S. Paterson Street, Madison (608) 441-0143 fairwisconsin.com

Gay/Straight Alliance for Safe Schools (GSAFE) 122 E. Olin Ave., Madison (608) 661-4141 gsafewi.org

Gay Softball League badgerlandsoftball.com

Gay Volleyball League madisongayvolleyball.com

Hermanos Latinos sneal@aidsnetwork.org

Lez Talk Yahoo Group leztalkmadison@yahoo.com

Madison Gay Hockey Association madisongayhockey.org

Madison Minotaurs Gay Rugby minotaursrugby.org

New Harvest Foundation newharvestfoundation.org

Out Professional and Executive Network (O.P.E.N.) openmadison.org

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

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

Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus perfectharmonychorus.org

Proud Theater (LGBTQ Youth) proudtheater.org

StageQ - Madison's Queer Theater stageq.com

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

Wisconsin Rainbow Families wirainbowfamilies.com



OCTOBER 11 GSAFE Walk/Run/Eat



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Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde, November 7 - 22, Bartell Theater Moisés Kaufman's critically acclaimed off-Bway hit uses court transcripts, personal correspondence, interviews, and other source materials to recreate the tragic fall of the once-reigning wit of London, Oscar Wilde. madisontheatreguild.org/wilde/

Holiday Art Fair, November 21-23, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art The 2014 Holiday Art Fair will present fine art and crafts from around the country as well as local and gourmet treats, a silent auction, performances by local art organizations, and the popular Re-discovered Arts & Treasures Sale. This festive event is one of MMoCA's most important annual fundraisers, providing crucial support for exhibitions and education programming. mmoca.org

A Madison Symphony Christmas, December 5, 6, 7, Overture Center for the Arts Ring in the season with this magical holiday event that is sure to send your spirits soaring! For this concert, the Madison Symphony Orchestra is joined by the Madison Symphony Chorus, Madison Youth Choirs, and Mt. Zion Gospel Choir. The concert begins at 7:30 p.m. in Overture Hall. madisonsymphony.org

Angel Tea & Holiday Fair, November 9, Holy Wisdom Monastery Enjoy homemade goodies, tea, hot chocolate, or hot cider, with special teapot and angel souvenirs for everyone. While there, shop the Holiday Fair at the monastery. Fun for the whole family! Reserve your seat for tea at benedictinewomen.org/angeltea.

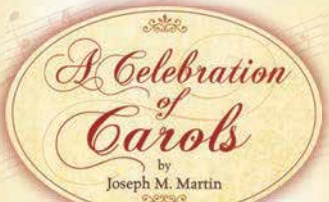
Madison Opera presents Fildelio, November 21 & 23, Overture Hall One of the most beautiful choral tributes to freedom ever written, Beethoven's score is truly sublime, with an ever-building dramatic intensity that leaves the audience exhilarated. madisonopera.org

Mad Rollin' Dolls Roller Derby Season Opener, December 6, Alliant Energy Center Expo Hall Madison's flat-track roller derby league returns for its 11th season of hard-hitting, fast-skating action at the Expo Hall of the Alliant Energy Center with a double-header home opener! All ages welcome. madrollindolls.com

Madison Ballet's Nutcracker, December 13-27, Overture Center Celebrate the 10th anniversary of Madison Ballet's beloved holiday classic! Follow Clara and her Nutcracker, as they travel one wintry night to a brilliant garden filled with characters to delight the young and young at heart. madisonballet.org

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DID YOU KNOW

MARRIAGE EQUALITY COMES (LEGALLY) TO WISCONSIN

On October 6, the Supreme Court of the United States denied review in all of the marriage equality cases pending before it. As a result of the Court's action, same-sex couples in Virginia, Wisconsin, Indiana, Oklahoma, and Utah will now be able to marry the partners they love. The orders also mean that same-sex marriage will soon become lawful in at least 30 states. The American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin had challenged the state's discriminatory marriage ban on behalf of eight couples seeking the freedom to marry in Wisconsin or to have their out-of-state marriages recognized. We're happy to report that the five couples who were not already married are busy planning weddings. One of the couples, Roy Badger and Garth Wangemann, will be married on their 38th Anniversary, on November 8th.

Wisconsin has also agreed to fully recognize those marriages performed during the one week in June after the ban was initially struck down. — Molly Collins, Associate Director, ACLU of Wisconsin



PHOTOGRAPHED BY ERIC BAILLIES

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Photographed by Timothy Hughes

FINDING Family

HAIR AND MAKEUP BY DAISY QUINTAL-LEPINSKI, UNION HAIR PARLOR.

Judge Rhonda Lanford found her true self through the love of families, both blood and chosen, and a lot of hard work

I had already pushed the photographer for *Our Lives* back to 6:30 p.m. because court was running long, and I had some work to finish up before I left for the day. Even so, my partner and I got home from work with just moments to spare. Our friend Kim, it turned out, was also running late. She usually beats us home to pick up her dog, Greta, who spends weekdays at our house. The upshot? When our family gathered on the couch for our family picture, Greta was right there too.

It takes a village—or at least an extended family. Greta and Ursa, our dog, are BFFs (best friends forever, for those of you who did not grow up in the '80s). With the dogs at one house on a workday, we can make sure both get fed and walked at lunchtime.

“Rarely do members of the same family grow up under one roof,” wrote Richard Bach.

My parents hail from the south—Alabama to be exact. My father had a sixth grade education and my mother had a fourth grade education. They were so poor they had to work in the cotton fields during the day instead of attend school. My mom lost her mom when she seven years old to pneumonia, and her father was an alcoholic. She was bounced from

family member to family member after her mom died, trying to take care of her younger sister and brother, who was still a baby.

My dad was the oldest of six kids, and his mother died when he was 12. His father was absent, and my dad’s job was to take care of his two brothers and three sisters on their rundown farm.

My mom and dad had lived a lifetime already when they first met.

My dad was fishing along the Tennessee River one day when he came upon a tent where a woman—my mom—and her two little girls were living. My sister Sandy was barely two, my sister Kathy still a baby. My mom was already a widow – her husband had been killed by a relative over a dispute over fishing territory. My mom had nowhere to go, but she was a survivor.

My dad said she was pretty, and he asked her on a date. She went, and the rest, as they say, is history.

They were married, and shortly after, my dad decided that the only way to try to make a better life for my mom and my two oldest sisters was to move north to find work. He moved to Chicago, found a job, and when he had saved enough money, he sent for my mom and sisters. They lived in a one-room apartment with a healthy population of cockroaches. They had no money, and when my mom became pregnant with my sister Diane, she delivered her at a free “research hospital” in Chicago. We still joke with my sister about whether the hospital was experimenting on her until my mom took her home.



With Greta, Ursa, and her partner, Judy Davidoff.

Free cheese

My brother Ray was born in Park Falls, Wisconsin and I was born in Ashland. I spent the first 18 years of my life in Iron River, an unincorporated town about as far north as you can get. My dad worked at a factory, and my mom held various jobs, from waitressing to painting fishing poles to anything that would put food on the table. Because my parents were not educated, they never were able to find jobs that paid enough for us to live above the poverty line.

I remember standing in line with my dad when they passed out free cheese and powdered milk in the government help line at the town hall. We shopped at Goodwill. We scavenged at the local dump for clothing, furniture, and sometimes food. We had a huge garden every summer and canned everything we could not eat. Given my mother’s southern roots, I did not know that fresh vegetables could be eaten in their native state without first being dipped in batter and fried. I had quite an awakening when I got to college and was part of the freshman dorm food plan.

Our summers were spent fishing. My mom, brother, and I would dig worms for bait out of the ground by the garden with a pitchfork. The first time I ever heard someone call fishing a “sport” and a “fun activity,” I was confused since it was simply a food gathering technique in my world. Riding my bike was fun. Playing in the dirt was fun. Fishing was not fun. We did what we did to survive. I learned a lot about how to face anything and everything head on and with my head high.

As a child I always felt like an outsider—never truly accepted and never truly fitting in. My parents were never accepted in the small, close-knit community of Iron River, even after 18 years. My dad talked about

We scavenged at the local dump for clothing, furniture, and sometimes food.

the first day they arrived in my town. He walked into the corner café and asked for a “piece of coffee,” which is how it was referred to down south. He was ignored.

The town had legendary stories about my mother, including the day that she stormed into my brother’s first grade classroom after my brother came home with fingernail marks on his neck, and my brother told her the teacher did it. My mom threatened the teacher’s life if she ever touched him again. She also kicked down the door of a neighbor’s house when she found out that the neighbor boy had punched my sister Diane in the face on the school bus. If only the movement against bullying would have had my mother at the helm, things might have progressed a little more quickly.

Before the phrase “it takes a village” became popular, I was living it, starting before adolescence. Because of my parents’ work schedules

Going beyond marriage equality



FAIR WISCONSIN
KATIE BELANGER, PRESIDENT & CEO

Fair Wisconsin has been preparing for marriage equality in the Badger state by developing our vision for a “post-marriage” movement. We all know that the freedom to marry is not the end of the road as we seek full LGBTQ equality. So we are focusing on educating the community and funders about the myriad issues beyond marriage, expanding our work on trans* equality through programs like the Trans* Leadership Institute and statewide trans* nondiscrimination, deepening our intersectional work, and expanding our framework of achieving legal equality to ensuring equality is a lived reality for LGBTQ people and their families.

Student expectations drive positive change



LGBT CAMPUS CENTER AT UW-MADISON
GABRIEL JAVIER, DIRECTOR AND ASSISTANT DEAN OF STUDENTS

LGBTQ students coming to college have increasing and complex expectations about their college experiences. Incoming students expect college to be a time of exploration, inclusion, diversity, and community. It becomes a challenge then when higher education institutions fall short in the areas of programming, support, or advocacy. We have to rise to meet these expectations with even greater support. I’m excited about the partnerships that we are able to create that speak to the wide range of intersections in a person’s life, like partnerships with Athletics, the campus Health Center, and with religious institutions.



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WHAT'S TRENDING [YOUTH & FAMILY]

Expecting more from senior living



INDEPENDENT LIVING, INC.
JIM SHAVER, CHIEF HOUSING OFFICER

We are seeing a significant trend in adult children taking increasingly active roles in their parents' home life and their futures. When it's time for a move—downsizing to an active independent community or “right sizing” into an apartment with support—the adult children want the best for their loved ones, which is often overlaid with their own expectations. Senior living communities are stretching to accommodate both the parents' expectations as well as those of their future residents, the Boomers. Watch for transportation, technology, wellness centers, and more to be reinvented to cater to an aging population without implying that someone is getting older.

Healthy living for our furry friends



DEER GROVE VET CLINIC
DR. STEVE FRAME

What excites me is getting so much cooperation from so many clients on weight loss for their pets. We've got pets shedding pounds like crazy. Obesity is an epidemic problem in our pets just as it is in humans. We've started the “Healthy Pet Weight Control” program. It includes a scientific approach to weight loss by calculating body fat percentage, using calorie targets, weight loss targets, continued weight checks, and nutritional counseling. I think the real secret is continued input and counseling because losing weight is hard and to be successful the diet plan needs to be customized to the individual pet.

and what people today would call a “dysfunctional” home, I learned at a very early age that I needed to take care of myself, and part of that was finding people to act as surrogates for the family that I did not have. I was doing my own laundry and cooking for myself by the time I was 10. I was getting myself up and getting myself to school. The first person I ever attached to outside my family was my first grade teacher, and she was the reason I threw my heart and soul into education. From day one, I was hooked, and I never looked back.

“Strange” feelings

I was also fighting a different battle without really acknowledging it. My first crush was at age five on Judy Graubart from The Electric Company. I used to imagine that we would sit on lawn chairs and hold hands in the sun. I had a crush on David Cassidy from the Partridge Family, but in my dreams, he was not my boyfriend; we were best friends who worked on cars together and wore matching shirts. I loved Lee Majors as the Six Million Dollar Man but was absolutely smitten when Lindsay Wagner as the Bionic Woman came on the scene.

Around 1982, I started acknowledging some of my “strange” feelings about girls, but I continued to fight them. It was a very different time in terms of our culture and what was accepted and what was not. There were no gay or lesbian leaders then, no role models. There were no gay movies that did not portray gays and lesbians as “freaks” or some sort of cultural anomaly. There were no television shows with gay characters, no songs about girls kissing girls, no celebrities standing up for us.

Frankly, most people did not acknowledge that gay people truly existed. My girlfriend in college had a sister who was also a lesbian, and she was a few years older than us. No one was really “out” then, and one day she decided to be brave and come out to her parents. She began the discussion by asking them, a couple of dairy farmers in northeast-



Digging worms for bait as a girl.

I finally acknowledged my sexuality after I left my hometown and went to college. In hindsight, the only way I was ever going to have a life that was authentic was to leave the life I knew and build a life somewhere else. Leaving what I knew was scary—out of my comfort zone—and I was not sure what to expect.

College started with its own challenge—three weeks into my first semester, my father had a heart attack and died at age 64. After that, I just wanted to be “normal,” and I tried dating boys. My heterosexual phase did not last long.

I came out in 1986. The first friend I told was one of my dorm floor best friends, Lee Anne. We were at a bar, drunk on 40 cent tap Leinenkugel beers. She listened to my heartfelt story of my struggle and my

The only way I was ever going to have a life that was authentic was to leave the life I knew and forge ahead somewhere else.

ern Wisconsin, if they knew what a lesbian was. They frowned, thought for a minute, and her dad finally said, “Aren't those them famous show horses?” She sighed and said, “No dad, those are lipizzans.” The conversation was over.

Gay bashing was still acceptable. It was acceptable to call someone a “faggot.” It was acceptable to bully. It was acceptable to make fun of the “queers.” It was acceptable to physically and verbally attack someone if you thought he or she was gay. I was struck recently when watching Macklemore and Madonna serenade same-sex couples getting married on national television. This was something that was not even imaginable back then. Certainly believing that a day would come when gay people could get legally married never even crossed our minds. If you were gay, you would never be legally married, period.

I did not want to be different. I had been different my whole life, and in high school I finally had a sense of belonging. I was popular. I was smart. I was funny. I had a lot of friends. I did not want to be gay. I always found it strange when people called it a “choice” because if it had been a choice at the time I would not have chosen to be gay. All of the “could nots” and “would nots” entered the picture. I could not live my life in an authentic way. I would have to hide forever. I would never have a “normal” relationship. I could never and would never get married. I would never be accepted. I would never have a “real family.” My mom, dad, sisters, and brother would never accept me.

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WHAT'S TRENDING [YOUTH & FAMILY]

Staying active to live longer



CAPITOL LAKES
TIM CONROY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

A good social life keeps you young. A recent study by the MacArthur Foundation found that heredity determines about one-third of how we age and the rest is determined by lifestyle. Where you live, those who live around you, and where you go for fun are a big factor in healthy aging. Look for a place where you can thrive, express yourself, and stay fit. Do what makes you happy, and your body will age better.

Diverse education for a diverse community



GOODMAN COMMUNITY CENTER
KATHLEEN WARD, COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Our Seed to Table Innovation Campus is a sophomore-only school year and summer program based on the highly successful Seed-to-Table Curriculum. This program, in collaboration with the Madison Metropolitan School District, uses inquiry-based methods to teach mathematics, Language Arts, Social Studies, science, and PE. In addition, Seed to Table provides education and training in three main areas: urban agriculture, culinary arts, and food preservation.

Seed to Table is part of Innovative and Alternative Education at MMSD which includes about 10 other programs. These programs work with students who are at risk for not graduating and provide opportunities to earn high school credits and get back on track to graduation. Many high schools across the country are shifting to career-based programs that prepare youth for future employment.



A FAMILY AFFAIR: At her judicial investiture with (from left to right) her sister Diane Lanford, Judge Ellen Berz, and partner Judy Davidoff.

journey, and then very profoundly said, "Duh." The second person I told was my dorm roommate, my friend Chris who had been my friend since middle school. I hemmed and hawed and told her I had something important to tell her, and I stalled and hemmed and hawed some more. She was sitting at the edge of her bed, literally on the edge of her seat as I was trying to get the information out. When I finally did, she leaned back, breathed a sigh of relief and said, "OH THANK GOD! I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TELL ME SOMETHING SERIOUS LIKE YOU HAD CANCER!" I have always been blessed with good friends. Lee Anne, Chris, and I are still close.

Telling my sister Diane was the most terrifying part of coming out. It is probably important to step back and explain the relationship I had and have with her and the relationships with a couple of other people who made sure I survived my teenage years and who continue to support me and be part of my family today. Diane was my parent and my caregiver from the day I was born. She left home when I was 7 years old to live her own life for a while, but she came back into my life when I was 13. She became my primary caregiver. Even though she lived two

My mom decided I had turned to women because of a bad experience with a boyfriend. What she did not know is that women had hurt me far more than any man ever did.

towns away from me, she made sure I had clothes to wear. She called me almost every day. She would visit me weeknights when she could and pick me up every Saturday morning to spend the weekend with her while my parents worked. She counseled me and mentored me. She was the one who attended all of my high school events and was the only one who showed up to stand with me on parents' night. With all of my important life decisions, she was my confidant, my guide, and my friend, all without judgment. She never told me what to do, but she told me the consequences of my choices—and trusted me to choose wisely.

Diane was also the one who saw that I was headed for trouble in junior high school, and she decided to intervene. I had a bad attitude and a chip on my shoulder and could have gone down a good or bad path. Diane enlisted the help of a teacher in seventh grade, Susan Bombich, who was my guide and protector by day, while Diane kept an eye on me during the weekends and evenings. Sue took it upon herself to look beyond the rough edges and mentor a kid who really, really needed her. I started to work hard every day to make her proud of me and to be the success she believed I could be. We have stayed close over the years.

PHOTOS BY KELLY DOERING, STICK PEOPLE PRODUCTIONS

She has been there and stood by me through the death of both of my parents, my brother, and many of my life crises and victories. She and her husband, Bill, opened their home to me and gave me a place to feel safe and loved when I had nowhere else to go as a teenager. My family outside my family really started to grow with her.

When I got to high school, I added another family member—another teacher, Sandy Kortjesma. She was not just my teacher, she was my friend, and she and her husband, Terry, opened their home and hearts to me. Sandy gave me refuge in her classroom and taught me to love literature, the French language, and history. We also have stayed close over the years, and both she and Sue spoke at my investiture when I was sworn in as a Dane County Circuit Court Judge last year. I work hard every day to make sure Diane, Sue, and Sandy are proud of me.

Against that backdrop, I was 20 years old when I decided to come out to my sister Diane. For the first time in my life, I thought she would judge me and, worse, blame herself. When I told her, she cried, she wondered why, and she accepted. And now more than 25 years later, she is still my confidant and one of my biggest fans.

After coming out, as I began my new life, I began creating my new family—the people who would sustain me as I forged unknown territory. I was still afraid the rest of my "real" family would not understand or accept me. When my sister finally told my mom after fielding multiple inquiries as to why I didn't have a boyfriend, my mom decided I had turned to women because of a bad experience with a boyfriend. What she did not know is that women had hurt me far more than any man ever did. If her theory were correct, I would be just about the most heterosexual person you would ever meet.

I needed to surround myself with people who would just say I was okay. I was scared, but I was also determined that I was going to be my authentic self no matter what.



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Care. No matter what.ppwi.org**Toward myself**

When I graduated college, I was broke but still dreamed of going to law school someday. To stay on course, I took a job at a law firm in 1988 working as a receptionist for \$5.00 an hour. After about a week on the job, I told everyone there—lawyers, secretaries, legal assistants, and the office manager—that I was gay. Everyone was pretty good about it, but a few did not embrace me.

One legal assistant was really struggling with it—she was very religious, and who I was did not compute in her reality. Like most people, I would come to work and over break or lunch I would talk about something my girlfriend and I did—whether we went to dinner at a new restaurant, or went on a trip to see our family, or had a fun evening with friends. At one point, this legal assistant said to me, “Why do you need to tell us what goes on in your bedroom?”

All of us who have been asked this question—and I assume it is most of us—know that we actually were not and still are not telling anyone what was going on in our bedrooms. We were sharing what was going on in our lives. It reminds me of a cartoon collage called “The Gay Agenda,” with outrageous captions like “They do laundry! They cook dinner at home! They go to their jobs! They spend time with friends! They raise children! We must all work hard to stomp out this menace to society!”

So I told this legal assistant, “I’ll make you a deal. When you come to work, please do not tell me what you did over the weekend with your husband and kids. I do not want to hear about whether you saw friends,

Our community will always be more than the “traditional” definition of family. We have had to, out of necessity, forge strong bonds with our friends and surround ourselves with those we trust and who lift us up and support us.

went to parties, had a picnic, or went to the kids’ football games. Because that is what you’re asking me to do when you tell me you don’t want to hear about my life because I happen to have a girlfriend.” It was only then that she understood what she was asking. By the time I left the firm in 1990, when she said goodbye, she said, “Before I met you, I would not want a gay person to be a teacher for one of my kids. Now I think I would have to meet that person and get to know them first.” It was then that I knew that part of change was changing one person at a time.

I’ve come a long way since being that 18-year-old dreamer trying to find her place in the world. When I moved to Madison in 1992, I found home and I found my family. I found a place that embraced our community. I remember how excited I was the first time I walked into A Room of One’s Own and could find books and movies and see people like me. After I moved, a friend from out of town came to visit and asked if there were any “gay bars” or “gay restaurants” here. I remember telling her that every bar is a gay bar and every restaurant is a gay restaurant in Madison.

What is a true family? We all create what that means to us. My family is my partner, Judy Davidoff, who has stood by me through thick and thin for almost eight years, loves me and supports me, and always wants the best for me. Ellen Berz, my friend and mentor of 25 years who helped me realize my dream of becoming a lawyer. My sister Diane Martin, who has been there from the day I was born, quietly coaching me without judgment. My friends and my community who have lifted me up and supported me for all of these years, both personally and professionally.

When I heard the U.S. Supreme Court would effectively let stand U.S. District Judge Barbara Crabb’s ruling legalizing same-sex marriage in



With her chosen family on Rosh Hashanah

Wisconsin, it was clear that all of our definitions of family would continue to grow and change. We can get married, we can legally adopt our children, and we can enjoy the legal protections and shoulder the responsibilities that come with this right. But we know that our community will always be more than the “traditional” definition of family. We have had to, out of necessity, forge strong bonds with our friends and surround ourselves with those we trust and who lift us up and support us. If you haven’t found those people, start looking—reach across any lines or barriers because we are all in this together.

Throughout the course of history, any group of invisible people have become visible and relevant because they support each other, lift each other up, and shout loudly that they have arrived. We are in control of our destiny now—we are responsible for the families we create, the dreams we chase, the lives we live.

True, honest, strong families, made up of the people you love and the people who lift you up are an utter blessing and a choice we all get to make. Thank you to my family and my community in Madison and Dane County. I love you all, always. ■

[YOUTH & FAMILY] WHAT’S TRENDING**Animal welfare is emotional/behavioral too****BAD DOG FRIDA**
SUE HUNTER, CO-OWNER

We seem to see more dogs/cats with behavioral and health issues. Whether that has always been the case or it’s a reflection of changes in our environment, people don’t just settle and throw their hands up. They are willing to get to the root of a problem with their companion animals. This is also reflected by the number of products available to treat everything from anxiety, to digestive upsets, to joint health, to food allergies and sensitivities. In particular we have witnessed some excellent results by customers who have used a food sensitivity testing kit that we carry, and with the results we identify foods and treats that work for their dog/cat.

Holistic approaches to caring for our pets**DOG HAUS UNIVERSITY**
NATE MATHIS-VARGAS, OWNER

The most exciting dog trend right now is the true holistic approach people are taking. Our customers view their four-legged companions as more of a family member than property. The food options, veterinary care, and of course daycare are part of a new normal. Here in Madison there are some fantastic options for families with pets. Dog Haus University is the only dog daycare on the Isthmus (at 825 E Johnson Street). We are booked for 12 months out and are scouting a new location on Monroe Street that will be open soon to meet the need of our urban dog daycare concept.

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DR. WILLIAM GILLES, DIRECTOR

One of the most exciting trends in the veterinary medical field is the increasing awareness and use of a "One Health" model. This model looks at treating humans, animals, and the environment in a holistic manner and increasing collaboration with other health professionals to problem solve as a cohesive unit. On an international scale, this might look like teams of veterinarians, physicians, environmentalists, and public health officials forming a unified front against a disease outbreak. On a local level, it provides the framework to treat people, pets, and the community as one connected whole. This is opening up the door to explore some really innovative ways to reach people and encourage positive community growth.

Marriage equality means parentage equality



THE LAW CENTER FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES
EMILY DUDAK TAYLOR, ATTORNEY

The Trend in LGBT Family Law in 2014? Parentage Equality! On October 6, 2014, the US Supreme Court denied review of the marriage ban cases before it. That left the September 4 decision of the Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit as the law of the land in Wisconsin (in other words, marriage equality). This equality includes not just the ability to marry, and not just the right to have your out-of-state marriage recognized here, but also the right to start reaping all the benefits of marriage. In my legal practice this means equal legal parentage. There are dif-

Expert guidance

Surrogacy isn't a simple or an expensive process. That's why it's important to have expert guidance. "If you don't have your i's dotted and your t's crossed from a legal standpoint, for instance, you can really run into problems," Murphey says. "It takes a whole team of people, and we help assemble the right ones."

Her agency matches IPs with a GC, conducts in-depth psychological screenings of both to ensure readiness and suitability, and connects them with medical resources that can assist with egg or sperm donations and implant embryos in the GC's uterus. They also ensure that both parties have appropriate legal representation and that needed contracts are in place. Three attorneys who had founded The Law Center for Children and Families opened the Surrogacy Center in 2002, to provide a safe, professional, and legal way to navigate the process.



Greg & Guillaume

Legally speaking

Murphey works with attorneys such as Theresa Roetter of Annen Roetter, LLC. She's practiced for 21 years in family formation and protection, including adoption and surrogacy cases. She works with straight couples, as well as lesbian couples using egg and/or sperm donors for medical reasons, where one woman gestates. She also works with men or women using a surrogate. Most lesbian couples don't need a surrogate unless neither woman is able to gestate.



Technology's come a long way for this increasingly popular parenting option, and marriage equality might make the legal side a little simpler.

greg and Guillaume of Paris, France, welcomed their baby daughter, Emilie, on December 29, 2013. She was born via a surrogate gestational carrier named Jackie, and her dads couldn't be prouder parents.

"We're so happy to have our lovely baby girl, and we're very happy to have Jackie in our lives," says Greg. "It's been so fulfilling that we want to have another child the same way."

He and Guillaume spent about five years preparing—exploring options, saving money, talking with each other about their expectations and readiness—before beginning the process.

"Surrogacy is illegal in France, so we looked at other countries," Greg says. "In the U.S. it's controlled, ethical, and legal."

After investigating many agencies, they talked with Mary Murphey, program director at The Surrogacy Center in Madison. "We belong to a gay parenting association and a lot of people had worked with the center," notes Greg. "When we talked with Mary it just felt right."

They'd been concerned about surrogacy, thinking it would be the "traditional" process, where the surrogate uses her own eggs and either donated sperm or an intended parent's (IP) sperm to form embryos. But today most surrogates are gestational carriers (GC), where donated eggs join with sperm to form embryos. The GC has no genetic connection to the baby; she supplies the uterus.

"With traditional surrogacy I felt like we'd be taking someone's baby," Greg explains. "But we had an anonymous egg donor and some embryos with my sperm and some with Guillaume's."

Greg is Emilie's biological dad, and the couple is already working with The Surrogacy Center and Jackie to have a second child with Guillaume as the bio-dad.

Local Sources

- Annen Roetter, LLC
- Forward Fertility
- Law Center for Children and Families
- Pink & Blue Surrogacy, LLC
- Surrogacy Center
- Wisconsin Fertility Institute

ILLUSTRATION BY DANIELLA ECHEVERRIA

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WHAT'S TRENDING [YOUTH & FAMILY]

ferent ways to get there: second-parent adoption, stepparent adoption, two-parent adoption, intended parentage, marital presumptions, sperm donor statutes, etc. Each couple will have to choose what is best for their family. What is most exciting to my law firm is the idea of judges losing their discretion to not grant adoptions for same-sex couples. They may be able to continue to deny us the “fancier” and more creative arguments, like the marital presumption or intended parentage. But we do not see how, post-Wolf v. Walker, a judge could deny an adoption. The removal of that judicial discretion is very exciting. Where you reside and which judge is assigned will no longer be the most important factors in a case.

Our bodies, our choices



PLANNED PARENTHOOD OF WISCONSIN
TANYA ATKINSON, VICE PRESIDENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS & EDUCATION

We are seeing a Wisconsin that is ready to come together around shared values, to celebrate (and demand) a person's ability to make their own health care decisions. We are seeing people wanting to shape the landscape and change hearts and minds around these unnecessarily political issues, particularly through storytelling and conversation. Embody, our sexuality education programming, provides storytelling training in conjunction with sexuality training. People have enthusiastically embraced it, noting that this is how their work comes to life. In addition to offering this training, we will continue our efforts to provide, and train others to provide, inclusive, innovative sexuality education. And conversations. Let's talk to our families, friends, and neighbors about why access to the kind of services Planned Parenthood provides is important for a healthier Wisconsin.

Two Dads. Twin Daughters. One Family.



Madison's Surrogacy Agency since 2002
surrogacycenter.com

“I do a lot of informational gathering,” says Roetter. “I help people put their teams together if they're not already in place. It's very individual—I've seen people who live in Wisconsin, have an egg donor in California, and a surrogate in another state. But if they want to go to all of the surrogate's doctor appointments, for instance, geography is very important, and they might choose local team members.”

“The legal and medical sides go hand in hand, and clinics often won't move forward with the process unless they have legal contracts,” she adds. “I make sure the egg donor and the surrogate also have legal representation. There's a contract between the IPs and the egg donor if they're using one, and a GC agreement if a parent can't gestate.”

She prepares contracts and sends them to the parties' attorneys, and they negotiate until satisfied. “Then there's the medical part,” says Roetter. “I'm not usually involved again until there's a pregnancy. Then I work to ensure that both parents can be on the birth certificate and that the surrogate is protected from responsibility for the baby.”

The medical side

On the medical front, after undergoing fertility testing, male IPs have one or both partners' sperm joined with donor eggs to form embryos. The Wisconsin Fertility Institute, co-founded by David Olive M.D. and Elizabeth Pritts M.D., both of whom are certified in reproductive endocrinology and infertility, conducts this and other surrogacy-related procedures.

The doctors also prepare the GC's uterus and implant embryos according to the IPs' wishes. The GC usually receives care from her own physician during her pregnancy.

In years past, county social workers had lists of pregnant women to match with prospective parents, Olsen observes. “It's so competitive now. Almost all are open adoptions, and it's like a popularity contest.”

For female IPs, the doctors retrieve and test the health of the IPs' eggs and each partner's ability to gestate. They mix donor sperm—which the IPs choose from a sperm bank—with healthy eggs, prepare the uterus of the partner who will gestate, and implant one or more embryos. If there's a medical reason neither partner can gestate, the IPs use a GC.

“It's possible to use known sperm donors, but it's complicated,” says Olive. “The FDA requires rigorous testing, and it must be performed within seven days of obtaining the semen sample. Thus, if a number of samples are desired—such as for use in inseminations—either they must all be obtained over a 14-day timespan or testing must be done multiple times.”

Sperm and egg banks have websites where IPs can find Mr. or Ms. Right, as Olive says. “We have a big university here with plenty of young, healthy grad students who donate for the money and to help families.”

The donor and GC side

Jesse Skalitzky knows the donor process firsthand. She'd been an embryologist at UW Hospital before staying home with her children, and her former coworkers knew a couple that was having trouble finding an egg donor. She decided to donate and loved doing so.

“But I wanted to do more,” she remembers. “I was 24 and had two daughters and a son. My family was complete, but I couldn't process

the idea of never being pregnant again, so I decided to be a gestational carrier. My family has been very supportive.”

She carried three times, twice for the same couple, and had three girls. She keeps in close touch with the families, and her oldest “surro baby” is seven. “I love being pregnant, and I'm good at it,” she says. “Each pregnancy was successful the first time around.”

Since 2010, she's run Pink & Blue Surrogacy, LLC, in Waterloo. “It's a natural extension of something I'm so passionate about,” she says. “We're actively involved the entire time for both the intended parents and the carrier. We manage the business aspects so they don't have to and work with legal and medical professionals.”

Just Beginning

Steve and Trevor of Dane County are just beginning the surrogacy process, working with Christie Olsen, founder of Forward Fertility, LLC. She's a nurse practitioner who worked in reproductive health for many years before founding her agency to shepherd couples through family formation via surrogacy and/or donor eggs.

“We originally looked seriously at adoption,” says Steve. “It seemed like the most logical choice, but we didn't know how much adoption had changed.”

In years past, county social workers had lists of pregnant women to match with prospective parents, Olsen observes. “It's so competitive now. Almost all are open adoptions (where the adoptive parents and biological moms interact), and it's like a popularity contest. You have to sell yourself with YouTube videos and a website. And international adoptions have become so much more difficult, especially for same-sex couples—some countries are very close-minded.”

When Steve and Trevor talked with Olsen, “We just clicked,” Steve says. “We knew she was the one we wanted to work with. Her style is a great match for us.”

Adoption and surrogacy are both expensive, but they wanted the genetic connection to their child that surrogacy provides. “Christie had just found a woman willing to be a GC, and she asked us how quickly we were willing to move,” says Steve.

“We met her, and that also clicked,” he continues. “We chose an anonymous egg donor from Forward Fertility's egg donor database. We don't know each other's names, but we know her statistics—height, weight, health background, family history. Her profile tells us what she's done with her life and why she wants to be an egg donor.”

The couple plans to use both their sperm to create embryos and have one from each implanted, so hopefully they'll have twins that are half-siblings. They hope their GC will be pregnant by January.

“We're not sure yet what our options are in terms of the number of tries,” Steve says. “We're very committed to it, and as long as there's a good chance, we'll try. If not, we'll need to re-look at our options.”

“It's very complicated and gets more expensive with each try,” he adds. “But we didn't expect it to be perfectly smooth. It would be that way even if we were a heterosexual couple. It happens when it's meant to happen.”

He and Trevor always knew they wanted kids. “We feel so blessed that this is an option for us,” Steve says. ■



JUDY DAHL is owner and principal of JKD Communications, which provides freelance writing and editing services to clients such as Madison Magazine, Credit Union National Association, AIDS Network, and the Greater Madison Chamber of Commerce. She has two NYC-based daughters and two canine interns and is proud to have completed the 300-mile ACT 12 bike ride this summer.

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Meeting THE NEED



The Salvation Army of Dane County faces serious fundraising shortfalls in the wake of bad press internationally, but the local chapter has worked directly with the LGBTQ community for years.

Major Loren Carter cuts a modest figure, even in his well-kept Salvation Army officer's uniform. His tone is even and sincere when he talks, and though the organization he coordinates is currently in a hard struggle for continued support in liberal Dane County, Carter is more dedicated than ever to continuing the work.

The Salvation Army of Dane County (SADC) currently provides shelter for homeless families and individuals, as well as food assistance, educational programs, recreational opportunities for at-risk youth, case management services, medical and dental care for the homeless, and emergency shelter for families and women.

But that work has been threatened by a recent severe downturn in the amount of donations that come in to the organization through private giving. Carter explains that the SADC gets most of its funding from the community: just \$1.2 million of their \$4.6 million budget comes from government grants. And the SADC has one of the highest ratings for a social services organization, with 85 cents of every dollar raised going directly back into their outreach programs.

And, Carter is sure to point out, all of the money raised in Dane County stays in Dane County. When you put change into one of their red kettles, it goes directly to help your community. Still, last Christmas they missed their fundraising goal by \$300,000, putting a serious dent in which programs they're able to offer and how they're able to operate them.

Asked why he thinks that might have been the case, Carter smiles, a little wearily, and explains that there's no way to know for sure—people carrying less change, the continued recession—but admits they've also gotten “notes in the kettles from people explaining why they can no longer donate to us.”

The reason? Recent stories, most often circulated on social media during their summer and holiday bell ringing campaigns, which highlight one particular case over and over again.

In 2012 pop star Darren Hayes called for a boycott of the Salvation Army worldwide over their perceived anti-gay bias. In response, a radio show in Melbourne interviewed Major Andrew Craibe, a Salvation Army Media Relations Director based in Australia, to ask him about those accusations. Craibe's response to the questions were damning and seemed to indicate that he, and the Salvation Army, believed that gays should be punished with death.

The Salvation Army's position statement on the subject of homosexuality refers to scriptural prohibitions on same-sex relationships and calls on gays to live in celibacy. It also notes that “there is no scriptural support for demeaning or mistreating anyone for reason of his or



Major Loren Carter

her sexual orientation. The Salvation Army opposes any such abuse.”

But Craibe's individual interpretation of Old Testament scripture and poorly worded answers were circulated the globe over and held up as the word of the entire Salvation Army organization. “He was expressing his personal bias. It wasn't a reflection of the Salvation Army as an organization,” Carter insists.

Many local businesses have since dropped their support for the SADC, though, declining to allow bell ringers to stand in front of their stores, and donations to the kettles have declined significantly.

The Salvation Army of Dane County works hand in hand with both OutReach and Willma's Fund to see that any LGBTQ families or individuals that walk through their doors have their needs specially met.

Lost in the din was the Salvation Army's own response to the controversy, and it's one that seems to perfectly reflect Carter's views and those of the staff who work in Dane County: “Members do not believe, and would never endorse, a view that homosexual activity should result in any form of physical punishment. The Salvationist Handbook of Doctrine does not state that practicing homosexuals should be put to death and, in fact, urges all Salvationists to act with acceptance, love and respect to all people. The Salvation Army teaches that every person is of infinite value, and each life a gift from God to be cherished, nurtured and preserved.”

Demanding more inclusive schools



GSAFE
BRIAN J., SR. DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION AND POLICY

We anticipate more and more students, educators, and parents in school districts across Wisconsin organizing to ask for local nondiscrimination policies to be revised to be inclusive of transgender and gender nonconforming students and staff. We've seen a ripple effect stemming from our successful work with key districts, and we only expect this to continue. Ultimately this will lead to a push to change state statute 118.13, Wisconsin's pupil nondiscrimination policy. Additionally, we'll see districts—regardless of whether they have passed inclusive policy—take on the challenge of implementing best practices in regard to supporting this student population, including issues related to student records, bathrooms, locker rooms, privacy, and more. While some will happen proactively, many will happen as a reaction to a trans* child openly transitioning and/or entering their school.

LGBTQ Latin@s making their voices heard



ALIANZA LATINA
BALTAZAR DE ANDA-SANTANA, GROUP MEMBER

The participation of the Latino community in Madison's LGBTQ events has been a great, growing trend. It was incredible to see the us represented in the Outreach Pride Parade this summer. It was a real pleasure to see many Latino allies supporting the LGBTQ community. I think Madison is becoming more inclusive, and the Latino community is having a larger civil engagement; I hope to see that continue.

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WHAT'S TRENDING [YOUTH & FAMILY]

Out of the shadows



BRIARPATCH YOUTH SERVICES
CEDRIC JOHNSON, DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

There has been a groundswell of much-needed attention to at-risk youth issues, in particular youth affected by homelessness and human trafficking. It has been an "invisible" problem until recent years, and we are making strides in raising awareness and supporting not only the teens who find themselves in these dangerous situations, but also their parents. Briarpatch has an incredible team of counselors and social workers that are available to anyone (teen or parent) who may feel there is no place to go for help. We have more work to do, certainly, but advancing the conversation around these issues will encourage others to step out of the shadows and potentially save lives.

Supporting fluid identities



MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT
SHERIE HOHS, LGBTQ+ SOCIAL WORKER

Gender identity is the hot topic. I get calls from teachers, parents, and organizations inquiring about how to "handle" situations where kids are not fitting into the category of "boy" or "girl." Students are also speaking up, asking the adults to respect their chosen names, pronouns, and identities.

In Madison Schools, we are working to debunk the gender binary myth. We are invested in creating gender-expansive learning environments where all children feel safe, loved, and affirmed. This involves changing our language, teaching practices, and curriculum to become more inclusive to all cultures, races, genders, and sexualities.

We were excited to welcome our national partners from Gender Spectrum and Welcoming Schools recently to help us create schools that embrace family diversity, promote gender inclusivity, and where LGBTQ+ students thrive.

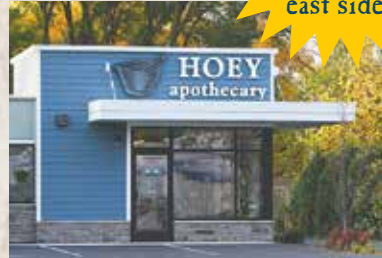
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Anyone in Need

"I care about anyone who walks through our doors and says, 'I have a need.'" Maj. Carter says simply.

Indeed, SADC works hand in hand with both OutReach and Willma's Fund to see that any LGBTQ families or individuals that walk through their doors have their needs specially met. "We won't turn anyone away," Carter adds.

Donald Haar started Willma's Fund specifically to assist homeless LGBTQ people who were not being served by the traditional shelter system, either because they were being turned away by certain religious organizations or because they were meeting with physical and/or mental abuse from fellow shelter inhabitants.

At a conference on homelessness organized by OutReach and Willma's Fund (with help from the SADC) earlier this year, Haar noted that he'd originally had the idea while working at the Salvation Army shelter, where he overheard someone say, "We've got nothing for transgender persons."

Indeed, Carter acknowledges the fact that traditional shelter set-ups are often unable—or flat-out unwilling—to help transgender individuals. And that's why, he says, their relationship with OutReach and Willma's Fund is so important as they're able to better meet their needs.

Same-sex families in need are fully welcome in the shelters and other programs offered by SADC.

"We're relying on [donations from] thousands of people who care about their community," Carter explains. "We want to be respectful of that, to be good stewards of that."

Outgoing social services coordinator Leah Weber did a lot to bring SADC up to speed, Carter goes on to say, by organizing educational training sessions that aimed to help staff be more inclusive and sensitive to the specific needs of the LGBTQ community, among others.

Years to come

As for the religious underpinnings of the organization, Carter doesn't shy away from them but insists that they are never a prerequisite for receiving services.

"We don't want to impose anything because that pushes people away. It makes it worse, not better," he says.

Carter explains that part of the intake process for families and individuals seeking help from the SADC involves a sit-down conversation with him and his wife, wherein they explain all of the services that are available—including religious ones. "We may sow some seeds," he says, "but whether they grow or not is up to the individual; it's not something we impose on people."

Scott Peterson, the newly hired Director of Community Relations, recalls meeting a young man who had moved to the area from the East Coast, having been pushed away from shelters there because they did require religious adherence to receive services. He was dubious about the SADC but ultimately impressed by the fact that there were no requirements and that LGBTQ people were welcomed.

"People start to look at the entire organization through one man's words, and that's really unfortunate," Peterson says of the Craibe incident. "But I want to emphasize that donations go right back to the most high-risk, vulnerable populations right here in Dane County."

And they've been doing that for nearly 125 years, since the chapter's founding in 1890. Carter and the organization hope that, with continued outreach, they'll be able to continue the mission for years to come.

"If you read our mission statement, it talks about the gospel of Christ," Carter explains. "The second prong of it is meeting the needs of humanity—without discrimination." ■

WILLMA WORKS



Donald Haar, performing as Willma Flynn-Stone, at the OutReach Awards banquet. With Major Carter (Inset).



Founder Donald Haar explains how Willma's Fund and the Salvation Army work together to help LGBTQ people in need.

As a Salvation Army employee and the founder of Willma's Fund for homeless LGBT people in Dane County, I can assure you that the Salvation Army of Dane County DOES NOT DISCRIMINATE against anyone for services or employment.

I whole-heartedly believe in the mission of the Salvation Army, especially here in Dane County.

The only things the Salvation Army asks are "do you have a need?" and "how can we help?"

They do not ask about sexual orientation or gender identity. The slogan "The Salvation Army is all about deeds not creeds" is true; they truly practice what others simply preach.

I am gay and very out here at the Salvation Army, and I have worked here for nine years. Of all the jobs I have had, this is by far the one where I have experienced the least amount of any type of discrimination.

I am also a drag queen, my drag name is Willma Flynn-Stone, and everyone at the Salvation Army of Dane County knows that. Willma's Fund holds drag shows to raise money to help homeless LGBT people with a focus on transgender people. The Salvation Army of Dane County has assisted with housing my transgender clients in hotels on many occasions. We usually split the cost; the Salvation Army pays for a week and Willma's Fund pays for a week. I am also aware of a family of two gay men and one child that stayed in the family shelter.

The Salvation Army provides hotel rooms for transgender clients not to discriminate but to protect them because they are not safe in any shelter, as the other clients often attack them verbally and/or physically. This is true at most shelters. Most LGBT homeless people I've talked to say they feel safer on the streets than in the shelters.

The Salvation Army was a key partner in the 2014 LGBT Homelessness Conference, which was a collaborative project with the First United Methodist Church, OutReach LGBT Community Center, and Briarpatch Youth Services. We gathered 105 people, mostly social service providers that work with the homeless community, to begin addressing the barriers to serving the LGBT homeless community. Major Loren Carter and 15 other Salvation Army staff were in attendance.

I have included a link to the Salvation Army's National website. The link includes video interviews with a lesbian and a transgender client who were helped by the Salvation Army in other states.

I also strongly urge you to learn more about the Salvation Army by volunteering.

For more information, visit the Salvation Army's non-discrimination statement: <http://salvationarmyusa.org/usn/nodiscrimination>

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OutReach LGBT Community Center, OutThere (18-24), and LGBT Senior Alliance are sponsoring another Thanksgiving feast. Turkey, ham, cornbread dressing and drinks are provided.

Bring a side dish, salad or dessert to share or a suggested donation of \$5.00. The event is open to all ages. No alcohol will be served.

For more information, please call OutReach at 255-8582 and ask for Steve or Angie. Also e-mail at angier@lgbtoutreach.org.

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LGBT Safe Schools

Part 2: Students Are the Focus.

"WE CANNOT COUNT ON intervention by teachers to protect or shield the children," said Sunshine Jones at the United's annual banquet in 1994. Jones was a founding member of the Madison Lesbian Parents Network and worked with Gays and Lesbians for Diversity in Education (GLADE). She and her partner Jo Ann Kelly were raising a child in the Madison schools. Jones cited cases of children being "subject to homophobic chants and slurs in school with instructors hesitating to halt them."

The prior year gay advocates had presented Madison Superintendent Cheryl Willhoite with a list of "Anti-Homophobia Strategies." These included mandatory homophobia training for all school principals, the survey of library materials for LGB inclusive items, and harassment intervention training for playground/lunchroom supervisors.

The need to focus on students and not just educational employees was the second major work taken up by Madison area school-based gay groups. In part it was driven by the experiences of the students. Gay and Lesbian Educational Employees (GLEE) published a newsletter called New Lessons. One lesbian teacher wrote insightfully, "As a lesbian, I live over the edge of political society and the dominant culture. The students I teach are at the edge of the school culture." The newsletter started to carry student tales from that edge.

In April 1993, "High School Student Speaks Out: Taking a few steps out" appeared.

It opened, "Throughout my childhood I've been a 'tomboy.' In my second grade picture I was wearing a plaid shirt with rainbow colored suspenders and jeans. I hated dresses and nylons." Part of her education continued when neighbors moved in on the block, and it was two boys being raised by two moms. "I began to realize that I wanted to live a lifestyle such as theirs rather than the type of life my parents lived." After seeing a gay pride parade in town, she recalled seeing "gays, lesbians, and bisexuals unafraid to show affection for one another, standing up for their rights and demanding more." Thus, aged 15, she decided to go home and come out to her mother and found a very supportive response.

VISIBILITY IN EDUCATION

In April of 1996, LGBT school efforts

erupted into a major Madison controversy. A photo essay exhibit called "Love Makes a Family: Living in Gay and Lesbian Families" had been prepared by Gigi Kaiser of Amherst, MA. A heterosexual teacher heard about the exhibit at a conference and asked to bring it to Madison, specifically to Hawthorne Elementary on the East Side. School District administrators were concerned it showed only one kind of family. A teacher at Hawthorne said the excuses from Downtown "didn't fly with her. Schools often pay special attention to certain groups in society," noting Hispanic Heritage Month, Black History Month, and posters of famous women.

When asked by a reporter, School Board President Carol Carstensen gave the exhibit a thumbs up from what she had heard about it. "One of our responsibilities as a school district is to reflect the diversity in the community." A member of the Lesbian Parents Network at one point estimated that at least 200 district children lived in gay or lesbian households. This was surely a grave under-reporting. At a school meeting one parent said it was "a polarizing issue." Tim Valdez, a fourth and fifth grade teacher, saw the exhibit as protection. "I have witnessed students picked on because of the perception they were gay or lesbian." One press report said the exhibit "has become a battleground for those with strong feelings on either side of the debate over the acceptance of homosexual families in society." A GLADE spokesperson said the school district administration had failed to lead. The school principal worked out a deal that the exhibit would go up for the planned two weeks but educational alternatives would be provided for parents who did not want their kids to see the show.

Nevertheless, the next Madison School Board meeting saw a rehash of the issues. Fifteen people spoke in favor of the exhibit and nine against. The record included a letter from Diane Reistroffer, a pastor at University United Methodist Church. She wrote, "I consider the District's contention that the essay discriminates against heterosexual families phony and ludicrous." Mary Babula's statement commended the "heroic teachers and community leaders at Hawthorne." On the other side outspoken firefighter Ronnie Greer, who became a well known LGBT community

opponent, called homosexuality a deceitful and wrong practice. The Board took no action against the exhibit.

Editorials in *The Capital Times* pointed fingers at the "bumbling school administration." Noting that they "are literally filled with images of heterosexual parents," to censor gay and lesbian parents "sends an insulting and despicable message."

YOUNG VOICES

Outside of Madison, one of the most moving pieces from this period also was re-published in *New Lessons*, a reprint from a Dane County high school student paper. It opened, "Dear Editor: I'm sixteen and gay. That's right, queer as a duck. A fairy, homosexual, homophile, fruitcake, cocksucker, whatever you want to call it, that's what I am. And I'm not the only one." About the students in his school, he noted, "Have they ever had a choice but to accept the heterosexual norm? I had none."

He continues, "I'll never have children; I won't be allowed to adopt. I'll live in fear of gay bashers, face ridicule of my lifestyle every day. I'll be a reject of society, a monolith of immorality in our perfect America." Clearly the letter shows that, at the least, school was producing articulate, powerful writers.

The student, like most in the state's educational systems, seemed totally unaware of any effects from the existing legislative protections enacted in 1993 under Statute 118.13 that protected K-12 students from discrimination (including bias, stereotyping, and harassment) on the basis of sexual orientation. Department of Public Instruction administrative rules required school boards to annually provide public notice on such pupil nondiscrimination. Today, groups such as GSAFE and the gay-straight student alliances have made many schools a very different place.

Yet, while not finding such a safe environment, the student of the nineties writes of his sexual orientation: "But I wouldn't trade it for the world. I have dreams of high fantasy, dreams of the perfect mate, dreams of pleasant days and blissful nights, dreams that far outweigh the consequences of my sexuality. Dreams that I will make a reality...."

Building this future was not to be his work alone. To the school community he wrote, "It is your duty as Americans to stand up for the rights of homosexuals, rise out of your homophobia and accept us on the basis of the dreams we share and the hopes we realize." Surely a great recipe for safe schools! ■



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



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PARENT: Christopher Mientus
NAME: Beasley
HOW DID YOU FIND HIM? All Saints Rescue, Milwaukee
AGE: 6.5, male
BREED: St. Bernard
BIRTHPLACE: Ohio
RESIDENCE: Beaver Dam
FAVORITE TOYS: The bed
FAVORITE LEISURE ACTIVITIES: Sleep, walks, rides
FAVORITE FOODS: Fresh beef, chicken, & seafood
PET PEEVES: Dad's work-schedule
LEAST FAVORITE PHRASE: Daddy has to go to work
IF PETS COULD TALK, WHAT WOULD YOURS SAY?
My daddy saved me....and I saved him.

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PARENTS: Jennifer & Stormy Justice, assorted kids
NAME: Oliver
HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR PET? He was given to a friend, but she was unable to keep him. He was living in her store. I took him home for the night and he would cry every time I walked away. He was immediately attached, so I let him stay.
AGE: 7, male
BREED: Siamese cat
OCCUPATION: Speed bump, area rug, alarm clock, and rat babysitter
FAVORITE TOYS: Mom's jewelry, Legos, window blinds
FAVORITE LEISURE ACTIVITIES: Harassing other cats, stalking the can opener, drinking fish water
PET PEEVES: Being woken up, putting up with vacuum cleaners, lawn mowers, and thunderstorms
IF PETS COULD TALK, WHAT WOULD YOURS SAY?
Don't leave me alone. Ever



PARENT: Erin Elizabeth Bialik
NAME: Scout Jasper
HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR PET? Happenstance
AGE: 2, male
BREED: Border collie!
BIRTHPLACE: The wilds of Dane County!
OCCUPATION: Professional herder
FAVORITE TOYS: Frisbees, rubber balls, hippo
FAVORITE LEISURE ACTIVITIES: Leisure? what's that? Chasing the elusive squirrel
FAVORITE FOODS: Spinach, carrots, bully stixxx, and mango
PET PEEVES: Loud noises, rowdy dogs, children
LEAST FAVORITE PHRASE: When I'm acting a fool, mom says she'll "get the gate" - horror
IF PETS COULD TALK, WHAT WOULD YOURS SAY? Hai! You haz something for me to do? Good. I like to haz busy times. K. Thx. Bai.

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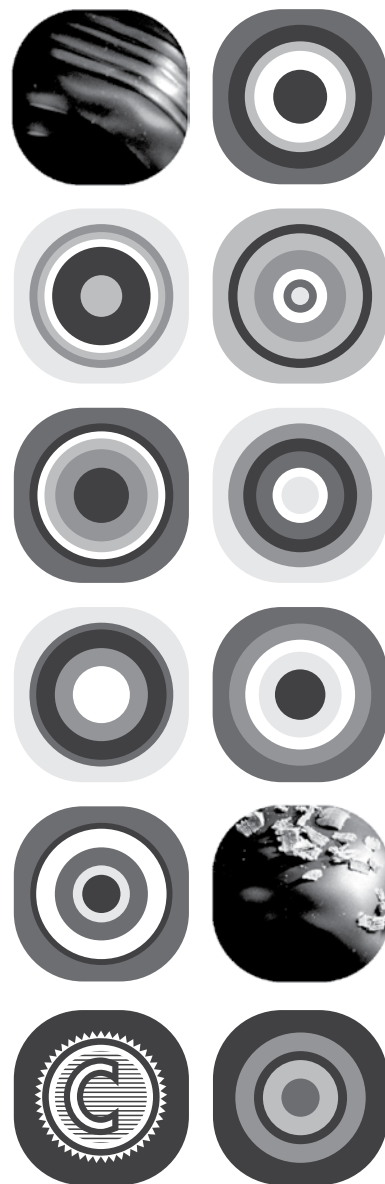
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Marriage Equality / Family Equality

Attorney **Michele L. Perreault** examines the progress made and challenges that remain in ensuring full parental equality following the victory for marriage equality.

HERE'S WHAT HAPPENS WHEN one writes an article about legal issues focusing on LGBT people: everything changes right before the deadline. As you are probably aware, on Monday, October 6, the U.S. Supreme Court declined to accept review of *Wolf v. Walker*, meaning that we now have marriage equality in Wisconsin! While it will take some time for state agencies and officials to change forms and procedures to adapt to the new legal reality, over the next several weeks we should start to see real progress.

This article was originally written to address specifics regarding protection of children in the then-existing legal environment. Even with this recent victory, much of the analysis and advice remains the same.

Concern for families and children permeated the 7th Circuit's thrashing of the State of Wisconsin's argument in favor of maintaining the discriminatory marriage amendment, with Judge Posner writing:

Formally, these cases are about discrimination against the small homosexual minority in the United States. But at a deeper level, as we shall see, they are about the welfare of American children.

So now that we have marriage equality, where do we go from here to try to address equal protection of our children, which, despite its prominence in the decisions so far,

Though many protections for children flow from marriage, Wisconsin law carries some specific statutes that must be addressed to establish such protection.

has not been a specific target of litigation? Though many protections for children flow from marriage, Wisconsin law carries some specific statutes that must be addressed to establish such protection. Rather than sit back passively to see how protections may eventually flow from marriage, some people have directly addressed Wisconsin statutes.

As just one example, I recently obtained



PERREAULT'S CASE: Kat and Teresa Riley with their children after Dane County Circuit Judge Shelley Gaylord ruled their marriage was constitutional and must be recognized under Wisconsin adoption laws.

same-sex stepparent adoptions for two couples: one married in Iowa and one married in Wisconsin during the brief "window" during which marriages were performed. These adoptions required two elements: first, recognition that the parties' marriages were lawful; second, that Wisconsin adoption statutes that reference the terms "husband," "wife," and "spouse" could not be used to impede the stepparent adoptions. Stepparent adoptions are less costly and less burdensome than traditional adoptions and some other forms of legal protections that attorneys have fashioned over the years.

In one of the two adoptions, we filed a direct challenge to the statutes and to the anti-equality marriage amendment. We specifically invited the Wisconsin Department of Justice to intervene as is required when parties are challenging the constitutionality of a law. As is their prerogative, the Department of Justice declined to be involved in the adoption process.

The decision not to intervene was, in my view, a tactical one from the State. The only way to establish precedent that must be followed by other courts in Wisconsin is to have a case go to the court of appeals or the Supreme Court. If, as was the case here, the

adoptions were granted, who would appeal? On the other hand, if they are so convinced that gay marriage is harmful to children (as they very poorly argued in the *Wolf* case), wouldn't intervention in this case be necessary to protect the children? Unsurprisingly, neither Attorney General J.B. Van Hollen nor Governor Walker, who has repeatedly said he does not support marriage equality, were willing to respond to numerous media requests for comment. The question is quite simple: does the State of Wisconsin support or deny equal protection for children raised in same-sex families?

Over the next several weeks and months, more stepparent adoptions will be filed around the state. These adoptions will be made easier now that we have marriage equality, but stepparent adoptions do not result in full equality.

We won't have full equality until we no longer have to "adopt" our own children. In Wisconsin, if a child is born during a marriage, both the husband and wife are automatically granted full parental rights to the child. This is true even if the child is not biologically related to one or both of the spouses (e.g., via artificial insemination or via an affair). This is called "the marital presumption." To establish full equality, we will have to obtain legal recognition of the same status with married same-sex spouses. That is, children born to or adopted during a marriage are automatically given equal legal protection with both parents, with no need to go to court or pay for an adoption. In the next several weeks, we anticipate filing legal documents to try to establish legal equality without the need to adopt.

We also need to consider alternative approaches for families who choose not to be married or who had children prior to marriage. Unmarried heterosexuals establish legal rights and protections under "paternity" statutes. At least one judge has recently been persuaded to enter the corollary order for women, in essence establishing a "maternity" action. This brings up a host of issues such as surrogacy laws (Wisconsin has none) and termination of parental rights for sperm or egg donors. While we have made extraordinary progress, we still continue to work hard to achieve equality.

It is time though for the State of Wisconsin to answer the simple question: do our children deserve equal protection under the law? I believe the answer from the courts and from the people of Wisconsin is a resounding "yes." ■



MICHELE PERREAULT is an attorney for DeWitt Ross & Stevens. Recently, she's presented "Protecting Children of Gay and Lesbian Families: Challenges, Opportunities, and Where We go From Here."

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Victories and the Work Ahead

Rep. Mark Pocan reflects on his first term in Congress and the successes and challenges that lay both behind and ahead.

AS I COME TO THE CLOSE of my first term in Congress, I want to share with you my reflections on the past two years. Before I begin a trip down memory lane, however, I want to say thank you for sending me to Congress. Thank you for letting me have a seat at the table where decisions are made to represent not just south central Wisconsin, but the LGBT community at large.

People often ask what it's like to serve in Congress—currently the most dysfunctional Congress in modern history. The legislative process is largely broken thanks to the Tea Party wing of the Republican Party. The Tea Party tail is wagging the GOP leadership dog, and little is getting done on the legislative side. But being there allows me to have other impacts.

I remember just one year ago on the afternoon of June 26 when the Supreme Court's DOMA decision was announced, the co-chairs of the congressional Equality Caucus had a telephone call with President Obama about the law. He promised us swift Federal action for implementing the decision, and that he did. In almost every area of government, swift implementation and strong progress have occurred. In addition, at the request of the Equality Caucus, while Congress stalled, the President moved forward and signed an Employee Non-Discrimination requirement for federal contractors.

We've also made progress on transgender rights, including the Senate passing a trans-inclusive ENDA bill to the Social Security Administration, updating policy to allow

individuals to change their gender designation to their most recent medically necessary reassignment surgery covered by Medicare.

While the equality front is moving forward here in the US, internationally we are in a darker period. According to the Harvey Milk Foundation, 1 in 6 people that previously had rights across the globe lost them in the last year. From Russia to Brunei and parts of Asia to Uganda, Nigeria and other African nations, too many can be killed or imprisoned for who they love. In Brunei, a newly adopted

According to the Harvey Milk Foundation, 1 in 6 people that previously had rights across the globe lost them in the last year.

penal code has legalized violence against its citizens, especially LGBT individuals and women. I was proud to lead a letter with 118 of my colleagues calling on the United States to halt trade negotiations with Brunei until the country addressed its human rights violations. The US must continue to be an active leader for global LGBT equality.

Back here at home, all of the progress towards LGBT equality is because people like



CONGRESSMAN MARK POCAN is the U.S. Representative for Wisconsin's second district, which includes Dane, Green, Iowa, LaFayette, Sauk, and portions of Rock and Richland counties.

you, across the country, got active. We stood up, talked out, organized, and helped elect our own and our allies to office. So thank you for all you have done to advance meaningful pro-equality initiatives across the country.

Let me end by sharing this story—something that drives me every single day I'm in Washington. The day after Senator Tammy Baldwin and I were elected two years ago, a local reporter went to a Gay/Straight Alliance group in one of our local high schools. They interviewed some of the youth. One student talked about the importance of our elections:

"I was always told if I'm gay, I'll never amount to anything. Well, they're wrong. Tammy amounted to something. Mark amounted to something."

Until no one questions that we all matter and amount to something, we have work to do. That's what's left for us to finish. ■

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The Privilege of Planning Ahead

Linda Ketchum examines the ways in which we worry about our children, depending on where they come from.

I'VE JUST SAID GOODNIGHT to my nine-year-old daughter. Every night at bedtime we review the day we had, and she asks, "Can you tell me what we're going to do tomorrow?" It's the same question every night, and she finds reassurance in the predictability of the answer. We talk about tomorrow, and I realize: the reassurance of that conversation is a part of our white privilege.

Recognizing that being able to talk about the day ahead with little worry is part of our family's white privilege doesn't mean that our daughter, the child of a lesbian couple, never faces frustrations or stigma. She's come home frustrated that some kid told her that two women can't get married or having had to answer to "Why do you have two moms?" for the umpteenth time. She's helped her teachers understand that saying "So tell your mom and dad" may not be reflective of all families by adding aloud "or tell your mom and mom." Early in her Kindergarten experience, a friend invited her to her house to play. After the play-date we invited the other child to our house. The girl's mom told us that her husband, who is very conservative, would not allow it.

Even with these challenges, pondering the day ahead as something normal and routine is part of our white privilege.

As a parent, when my daughter and I talk about tomorrow, I am not worried about how she will instantly be perceived based on her skin color. I don't have to worry when my daughter walks out of the door wearing a hoodie that she will be perceived as some sort of threat. I don't have to worry when my daughter

encounters a police officer that she will be seen as not belonging in a particular neighborhood. I don't have to worry that if my daughter is running down the street some neighbor will presume she just committed a crime. White parents don't typically have to worry about such things, but black or brown parents do.

The Wisconsin Council on Children and Families (WCCF) has issued a new report, "Race for Results," based on data compiled by the Annie E. Casey Foundation's "Kids Count" report. Last year's Kids Count data ranked Wisconsin 12th in overall child wellbeing. However, this year the researchers focused on wellbeing and race. What they found was that white kids in Wisconsin tied with kids in

Educator Robin Parker posits that system justification theory holds answers to why white people often don't want to "see color."

California for 10th in overall wellbeing, but African-American kids in the state ranked last in overall wellbeing.

The Capital Times wrote an article about the new WCCF report, and the comments were revealing. While some readers focused on the data, others chose to focus on why black youth wear their pants low, why they wear hoodies, why they might talk loudly, about the music they listen to, why their parents have failed them, etc. As a middle-aged lesbian, the comments had a familiar ring. For example: *I don't mind gay people, as long as they aren't*

so obvious. Why do you have to dress like that; can't you wear a dress? Gay marriage is special rights. Or the comments we hear when a woman is assaulted or beaten: What was she doing out alone at that hour? What was she wearing? What did she do to provoke him? Why doesn't she just leave?

All of these are attempts to deny rights to a group of people: the right to be who you are, to dress as you choose, and to travel wherever you want. These comments attempt to deflect responsibility and accountability for the disparate treatment, the discrimination that exists against blacks, women, and the LGBTQ community.

In his article, "Decoding Modern Racial Discourse: A System Justification Theory Approach," educator Robin Parker posits that system justification theory holds answers to why white people often don't want to "see color." "People are motivated to justify and rationalize the way things are, so that existing social, economic, and political arrangements tend to be perceived as fair and legitimate" even if they are not.

According to Parker, system justification theory explains that the preservation of the status quo "may be a more salient motive for action than self-interest, domination or out-group prejudice... white people may say, 'Racism isn't a problem in our society,' not because they have a conscious, personal dislike for black people or are unable to understand the contemporary struggles with racism black people endure. Instead...the dismissive remark arises from a strong psychological need to maintain the current social order even when doing so is contrary to cogent evidence."

To women and those of us in the LGBTQ community System Justification Theory ought to sound familiar. We know that the systems in place in this country were put there by privileged white men to benefit privileged white men. Those of us who identify as white and who are LGBTQ must be willing to talk about our white privilege and systemic racism as candidly and openly as we do issues affecting the LGBTQ community.

Tomorrow morning, when she wakes up, my daughter will ask, "What are we doing today?" It's really a good question when you stop to think about it. Maybe she's on to something; maybe we should ask ourselves every morning, "What am I doing to challenge the status quo today?" ■



LINDA KETCHUM is the Executive Director of Madison-Area Urban Ministry (emum.org), an interfaith social justice organization that has spurred social change in and around Dane County.

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Invisibly Queer

Dr. Sue Gill explores the ways in which some queer-identified people end up ostracized or unseen even within the LGBTQ community.

I WOULD LIKE TO TALK with all of you who may identify as LGBTQ internally but are not recognized socially as a member of that community. I would also like to talk with LGBTQ folks who are socially identifiable as such so we might increase our compassion and awareness for the invisibly queer among us.

If you are invisibly queer, you already know who you are. For the rest of the readers, let me provide some examples: People who identify as bisexual/lesbian/gay and are in a heterosexual relationship, people who identify as trans* and have not expressed their gender in public or visible ways, transmen and transwomen who are perceived as cisgender, the partners of those transmen and transwomen, gay men, and lesbians who are not socially read as such, especially if they are not currently in a relationship.

Those who are invisibly queer run the risk of social isolation from the queer community and even occasional hostility.

This invisibility can cause complex issues. In some instances it allows for continued access to privilege as part of a majority group and perhaps even increased safety, depending on how they are perceived socially. People who are invisibly queer probably don't receive direct harassment as often as those who are socially identified as LGBTQ. Invisibility in this sphere also allows the person to decide when and to whom they wish to disclose their identity, and it can feel empowering to be in charge of "outing" oneself.

On the other hand, invisibility can be an isolating experience. I have a friend who used to be socially perceived as a lesbian, but now he is perceived as a "non-threatening short white

dude" and has lost the ability to participate in the "lesbian nod" that was a part of his former community. He has had to remind himself, "Oh right, I am invisible to lesbians now."

Invisibility can also be bad for one's health. The 2013 National Health Interview Survey found that people who identified as bisexual had higher rates of smoking, binge drinking, and psychological stress than people who identified as gay or straight in the survey.

Those who are invisibly queer run the risk of social isolation from the queer community and even occasional hostility. The very community that should provide understanding and comfort can be outright rejecting. Lesbians hating on a person who comes out as a transman or the cis-appearing hetero-appearing person who is automatically treated with derision, fear, or exclusion by the very people who should provide deep acceptance are examples of this.

I have encountered a lot of grieving among trans* people or the partners of trans* people who face the loss of social community if they transition from being socially perceived as gay or lesbian and are now perceived as straight.

Exposure to hurtful comments is a hard experience for any kind of invisibility. People can be cruel when they think they are in heterogeneous company. They say things they may not always say in mixed groups. I personally have heard comments such as, "Did you see that 'he/she'?" "That's so terrible that someone would do that to their body; I don't think it's right." "I just can't imagine two guys doing it. That's just gross." As much as it makes my stomach churn to read those sentences, it is devastating to hear them when they apply to you personally and the speaker doesn't know it. Especially when spoken by a friend or family.

I think this experience is even worse than the epithets thrown toward a visible difference,

and it can really make a person shrivel inside. It's a lot easier for me to be resilient in the face of some stranger hollering "Dyke!" derisively at me than it is for me to stand tall if a friend said, "I don't understand those gender queer people; I think they're just weird. They should just make up their minds about what they are."

If you are invisibly queer and have heard rude comments and are afraid to come out to the people in your life, what are you supposed to do? It is important to start by working toward a deep sense of self-acceptance and acceptance from a few trusted others who know those invisible parts of you. Tell a few people about those invisible areas of your identity, plan for most friends to be curious, maybe surprised, and supportive, and also plan for a few to be challenging, in denial of your own declared identity, or uneducated about some aspect of your identity. This usually gets easier after you have done it a few times and once you have a few people strongly on your side.

I think it is also a good idea to have some quick prepared comebacks for those casual conversations when somebody may unknowingly insult you. For example, if you identify as bisexual and somebody says, "I think that bisexuals just haven't had the guts to say that they're gay yet," you may wish to have a personal response ("Actually I identify as bi, and I can assure you that I'm not just on a path to being gay"), a funny but corrective response ("Yeah, because NO WAY could anyone possibly actually love men and women. Impossible!"), and an educational response ("Well actually, I heard that just under 2% of the population identifies as bi; it's genuine").

Finally, for those who are not invisibly queer: Please check your own prejudices and assumptions. Talk kindly about others, even if you think a member of that group is not in the room. Perhaps some of your friends or family are invisibly queer. Do you talk about bisexual people in a way that would encourage a friend to come out to you, or have they heard you say things that might make them shrink inside? By the way, kudos to the Madison Gay Hockey Association for adding "preferred gender pronoun" as an option on your player's profiles this year. That's a great example of a way to expand inclusivity for the invisible among us. ■



SUE GILL and her partner, Sheri, have lived in Madison since 2000. They keep busy with their two dogs, Frankie and Maslow. Sue is a psychologist in private practice and can be found at madisontherapy.com.



Invest In Your Health

Carrie Waters Schmidt explains how to save for retirement health care expenses.

I JUST RECENTLY READ an article from USA Today that reported health care spending has hit a 10-year high, which brought it to 5.6 percent for the year. Health care costs have been on the rise—this is not a new phenomenon—but then again, it's not something to shrug off, as health care costs generally have grown at a faster pace than inflation. This leads us to a scary question: how will you pay for health care in retirement when you're on a fixed income?

There are a few things you can do, but it is wise to start with an evaluation of what your personal costs are likely to be. To do this I use a Health Care Cost Assessment Fact Finder to help me figure Medicare costs and long-term care costs. It uses your health, lifestyle, and health history to help paint a clear picture. If you don't have access to such a tool, then consider using an average cost of \$275/mo per person. Also note that the last few years of life are often the most expensive, so be sure to not underestimate these costs.

As with all savings goals, starting young is key. Not only does this get you in the habit of saving, but it exponentially helps the bottom line due to compounding. To better illustrate this I will use the corny analogy of an oak tree. Consider the start of an investment being an acorn. Planting that tiny little acorn will eventually result in a full grown tree that drops many more acorns (interest and dividends), which then take root and drop more acorns, and so on.

Before we can discuss some of the various options available it is important to mention that if you are only able to invest a small amount it is imperative that the growth rate of your investment outpace the rate of inflation.

A way to cover the cost of health care is to invest in assets that pay dividend streams. Dividends can remain constant even when stock prices tumble. So even though stocks may have fluctuating principal values based on market conditions, the income stream may be unchanged. What's more, they are often taxed at a more favorable rate than ordinary income.

To supplement your employer-sponsored retirement plan you can consider funding an IRA. If you qualify, you might consider a Roth IRA as they are funded with already-taxed dollars, which makes withdrawals made

after age 59 ½ tax-free. This is an example of an income source that can help you qualify for subsidies as the withdrawals will not add to your taxable income. Withdrawals from

"It is important to mention that if you are only able to invest a small amount it is imperative that the growth rate of your investment outpace the rate of inflation."

traditional IRAs and most other tax-deferred retirement plans are taxed as ordinary income and if taken prior to age 59 ½, may be subject to an additional 10 percent federal tax penalty as well as possibly state income taxes. Qualified distributions of earnings from a Roth IRA are tax-free after five years from the contribution date and after age 59 ½. Earnings taken prior to age 59 ½ may be subject to a 10 percent federal tax penalty and possibly state income taxes.

Lastly, the big unknown factor in the realm of health care costs is long-term care. As I've written in past articles, long-term care insurance is one of the best ways to cover this expensive threat. The annual cost for care in Madison is between \$82,490 and \$93,440, which can wipe out even the most robust investment portfolios should care be prolonged.

Disclaimer: This information is prepared for general circulation and does not have regard to any specific investment objectives. The information is an assessment of the market environment at a particular point in time and is not intended to be a forecast of future events or a guarantee of future results. Neither the information presented nor any opinion expressed constitutes a solicitation for the purchase or sale of any security. Statements regarding future prospects may not be realized and may differ materially from actual events or results. ■



CARRIE WATERS SCHMIDT is a registered representative and investment advisor representative with Lincoln Financial Advisors Corp., a broker/dealer (member SIPC) and registered investment advisor.



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All Families Suffer When Good Food Leaves

Black Earth Meats run out of town by Village Board, but the fight for fresh, sustainable food sources continues.

IF YOU ASK PEOPLE what they are most thankful for, their families and their health are often at the top of the list. I certainly feel that way. And as a chef, I feel that high quality food plays a large role in both of these things. So when I read that Black Earth Meats (BEM) was closing its shop, my heart just sank.

In Wisconsin, BEM was the only small organic meat processing facility. Period. The owner, Bartlett Durand, shouted from the mountaintops his belief that consumers deserve high quality, grass fed, organic meat that is treated humanely and with respect all the way through the process of going from the pasture to the slaughter house.

So why shut BEM down? The butcher shop that Durand took over in 2008 has been in Black Earth for 60 years. In a separate news story, Village Board President Pat Troge asserted that BEM had grown too large for the village and was putting an undue strain on village resources (water treatment facilities, etc). Neighbors have also been cited as complaining about the increase in animal residue, smells from the animal waste products, as well as excessive noise and a few other complaints referred to as "neighborhood trouble."

So in December of 2013, the Board asked BEM to move outside of the village, giving them 120 days to come up with a viable plan. When Durand came back with four possible plans and asked for an extension of time, the Board declined and told Durand that they would prefer to move toward litigation. This decision caused Durand to lose his bank note for the store, which closed this past September.

Despite the fact that the BEM store in Black Earth is now closed, their retail butcher shop, The Conscious Carnivore, remains open—which is great if you live in Madison but not so helpful if you live outside of the city. In the fullness of time, as a part of a four-step program that Durand has in place, we will hopefully see more Conscious Carnivore stores opening in other communities using crowd funding and other creative funding sources, as well as good old-fashioned investors. Stay tuned to the Black Earth Meats' website (blackearthmeats.com) over the next several months for the unveiling of Durand's plan and how you could become involved in what Durand



called "Black Earth Meats 2.0." It's going to be very exciting, and the community will certainly have a part to play if they choose to (think Kickstarter and other innovative fundraising adventures).

In the meantime, rest assured that BEM will continue to offer their amazing meat CSA, which can always be delivered (again, check their website for details).

Is there a lesson here? I believe so. The take away is that we, as heads of families, need to take a stand and shoulder a more active role in the pursuit of healthy, sustainable food sources. Most Americans have become too complacent in what they will accept in their food supply chains. Cheap food is just that. Why are we willing to spend \$130 on a pair of shoes but not \$18 a pound for organic beef? With weekly news releases about food contamination and recalls, why aren't more people in an uproar? When so many other countries refuse to accept GMOs in their food chains, why is the US just fine and dandy with it?

Durand's fire to keep BEM alive has inspired a lot of us to keep fighting the good fight, to demand food suppliers that are not only dependable but also ethical and worth supporting. His fight has left us with an opportunity to come together and grow as a community, to leave a legacy of better health for ourselves and for our families. I am certainly all in. I hope you are too. ■



JEANNE BENINK is a Madison chef and the sole owner of Simply Served Personal Chef Service. Her friends often call her the soup guru, and she truly does have passion for exploring soups and stews from all over the world. You can find her online at simplyservedpersonalchef.com

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Unmasked

In spite of struggles at home and at school, **Tara Gregorich** found the support she needed to come out and drop the mask she'd been living behind.

FOR A LONG TIME I couldn't really smile. For a long time I couldn't really laugh. For a long time I had to be the girl behind the mask.

Not because I wanted to, but because it was safer for me. I grew up with my dad and stepmother who both believed in a religion that frowned heavily on homosexuality. I never saw that as a problem—until the day I realized I was a lesbian.

The day I woke up was when I saw my best friend playing on a swing set. I watched the way she moved, the way she laughed and smiled. I was scared—terrified even. I told her that I thought I was bisexual and cried with her for a bit.

I came out to my mother first. I waited until she was drunk at a party and told her I was bisexual. At first, she was hurt that I waited until she “had forgetful juice” in her, but then she said that she was proud of me. I had hoped that with the alcohol she would forget the fact that I came out to her, but much to my dismay she didn't. We had a talk the next morning, and she said that she was proud of me no matter what and exclaimed that she loved her “bisexual” daughter!

My father, however, was not as accepting. I told my stepmother first, just for the relief of telling someone else about my journey. She frowned down on me and drowned me with the “just a phase” speech. Then, for some reason unknown to me, she told my father. Dad waited until we were both in the kitchen eating ice cream to confront me on the matter. We had an honest talk about who I was becoming and about the fact that I had been getting targeted at my current school and so was switching to a new one.

It wasn't until the end of my eighth grade year that I decided to leave home to live with my mother. I decided to leave the best friend who had woken me up, my dad, and my family of friends. I decided to start a new journey with my mother and complete strangers. I decided to start the year out from behind my mask. It wasn't easy at first because of the criticism that I had received at my old school, but with time I found myself a clan of people to mingle with and call my new friends.

I also found an LGBT group to join in Harmony Café of Appleton. It was my place to escape from everyone and everything wrong in my life and find something bright and beautiful. It wasn't long until an opportunity to become something inspiring showed up: the position of youth health promoter. I didn't originally plan to interview for it, but my mother and the leader of the group urged me forward. With this position I have been able to reach out to my peers and show them the brighter side of their struggles. I have been able to learn and explore myself and open up to everyone around me.

But I didn't open up to myself. I was honestly miserable. I was still getting messages from my old school, I found myself lying to my own mother, and I was hurting even more. I was hurting on the inside, and I didn't know how to express it on the outside. I started cutting myself in January. I felt my mother would be better off without me. Finally, I just cracked.

It was mid-February, and I was in the hospital, the psych ward. For seven days I was surrounded by people that knew all of my darkest secrets but didn't even know my last name. I was trapped looking out of a window, behind a mask, dreaming of flying. I still remember all the tear-stained faces that roamed the halls, each of them like ghosts searching for a way out. We all had something in common, and yet we were all so different.

Today I live with more confidence than ever. Today I stand up proudly and say I am a lesbian! Today I write this with hopes of sharing my story with you. I am healthy and happy. I no longer have horrible sick thoughts or twisted dreams. I have a family that loves me through hell and high water. Today, I am no longer the girl behind the mask. ■

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“It was mid-February, and I was in the hospital, the psych ward. For seven days I was surrounded by people that knew all of my darkest secrets but didn't even know my last name.”

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