

our lives



FOOD & DINING

Tips, Trends and Creative Ideas from Area Experts

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

May / June
2019

SUCCESS & CRAFT BEER

Giant Jones Brewing

Jessica and Erika Jones have created a local, organic brewery that's run by queer women.

SPRING ELECTION ANALYSIS

LGBTQ+ candidates in Madison notched several important wins.
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SORTING OUT MADISON PRIDE

Untangling the controversy and logistical hurdles around this year's Pride celebration.
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LGBTQ-OWNED RESTAURANT GUIDE

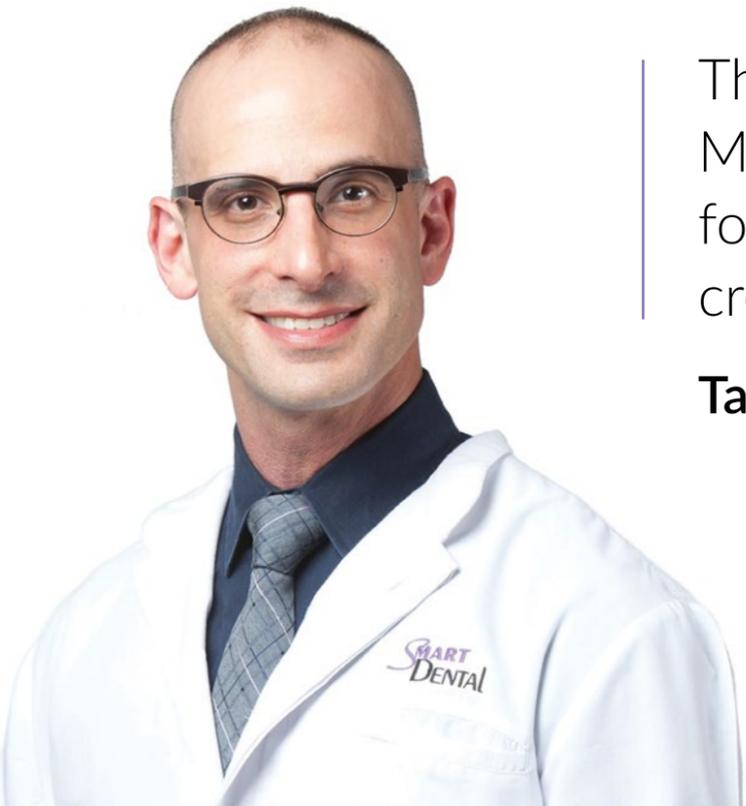
An ever-growing list of food & beverage establishments run by our community.
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“Harvey said, and he’s right, ‘It’s not about personal gain. It’s not about ego, it’s not about power. It’s about giving young people out there hope. You gotta give them hope.’ Tonight, I am full of hope.”

- Satya Rhodes-Conway, Madison Mayor, on election night

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IMPROVE



Katie Miller's Good Table

Cover photographed by Samantha Dutcher

Photographed by Thomas Yonash for Our Lives magazine.



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EDITOR'S NOTE EMILY MILLS

BREAKING BREAD



HAPPY SPRING! It's the season of growth and renewal, and both feel like things we could all use more of in these often stressful and uncertain times. It's the time to dust off winter's sediment, plant seeds, and bask in the sunlight with friends.

If there's one place to look for connection and positivity, it is in that creation and sharing of what sustains us: food. Our universal language.

Often in the publishing industry, when an issue is themed around "Food & Dining," the focus is entirely on the flashier, business side of things. The magazine you hold in your hands includes some incredible, up-and-coming as well as established restaurants, chefs, business people, and more. I'm particularly excited about the super-inclusive **Winnebago**, a new cafe and live performance spot tucked just off E. Washington Ave. on the city's east side. Here's to more small, independent venues!

This issue also includes some of the less glamorous but crucial work being done by those seeking to address the growing problem of food insecurity in our communities, like the services provided by the **River Food Pantry**. There's also the story of **Katie Miller** and The Good Table, a new, queer pop-up meal event that seeks to provide a way for LGBTQ+ people to commune over healthy, accessible food.

Several of the new businesses we feature are either trans-owned or -operated, which represents another important piece of progress in how we create community and who gets to be in the driver's seat of that change. Our cover story, from **Jess** and **Erika** of **Giant Jones Brewery**, is one great example of what's possible when people are able and allowed to live and thrive as their authentic selves.

I hope you find some inspiration in these pages and the stories they contain, too. There's never been a better time to get involved in the nourishment of your spirit and your community. ■

CONTRIBUTORS



LUCY HODGMAN is an editor at a nonprofit in Madison, having settled here after several stints in the Midwest and California. Her career path has woven happily through kitchens and offices; she realizes the geographical and career trajectories might both be expressions of a desire to fit several dreamed lives into one. She is queer, polyamorous, and a huge fan of learning about and discussing human nature, relationships of all kinds, and how best to be good to one another.



RUTHIE HAGUE's roots are in photojournalism and art. She was hired as a Staff Photographer by Sun-Times Media in 2006, and worked there for years covering events such as the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti; the 2008 Olympic Trials for Track and Field in Eugene, Oregon; and Paul McCartney at Wrigley Field. During her tenure there, she earned 18 State and National Photojournalism awards. In 2017, Ruthie and her family relocated from the Chicago area to Madison.



MERLE GEODE is a queer, genderfluid, multiracial Korean writer, poet, shamanic practitioner, and artist who made Madison home for 14 years before moving to Minneapolis in 2017. Merle is a 2019 Mirrors & Windows Fellow at The Loft Literary Center in Minneapolis. In fall 2019, Merle will begin the MFA program in Poetry at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities. Their writing has appeared in *Our Lives*, *Isthmus*, *Twin Cities Daily Planet*, and various zines self-published by queer writer and artist groups. They are a double Sagittarian who previously worked as a dog groomer, cook, baker, and food writer. Wisconsin's driftless region remains one of their favorite landscapes.

SATURDAY JUNE 1

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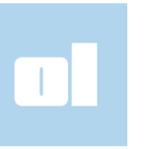
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Rhodes-Conway celebrating with supporters on election night at PRISM Dance Club.



The Gay Agenda

LGBTQ+ candidates in Madison notched several important wins in the spring elections.

LOCAL POLITICS | LGBTQ FIRSTS | GOVERNMENT

FORMER CITY ALDER SATYA RHODES-CONWAY became Madison's next mayor, defeating incumbent Paul Soglin 62%–38% on Tuesday, April 2.

Rhodes-Conway made history as the city's first lesbian, and just the second woman, to hold the office. Her campaign focused on pushing for greater equity in housing and transit, racial justice work, and a focus on better preparing Madison to deal with climate change.

Prism Dance Club (formerly Plan B) was filled with cheerful supporters, including a large contingent of Madison's LGBTQ+ community, for Rhodes-Conway's victory party Tuesday night. "Girl On Fire" by Alicia Keys played, per the mayor-elect's request, as she entered the building to

rousing applause shortly after local news outlets called the race in her favor.

"Tonight, I am full of hope," Rhodes-Conway said during a short and heartfelt victory speech. "I have hope for young people everywhere but especially here in Madison that have felt left out or talked down to or bullied because of who they are. I have felt that way once upon a time, and look where I am now."

She also thanked Soglin for his long work on behalf of the city, and urged the community to stay active and involved with civic life. "I am full of hope for our city," she said. "Hope that we can be the equitable and sustainable city that we want to be, that we can be, but I know that I will

PRIDE MADISON POLICE CITY PLANNING

What's Up With Madison Pride?

Controversy, logistical hurdles, strained resources, and miscommunication all combined to spell the end of **OutReach's Pride Parade** in 2019.



OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER announced in March that the organization will not hold a Pride parade in Madison this August.

The decision comes after a tumultuous 2018 event that involved rescinding invitations to law enforcement contingents after pushback from local activists, and an intense backlash to that decision from other parts of the community.

In a press release dated March 26, the OutReach board said the decision to forgo the parade was a difficult one, but largely based on logistical hurdles in the form of city ordinance changes related to how many events are allowed to close off downtown streets, as well as overall strain on the organization's limited resources. Confusion and incomplete information lead both OutReach and the Crazylegs race to change their plans for 2019. The final rules passed by the Common Council on March 19, however, did ultimately include exemptions for so-called "legacy" events, which included the Pride parade. By then, though it wasn't yet public, OutReach's board had already made its decision.

The goal instead will shift to holding the newly dubbed OutReach Magic Festival at Warner Park, on Sunday, August 18 to coincide with Woof's King Street Pride Block Party the day before. The name is a nod to the MAGIC picnics held for years in Madison as the de facto Pride celebration. Organizing is currently underway, with plans that include live music, games, vendors, and more.

MISUNDERSTANDINGS AND CONFUSION

Complications around organizing for a 2019 parade arose as early as December 2018. OutReach Executive Director Steve Starkey told Our Lives that a series of changes and stipulations by the city, as he understood them at the time, posed a difficult scenario.



Verveer

The new ordinance limits the number of events allowed to cause street closures on the downtown isthmus. Increasing costs to the city, traffic snarls, and missed or delayed bus rides disproportionately impacting low income people and people of color, were all cited as reasons for the changes.

Ald. Mike Verveer, who has represented a major portion of the downtown for 25 years, says that he was initially alerted to a proposed ordinance change in early November 2018. A core group of people from the Street Use Commission—a committee made up of representatives from 12 different city departments and to which the Common Council delegates decisions about permitting street closures—had been working behind the scenes for two years to come up with a proposal to address the various concerns of different departments. When it was finally sent to Verveer, along with former Mayor Paul Soglin and recently retired Ald. Ledell Zellers, it came as something of a surprise, he says.

"I was like, whoa, this is the district I represent and you haven't included me in any of the discussions at all," Verveer remembers. "They notified me of the one public meeting they had on the south side and then I insisted they have one in the downtown. That then lead to me saying fine, I will sponsor the ordinance and get it introduced but I cannot ever support this without some very significant changes to your approach."

Those changes included creating the "legacy" designation to specifically carve out exemptions for longstanding downtown events, including the UW Homecoming Parade and Pride. The ordinance allows events that have held permits for 10 or more years to qualify for the special status.

"I in no way shape or form wanted Pride to be the first collateral damage to the new Street Use policy," Verveer says. "The legacy definition, the grandfathering of events that have been around for about 10 years or more...it was all heard in public meetings that Pride would be

→ Continued on Page 12

need your help to make that come true. Please stay engaged with city government. We will need you to hold us accountable to those goals. We will need you to help make Madison a city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive."

Rhodes-Conway was officially sworn in on April 16.

FULL TEXT OF RHODES-CONWAY'S ACCEPTANCE SPEECH:

Thank you, Madison! In the words of the great Harvey Milk, "It's not my victory. It's yours and yours and it's yours."

I have to thank the intrepid canvassers who fanned out across the city in the ice and snow and rain, and the hundreds of others who contributed time, talent, and treasure. Each and every one of you helped make this possible. Thank you.

I want to thank my family. I love you guys. I want to thank my Kitchen Cabinet and my campaign team. And most importantly I want to thank my steadfast partner. I could not have done this without Amy [Klusmeier].

And I also want to thank Paul Soglin. I just got off the phone with him. I congratulated him and I thanked him on behalf of all of us for his steadfast work on behalf of this city. I'm really glad that this campaign stayed focus on the issues that are important to Madison.

To quote Harvey again, that's what it's all about. Harvey said, and he's right, "It's not about personal gain. It's not about ego, it's not about power. It's about giving young people out there hope. You gotta give them hope." Tonight, I am full of hope. I have hope for young people everywhere but especially here in Madison that have felt left out or talked down to or bullied because of who they are. I have felt that way once upon a time, and look where I am now.

I am full of hope for our city. Hope that we can be the equitable and sustainable city that we want to be, that we can be, but I know that I will need your help to make that come true. Please stay engaged with city government. We will need you to hold us accountable to those goals. We will need you to help make Madison a city where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

I am so looking forward to working with all of you as your next mayor.

ALI MULDOW AND ANANDA MIRILLI WIN MADISON SCHOOL BOARD RACES

GSAFE Co-Executive Director **Ali Muldrow** and Department of Public Instruction equity consultant **Ananda Mirilli** both won their races for Madison School Board in April. Their victories, along with Christiana Carusi in seat three, helped flip the board to entirely women members, and added representation by at least two queer people of color.



Muldrow celebrating with supporters on election night at Robinia Courtyard.

Muldrow and Mirilli ran a somewhat unique, collaborative campaign, appearing together at events and providing support to each other's work while boosting media coverage for both.



Mirilli

In the contest for seat four, Muldrow handily beat longtime conservative gadfly Dave Blaska with 70% of the vote. She focused her campaign on creating a more

inclusive environment for LGBTQ+ students, students of color, and students with disabilities. Muldrow will also push for better funding and integration of arts education.

For seat five, Mirilli bested incumbent TJ Mertz with 58% of the vote and a campaign based on addressing school safety issues and racial disparities. The former director for the restorative justice program at the YWCA, Mirilli cites her work to expand that program throughout Dane County as experience she'll bring to her work with Madison's public schools.

The new members join four other women currently on the school board: president Mary Burke, treasurer Kate Toews, clerk Nicki Vander Meulen, and Gloria Reyes.

MADISON COMMON COUNCIL BECOMES STILL MORE PROGRESSIVE

In one of the larger turnovers in recent memory, the Madison Common Council saw nine new members elected the body in the April election. The results also delivered a big win for the grassroots, liberal political party Progressive Dane, with its endorsed candidates capturing the mayor's office and nine of 12 council seats in which it made an endorsement.

At least one of those newly elected, **Patrick Heck**, identifies as gay. Heck will represent District 2 and is a 15-year resident of the Tenney-Lapham Neighborhood, where he's been active on the TLNA in various capacities during that time. Prior to moving to the city, Heck was the chair of Equality Virginia, the state's leading LGBTQ lobbying organization. He works as a climate and weather researcher at UW-Madison, and says his priorities will be

on thoughtful and sustainable development, including a focus on affordability, mitigation of issues related to climate change, modernizing the transportation infrastructure, and the creation of a neighborhood dog park.

New council members are **Lindsay Lemmer** in the 3rd District, **Donna V. Hurd Moreland** in District 7, **Avra Reddy** in the 8th District, **Zachary Henak** in the 10th District, **Syed Abbas** in the 12th District, **Grant Foster** in the 15th District, and **Christian Albouras** in District 20.

Voters re-elected **Barbara Harrington-McKinney**, **Shiva Bidar-Sielaff**, **Marsha Rummel**, **Paul Skidmore**, **Arvina Martin**, **Sheri Carter**, **Michael Tierney**, and **Rebecca Kemble**.

EAU CLAIRE ELECTS WISCONSIN'S FIRST TRANSGENDER WOMAN FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

The spring elections saw LGBTQ milestones in other parts of the state, too. Eau Claire residents elected **Laura Benjamin**, a local entrepreneur and business owner, to the city council. Benjamin was the fourth of five new members elected, out of a pool of 10 candidates. She becomes the first openly transgender woman elected to public office in Wisconsin.

Benjamin is a long time Eau Claire resident who is raising her family there. She moved from Minneapolis to Eau Claire in 1999 for college, attending and graduating from UW-Eau Claire. Benjamin says she

has been a key contributor to the redevelopment of downtown as a member and marketer of the Pro-Confluence Committee: Voices for Growth.

Her campaign focused on creating increased opportunities for startups and entrepreneurs, improving wages and job opportunities especially for recent graduates, transparency in local government, and advocating for "diversity, tolerance, and LGBT rights, so that everyone has equal access to opportunities to succeed."

—Emily Mills



Laura Benjamin

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exempt. The rationale being that, yes it's true OutReach has not been the organizer of Pride the entire time, but Pride has been around ever since I was an undergrad in college and it was called Galvanize."

That information either didn't reach Starkey in time for the board to make its decision, or was unclear. In an interview shortly after OutReach released its plans to cancel the parade, Starkey expressed frustration with Verveer and with what he saw as insurmountable obstacles being placed by the city against the event.

Starkey says that Verveer warned him in December about the proposed changes, including that police were talking about needing 40 officers to patrol the event, which would represent more than double the numbers and cost of previous years.

Despite that, Starkey says that meetings with MPD Pride in January and February went well enough that OutReach was still hoping to go ahead with plans for a parade. Capt. Brian Chaney Austin and PO Jodi Nelson, the two main Madison Police Department representatives with the LGBTQ employee group, indicated that they would "stand down" and not apply to march as an official contingent, in deference to the controversy the year before.

SOME LOGISTICAL CONCERNS

When Starkey finally went before the Street Use Committee for a preliminary meeting in February to discuss possible plans for a parade, he says both Chaney Austin and Verveer promised to attend and advocate on behalf of OutReach. Neither showed up, he says.



Starkey

"I was there on my own, talking to the committee," Starkey says. "That probably would have really changed the situation if they had been there. I was planning to have their support, and I didn't."

Starkey says that, at the time, the committee was still pushing for Pride to dramatically alter its route, either to another part of town entirely or to the capitol square. Between the assumed restrictions, costs, and ongoing fallout from the previous years' conflicts, OutReach's board decided to issue its decision.

"I don't want to assign any blame to OutReach or to Steve on this," Verveer is careful to add. "As I attempted to explain in the other interviews I did on this...I see Crazylegs changing its starting line and OutReach canceling the parade as being very similar situations. They were being told by city staff for the last couple of years that their events were really problematic, and that it really would be helpful if they changed their route."

Now that both have dramatically changed their plans for the year, that could impact the ability of either to return to their original routes in the future, thanks to the language of the current ordinance. Verveer says he plans to push for further amendments in the future, so that if a Pride parade were to be resurrected, it could still have a shot at using the downtown route.

Verveer seems optimistic about his chances, and is clear about support for Pride on the committee and the Common Council generally.

"There was no complaint, at least in my presence--and they all know I'm gay, it's no secret, and they know for me it's perhaps a little personal. There was no dissension among any of the Street Use staff commission members in our private meetings or public meetings. Pride would be exempt."

POLICING REALITIES

Also at the Street Use Committee meeting earlier in the year was Madison Police Department representative Lt. Dave McCaw, who moved back into the role after Chaney Austin was promoted. McCaw had been the rep in 2014, the first year OutReach took over holding a Pride parade.



McCaw

In addition to what Starkey says Verveer told him about the dramatically increased police staffing needs proposed for this year, he also claims that McCaw "never even looked at me" over the course of the meeting. Instead, Starkey says, McCaw directed his answers to Kelli Lambert, the community events coordinator and meeting facilitator. That lack of engagement, plus the difficulty of holding the parade the first year, are reasons Starkey gives for believing McCaw "is not particularly LGBT friendly."

McCaw and Chaney Austin both find that accusation unfair and hurtful. In a conversation with the two of them following Our Lives' initial online reporting of OutReach's decision, the two pushed back strongly on many of Starkey's claims.

"He won't say this himself so I will," Chaney Austin says. "Dave is one of our strongest allies on MPD Pride. I take offense at the assertion that he's not LGBT friendly."

Verveer also spoke with McCaw shortly after the first *Our Lives* article pub- → Continued on Page 14

RELIGION LGBTQ RIGHTS METHODISM

Growing Pains

A recent vote by the **United Methodist Church** to bar gay clergy and same-sex weddings stunned many of the denomination's more liberal adherents. The way forward may change the face of the church forever.

AT APPROXIMATELY 4:45 P.M. on Tuesday, February 26, Rev. Dr. Mark Fowler says, the United Methodist Church as he knew it died.

It was at that time, at the denomination's international annual gathering held this year in St. Louis, that a measure (called the Traditionalist Plan) banning ordination of LGBTQ clergy and same-sex marriage unexpectedly passed on a vote of 438-384. Fowler is the lead pastor of First United Methodist Church in downtown Madison, a congregation that has been open and affirming of LGBTQ people officially since 2009.

"I think the real intention was to break the church," Fowler says. "If you make the punishment so high, people want to leave. They want us out. We're an embarrassment to them."



Fowler

"It was a tragic moment," he tells *Our Lives* in a heartfelt interview shortly after the conference ended. "A denomination in which there are people out to harm not only those who are on the target, but those of us who are their allies and have stood with them by invitation and other ways—we will be deprived of our orders so we cannot marry, our churches will be picked off... that will not stand. I think, ultimately, there will be two Methodist churches."

Progressive pastors and congregations across the world have been speaking out against the vote ever since. Fowler's own congregation has been in discussions with their Church Council and the Reconciling Ministries team to figure out next steps. The UMC's decision is widely seen as evidence that a major split is in progress for what is currently the second largest Protestant denomination in the U.S.

Rev. Jenny Arneson, pastor of the Sun Prairie United Methodist Church, told the

Capital Times that the question of whether or not to remain in the denomination would "be part of our conversation." The Rev. Brianna Illéné, pastor of the LGBTQ-inclusive Trinity United Methodist Church on Madison's near west side, said, "We stand in defiance of that. We're not going to change. We will continue to welcome LGBTQ+ people. We're not going to stop doing weddings."



Arneson



Illéné

Fowler also has strong words of opposition to the vote, but emphasized that he, like many, has no desire to tear down the things he still values about the church. "We want to resist, reject, repudiate," he says. "Whether it's called the United Methodist Church and has that institutional backing, I don't think that matters a whole lot to any of us."

To really understand the importance and impact of the vote, it's necessary to dig into the context that surrounds it. As with anything involving a large organization and bureaucracy, says Fowler, that's very complicated.

A LONG-SIMMERING DEBATE

The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968 from a union between two predecessor Methodist groups. In 1972 a measure was passed that ultimately set the bar for the debate to come. It created a prohibition, saying that "the practice of homosexuality is incompatible with Christian teaching." The so-called Traditionalist Plan that reaffirmed the ban on LGBTQ inclusion used that same language.

However, Fowler notes, if one reads the full paragraph of the '72 measure, it's clear that the "incompatible" sentence was tacked on after the fact and makes little sense within the rest of the language.

"The paragraph was very inclusive, very embracing, very progressive," he notes, "but because our discipline is done as legislation, a motion was passed that added the prohibition as an amendment."

Progressives within the UMC have since been working to push back and reaffirm the original intent of the inclusive message. At the General Assembly in 2016 the delegates hit an impasse, though. Unable to agree on legislation to address LGBTQ inclusion or exclusion, they asked their bishops to intervene.

Bishops within the UMC usually only make decisions about pastoral assignments and logistics, and act as presiding officers at conferences—not rule creators. In this case, they were asked to take over and propose a

measure to address the issue. Instead, Fowler says wryly, they punted.

"The bishops were a little nervous about that kind of authority, so they did what happens and formed a commission to study this," he explains. "When it came back they favored what was called the One Church Plan." That measure would have allowed individual congregations to decide for themselves how inclusive or restrictive to be of LGBTQ people's involvement. In polling it was favored by some 60% of U.S. members.

"But bishops get very nervous if people object," Fowler goes on. "So they allowed a variety of plans to come to the floor, which confused everything and threw it right back into the very political process, except that one of [the plans] was razor sharp and ready to pass. And it did."

Fowler says the bishops didn't make an attempt to defend their own One Church Plan, and in fact, it never even came to the floor.

In the end, a gay delegate took to the podium to at least give the plan a reading, but the vote—and its very real damage—had already been done. After the dust settled, a large group of pro-LGBTQ delegates and others took to the floor to sing, pray, and openly weep.

LEGACY OF COLONIALISM

How did it happen? The UMC has 12 million members worldwide and newer congregations especially in places like Africa and Indonesia. It was an alliance between evangelical delegates from those regions, plus the U.S. and Europe, that helped tip the scales to pass the Traditionalist Plan.

Of course, this, too, is complicated. "The backstory, which I think needs to be the front story, is that it actually is a remnant of American and European colonialism in Africa," Fowler says. "There are progressive African delegates and academics and leaders who basically said, 'We must always remind ourselves that the same white male privilege and normativity that drove the American side of this vote also drove what was going on in the Philippines and in Africa.' This is a remnant of colonialism and the form of the church that was left."

Add in the same partisan divide that exists in American politics, and it made for a potent weapon on behalf of the restrictive rule. New, punitive measures were also added for those who disobey the edict. Pastors who perform same-sex weddings could face a one-year, unpaid suspension, with a second offense leading to removal from the clergy entirely.

"I don't think they ever really intend to have to carry them out because I think the real intention was to break the church," Fowler says. "If

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lished that included Starkey's accusations. He says McCaw was "pained" by the implication that he was in any way homophobic.

Further, McCaw adds, nothing was said at the meeting about the number of officers needed for a parade, as Starkey first claimed. "He came with what-ifs, but no solid plan," McCaw says. Police can't issue numbers or needs until a plan is officially presented, they add. They're also largely beholden to whatever the city's Traffic Engineer, Tom Mohr, decides are the logistical needs for a particular event.



Chaney Austin

"Tom gives us a detailed map of the route and where intersections would need to be policed for traffic safety, and then we assign officers based on that," McCaw says. "I'm very middle-management. I don't make these decisions."

Starkey also claims that a change from designating the parade as special duty to a district event added cost and unneeded extra officers. McCaw and Chaney Austin counter that as well. The issue is a bit complex, but breaks down to this: Special duty events were meant to cover instances like a downtown church requesting an officer or two to direct traffic after services. District events cover most parades and festivals, like Pride, which involve greater logistical and security needs.

In the past, uniformed officers who marched as part of the parade also counted toward the total number of security staff required for the event. They cost less because participating in an event fell under the special duty designation, which is covered under MPPPO time instead of regular pay. But because police were being asked not to participate in the parade at all, those numbers would then have to be made up for with officers working regular duty hours.

Starkey says he was told by Verveer that McCaw stated he wouldn't be able to find enough officers to volunteer to cover the parade with the increased needs. That, too, McCaw and Chaney Austin both say is incorrect. It also gives the wrong impression of police attitudes toward the event.

"Other than Mifflin Street Block Party, cops really like working these things," says Chaney Austin. It's an all-too rare opportunity to find work that's a reprieve from the much harder, often darker things cops encounter day-to-day. "We get high-fives and thank-yous. People smile at us. What's not to like?"

CROSS-PURPOSES

There were other hurdles presented prior to the new ordinance being adopted that made a downtown parade appear unfeasible, Starkey says. Traffic and Madison Metro both required that, if a parade were to happen there, it would need to stop and pause at all three lighted intersections. Participation in the parade would also need to be downsized to just 60 entries, and the date would have to be moved two weeks off its usual spot, breaking it away from other Pride activities.

The city also floated the idea of holding the parade on Williamson Street, as it was the first year OutReach ran it. Starkey says that was less than ideal, given the lack of open businesses or people on the sidewalks in that part of town on a Sunday.

OutReach initially proposed the Williamson Street route in 2014 as a way to both work around city concerns and to tie it in with two sponsors of the parade—Plan B and Woof's. Even still, the process was a rocky one that Starkey says he doesn't look back at with any fondness.

"We had pretty lousy experiences with the Street Use Committee in 2014," Starkey says. "Partly because of the number of officers they required [40], partly because they did not want us to use State Street. They wanted us to be on the capitol square only, and then they didn't want us to go any way."

Starkey says that the representative for Metro was so opposed to the parade that she "stood up, wringing her hands, and said 'I'm so worried, I'm so scared, this is going to be a fiasco, we're going to have a riot, I don't know what's going to happen, we should not do this.'"

Finally, after its Williamson Street proposal met resistance for it requiring the closure of the Highway 151/Blair Street intersection, OutReach went directly to former Mayor Paul Soglin and asked him to intervene on their behalf. "Then they were really mad at us for going over their head," he admits.

The tactic worked. The parade was given the go-ahead for Williamson Street, and much of the organizing at the time fell to former OutReach volunteer Derwin Leigh. McCaw says he had his own lousy experiences with Leigh, who he says was demanding and difficult to work with from the start.

"He wanted us to remove all parking along this very residential street," McCaw says. "But then [Leigh] said he and his people would take care of putting up the signs for it, to save money. We said OK, but it has to be done at least 48 hours in advance of the parade to be legally enforceable. I tried contacting him several times when it wasn't getting done and heard nothing back."

The signs were finally put up, but with about 24 hours to go. When the city said they couldn't enforce it, and didn't tow cars, Leigh blamed the city. McCaw says that Starkey was aware of what happened and even reached out to apologize. "I thought we left things on good terms." → Continued on Page 16

you make the punishment so high, people want to leave. They want us out. We're an embarrassment to them."

Further backing that assessment, a disaffiliation measure was also passed that would make it much easier for churches to leave the UMC without automatically having to give up property or other assets held by the denomination. Pastors could also leave without taking a penalty on their pensions.

Those pieces still have to be reviewed by the UMC's judicial council to make sure it passes legal muster. Fallout won't be limited to individuals, either, as major seminaries at schools like Emory and Duke, which have supported their LGBTQ students, face the prospect of losing grants from more conservative churches.

DEDICATED TO EQUALITY

Rev. Fowler isn't ready to give up his Methodism without a fight, though, and neither are many of the LGBTQ-identified members of the church.

"Most of us who are progressive really look forward to the day when we all sit at the same table and that hearts will be changed," he says. "I've been amazed at my LGBTQ colleagues who have been hurt, conference after conference, and they didn't leave. They wanted to say, not to win a victory, but because they thought if they left then this evil would stand."

Fowler bemoans the fact that the three largest Christian churches in the U.S.—Roman Catholic, Southern Baptist, and UMC—are all restrictive of LGBTQ people.

"In a secularizing world, it's the dominant proclamation of the gospel, which breaks our heart," he says. "We believe...the two most important things are love of God and love of neighbor. We believe that the grace of God, which is God's love for us, was poured out on us before we asked, and all we need to do is respond. I believe the majority of Methodists in this country would say that, if you limit the love of God in order to exclude people, then our theology is in vain. It makes no sense whatsoever."

Fowler is sure to acknowledge the Methodist church's checkered history on issues like slavery, race, and women's rights (all issues that have led to previous Methodist splits—about a dozen in all). It has taken time and work, but, he says, "We've bended toward a progressive, loving gospel—and opened ourselves to what God has to reveal to us about what the extremity of that is, and know that we will never find it. Our job is to reach for it."

—Emily Mills



LGBTQ Organizations Update

News | Awards | Staff & Board Changes
Calls to Action | Events

Reported by Emily Mills

Stay up-to-date with area LGBTQ+ and allied organizations and non-profits, be informed, and get involved.

NEWS

Important notes about area LGBTQ groups.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

The center is pleased to announce their first annual OutReach Magic Festival, a nod to the MAGIC Picnic, a local Pride celebration that was held for many years. The festival will be held on August 18, 2019 from 1:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. at Warner Park. This year's event is particularly special, with a focus on celebrating the 50th Anniversary of Stonewall, as well as the 30th Anniversary of Madison's first pride parade.

WI LGBT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Participants in the inaugural class of the Business Leadership Academy have been announced. The Business Leadership Academy is a year-long program focused on developing and fostering the next generation of LGBTQ and allied leaders in the workplace.

Those individuals selected to participate in the year-long program are:

- Phillip Bailey, Realtor, Shorewest Realtors
- Rudy Gutierrez, Assistant Vice President, U.S. Bank
- Natalie Hinckley, CEO, Creative Director, Hinckley Productions
- Barbara Jones, Branch Manager and Vice President, BMO Harris Bank
- Josh King, Senior Product Manager, Northwestern Mutual
- Jennifer Murray, Director, University of Wisconsin Milwaukee LGBT Resource Center
- Kent Peterson, Supply Chain Analyst, Harley-Davidson Motor Company
- Mark Pochowski, Digital Specialist, Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin
- Kathryn Propstein, Market Relationship Consultant, Wells Fargo
- Emily Smith, RN, Gender Services Navigator, UW Health
- Ryan St. Peter, Account Manager, Marcus Hotels & Resorts
- Kate Westfall, Corporate Attorney, Reinhart Boerner Van Deuren s.c.

The 2019 Business Leadership Academy meets monthly from February to December on

the second Tuesday of each month from 3:00 to 7:00 p.m. These workshops will be held in the Milwaukee area. Topics that will be addressed during the program include: Effective Communication, Managing People, Business Financials, Productive Conflict, and more.

AWARDS / RECOGNITION / GRANTS

Special thanks for those who do good.

AIDS RESOURCE CENTER OF WISCONSIN

The center has achieved accreditation through the Accreditation Commission for Health Care (ACHC) for Specialty Pharmacy Services with a Distinction in HIV. ARCW is the only agency with pharmacies in Wisconsin and Colorado with this distinction, and their pharmacy at the St. Louis location will be accredited by the



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THE SILVER LINING

Ultimately, Starkey seems relieved to be focused on a festival instead of a parade. There are fewer permits required, for one. Security can be hired from a private firm instead of police. OutReach operates with a very small budget and just two full-time staff members. It relies on volunteer help to do its work, which is largely focused on providing services and support to the LGBTQ+ community.

Starkey says that, in discussions with the Community Pride Coalition (CPC), the group didn't want any police in a parade. Between that and the city's requirements, "It really backed us into a corner."

The CPC is fully on board for the festival, though the issue seems to have split community opinions. "Is OutReach truly bound to provide the community with this? Is it part of their mission?" Burt Tower commented. "If Madison wants a pride event badly enough, a group of dedicated volunteers should step up. And if nobody steps up, well I guess it's just not important to our community to have it."

"I'm truly sad to see no pride parade in 2019," commented Allison Madison. "While I'm sure that there are those who will appreciate the picnic, it definitely won't be the same. Heck, it'll feel as if we'll be penned in, a condition our proud LGBTQ+ community should not be subjected to."

Starkey is doing his best to look on the bright side, though he understands the decision is disappointing for many. A festival, he hopes, will cost significantly less and provide more of an opportunity for the different parts of the LGBTQ+ community to really come together and get to know one another.

"A parade doesn't really foster an atmosphere where people are going to do a lot of meeting new people or have conversations," Starkey says. "There's a lot of division in the community because there's so many different groups...we need to have a lot more interaction between those groups so that people aren't just in their own faction but reaching out and meeting more people, being more inclusive."

Starkey says OutReach is focused on making a festival more diverse and inclusive of the various communities, with specific focus on young people, people of color, and the trans community.

He adds, "[I hope] this will be kind of a healing situation where the community can come together and start to build new relationships, build trust, and unity."

He hopes that, depending on potential changes in city leadership over time and the potential for other groups to step in to help organize, this won't be the end of Pride parades in Madison. —Emily Mills

end of 2019. Accreditation is a process through which health care organizations demonstrate compliance with national standards. Accreditation by ACHC reflects an organization's dedication and commitment to meeting standards that facilitate a higher level of performance and patient care.

DANE BUY LOCAL Colin Murray of DBL was named Madison Small Businessperson of the Year by Alignable, a social networking site for small businesses across North America. Competition criteria focused on local SMB role models, who are dedicated to helping other small businesspeople succeed. After an extended round of nominations, top nominees advanced to the finalist stage, where local Alignable members voted for their favorite candidate.



Murray

MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY The team had its seasonal team meeting in which a litany of topics were discussed and a new team captain was voted in. With an overwhelming majority, Eric Fabian is the Madison Minotaurs captain for 2019. This is the second year in a row that he was voted to the position.

PERFECT HARMONY MEN'S CHORUS A big thank you to Danny Atwater for coordinating PHMC's annual cabaret fundraiser, which once again has had sold out shows both nights. Thanks also to emcee Randy Bouche, to musicians Brian Schultz and Laura Schram for accompanying solo acts all evening, to the Brink Lounge for hosting, to Jeff Smith for making desserts, to chorus members and volunteers for their work, and to the audience for their support.

STAFF / BOARD CHANGES

Who's moving on or moving into org leadership.

FAIR WISCONSIN Amber Sowards has joined Fair Wisconsin as the new Communications Manager. In the role she will be implementing a social media strategy plan to allow Fair Wisconsin to ramp up its online presence.



Sowards

Amber has a background in communications, previously having held a similar title with another local non-profit, and hopes to bring that insight to FW.



OUR LIVES, WISCONSIN LGBTQ YOUTH AND TEACHER, HONORED WITH GSAFE AWARDS

The annual GSAFE Celebration of Leadership filled the ballroom at the Monona Terrace in late April, where a handful LGBTQ youth from across the state were recognized for their incredible work on behalf of their communities. Our Lives was humbled to be included in this year's honorees as well, being given the Special Recognition Award specifically for our continued efforts to create a more intersectional, justice-oriented publication that includes an ever-wider array of voices and experiences.

Publisher and founder Patrick Farabaugh and Editor Emily Mills both express their deep gratitude for the recognition, and for the important work done by GSAFE and its allies to help build a better world for all.

The 2019 youth scholarship recipients are Cornelious Bragg III of East High in Madison, Dija Manly of Lafollette High School in Madison, Emily Otto of North High School in Eau Claire, and Charles Spice of Escuela Verde in Milwaukee.

Melissa Tempel, of the Waukesha School District and Milwaukee Public Schools, was given the 2019 Educator of the Year Award.

Amber has an MFA in Photographic and Electronic Media from the Maryland Institute College of Art. Her photography has been exhibited both nationally and locally. You may be familiar with Amber's photo series, Captured, created with GSAFE in 2016. To learn more about Amber's work please visit ambersowards.com.

NEW HARVEST FOUNDATION Cassandra Bishop, Logan Dixon, and Kathy Konicek have come on as new board members. It is with great appreciation for their years of dedication and commitment to NHF and the LGBTQ community that the organization says goodbye to Tim Lom, Donna Schmitt, and Jennifer Campbell.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER Patricia Kelsey has come on board as the center's new LGBT Senior Advocate. Patricia holds an Associate Degree in Gender and Women's Studies from Madison College and a Certificate in Gender and Women from UW-Madison.

In the role as LGBT Senior Advocate Patricia will connect with LGBT seniors and assist them in finding services, and work with senior serving agencies in Dane County to ensure that they are welcoming and culturally competent to provide services to LGBT seniors.

BOARD RECRUITMENT: OutReach is looking for passionate, energetic, hard-working people to grow our board of directors. LGBTQ people of color, people who are disabled, women, people who are transgender and/or gender non-conforming, people of varying faiths and

backgrounds are welcomed and encouraged to apply. OutReach welcomes folks who have experience with anti-racism and racial justice issues. Anyone who is interested should reach out to Steve Starkey at steves@lgbt Outreach.org or by phone at 608-255-8582.

DEVELOPMENT & CALLS TO ACTION

New programs, outreach, or changes in mission.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER A new mission statement has been crafted and announced: "A commitment to equity and quality of life for all LGBTQ+ people through community building, health and human services, and economic, social, and racial justice advocacy."

OutReach continues their work with Safe Communities on the Pride in Prevention Coalition (PIPC). The coalition includes GSAFE, ARCW and many other local nonprofit groups, and is focused on preventing opioid abuse, addiction and overdose, especially in the LGBTQ+ communities. Community education is the primary goal this year.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plan ahead to join in.

AIDS RESOURCE CENTER OF WISCONSIN The AIDS Ride Wisconsin will return, July 26-28. Find out more and register at aidsridewis.org.

METHODOLOGY | Our Lives reaches out to area LGBTQ+ organizations to seek information for inclusion in this section. We also gather information from newsletters and social media put out by the various organizations. If your LGBTQ+ organization would like to be included in these updates, please reach out to us directly at contact@ourlivesmadison.com.



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Save the Date

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Tickets available online at Chamber website.

Madison Area Coffee Connection
May 21 - 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.
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Free to attend. All welcome. Details on website.

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AMERICAN FAMILY NAMED LGBTQ BEST PLACE TO WORK FOUR YEARS RUNNING

When Coco Chaussee became an American Family Insurance employee four years ago, one of the first things she did was join the company's LGBT+ Allies Business Resource Group (BRG). While working as a contract project manager at the company for nine years, Chaussee, a lesbian, appreciated the company's inclusive culture. She was thrilled to officially join a group that's so important to her personally and professionally.

"I always knew about and valued the company's support of the LGBT community," Chaussee said.

Then came a moment when she felt LGBTQ rights could be threatened. At American Family, she was given certainty about the company's commitment to LGBTQ employees. Chaussee realized just what this support meant to her.

"The BRG organized a meeting to assure concerned employees that their rights would be protected and respected at the company," Chaussee said. "The willingness of the company to support us the way they did made me want to do more," she said.

At the end of 2018, Chaussee accepted a two-year term as co-lead of the BRG, meaning she'll be a steward for the group as it works with the business to champion diversity and inclusion on all levels.

Chaussee's experience was affirmed when the company was named one of the best workplaces for LGBTQ equality.

American Family's perfect score of 100 percent on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index (CEI), a national benchmarking report on LGBTQ workplace equality, is the company's fourth consecutive top score. The 2019 CEI rated businesses in the report based on policies and practices including non-discrimination workplace protections, parity in spousal and partner benefits, transgender-inclusive health care benefits, and public engagement with the LGBTQ community.

Also this year, American Family Insurance moved up four spots from last year to 225 of the top 500 companies ranked on the Forbes Best Employers for Diversity. The Forbes ranking is based on feedback from at least 100 employees at companies with more than 1,000 people, regarding numerous facets of diversity at the companies. Other factors, such as the number of women on a company's board of directors, the existence of a designated department or leaders responsible for diversity programs, and having communications about diversity also impacted the ranking.

"We're proud of these recognitions, but our work continues," said Tyler Whipple, diversity and inclusion director. "It's more important than ever that all our employees feel welcome and included. We are committed to creating a workplace where diversity is embraced, everyone feels a sense of belonging, and employees can do their best work on behalf of our customers."

For more information on the 2019 Corporate Equality Index, or to download a free copy of the report, visit hrc.org/cei.

MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY Outside practices have begun, and they are held every Tuesday and Thursday until **May 23**. Practices are held at Nannyberry Park from 6:00 p.m. until sunset.

Five Saturday game days are scheduled for this season, including three tournaments. All of the home games are played at the Wisconsin Rugby Club at 4064 Vilas Road in Cottage Grove.

- **April 6** - Milwaukee Beer Barons at home
- **April 13** - Minneapolis Mayhem in Minneapolis, MN
- **April 27** - Spring Fever Tournament in St. Louis, MO
- **May 11** - Minotaurs-hosted Madtown Scrumdown
- **May 24** - Capital City Cup in Columbus, OH

The Capital City Cup is a biennial tournament that hosts more than 20 International Gay Rugby teams from the eastern half of the U.S.

MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER The center's Really Grand Friday season kicks off at the scenic Great Lakes Distillery on Friday, **May 10** from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Enjoy amazing food and a handcrafted beverage at the one-of-a-kind location. Tickets are \$65 in advanced, \$75 at the door. You may also take advantage of our season pass: attend all three Really Grand Fridays for the entire season for just one low price of \$175. Please contact Alicia Washington-White, Fund Development & Events Manager, with questions at

METHODOLOGY | Our Lives reaches out to area LGBTQ+ organizations to seek information for inclusion in this section. We also gather information from newsletters and social media put out by the various organizations. If your LGBTQ+ organization would like to be included in these updates, please reach out to us directly at contact@ourlivesmadison.com.

ARTISTS BAUER & BECKWITH EXHIBIT AT DRIFTLESS HISTORIUM



Two southwestern Wisconsin artists bring their work to Mount Horeb's Driftless Historium, where their artistry evokes some of the same themes of nostalgia or found objects that complement the environment of the museum and archives of the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society.

Paintings by **Chuck Bauer** and mosaics made by **Chuck Beckwith** will be on display from March 16

through May 14 at the Historium, 100 S. Second St. in Mount Horeb.

Chuck Bauer is drawn to subjects with a domestic or a natural theme, and he uses conventional approaches that convey nostalgia and tranquility. Not afraid of color, Bauer's early training as an abstract painter still fuels his approach to realistic topics. In painting, he believes, "You have to balance your thinking: employing not too much or too little; thus, seeking to keep both the painter and the viewer intrigued, excited, and entertained."

Chuck Beckwith has been making mosaic works for many years, and uses a demanding, personal technique he developed. He utilized carefully fitted shards of commercial crockery, found objects such as glass doll eyes, small pieces of decorative jewelry, and images and letters discovered on the reverse side of plates, saucers, etc.

"Bauer & Beckwith: Paintings and Mosaics" will be on exhibit in the Kalscheur Room Gallery of the Driftless Historium, a \$1.7 million facility that opened in 2017. The Driftless Historium is the headquarters, collections, and research center and public museum of the Mount Horeb Area Historical Society, which celebrates and preserves the rich human and natural history of Southwestern Dane County's Driftless Area.

mkelgbt.org. Purchase tickets at RGFMay2019.givesmart.com.

OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER The 11th Annual Garden Party will be held in Madison 6:00–8:00 p.m. on **June 6** at Olbrich Gardens. There is a suggested donation of \$50, with a sliding scale to \$20. Tickets can be purchased prior to the event at lgbtoutreach.org.

PERFECT HARMONY MEN'S CHORUS The chorus just had its spring retreat and spent some intense work on *Quiet No More*, a jointly commissioned work with a sequence of songs commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Riots, to be premiered in Wisconsin at the spring concert, **May 31 & June 2**. Find out more at perfectharmonychorus.org.

PFLAG MADISON Regular meetings are held every **3rd Sunday of the month** at the Friends Meeting House (1704 Roberts Ct. in Madison). From 2:00 to 3:00 p.m. the group welcomes a guest speaker, covering a variety of topics that are informational and/or educational for the LGBTQ+ community, allies, and those wishing to learn more. From 3:00–4:00 p.m. there is a confidential support circle for those who wish to stay. The next meetings are **May 19** and **June 16**.

WISCONSIN LGBT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE The 2019 Madison Women's Leadership Luncheon will be held on Thursday, **May 9** at the Goodman Community Center. The chamber will also host

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SPORTS MENTAL HEALTH ROLLER DERBY

Rolling With the Punches

Local artist and activist **Wendi Kent** found support to cope with relationship trauma through the fast-wheeling world of roller derby.

LAST HALLOWEEN, WENDI KENT, a 38-year-old queer photographer, activist, and art teacher, was gliding around the Madison Skate Park in a giant vagina costume. Kent is a member of Madison Wreckers Roller Derby who skates under the name Slaughterhouse Thighs. She has short hair, stylish thick-framed glasses, and a variety of tattoos, including the phrase “thick thighs/save lives” across the backs of her legs.

Along with fellow skater Critical Tits (aka Hannah Jaber), Thighs was enjoying one of the year’s last outdoor femme skate nights, an evening dedicated to creating space for female/femme-identified skaters, who are not always well-represented at skateparks.

The costume covered her torso and head in concentric layers of increasingly deep-pink fabric. Finding it a little cumbersome, Thighs took it off and continued skating in her athletic gear including helmet, pads, and pale blue, rainbow-laced outdoor skates. About 15 minutes into the session, she turned sharply to avoid crossing paths with a skateboarder, and fell awkwardly on the wet pavement.

As usual, she got up and skated on, down

some ramps, over a round, convex feature affectionately dubbed “the boob,” and off the half pyramid, before realizing that something was wrong. Critical Tits helped her to her car, and Thighs made it home and later to urgent care, where x-rays revealed that a tendon had pulled a segment of bone off her ankle: she would need surgery and months to recover.

Thighs was distraught, but not over the pain of the injury. After facing relationship trauma in 2016, roller skating had become a crucial part of her therapy, both mental and physical, as well as her social home. Not having it for such a long time would be a challenge.

A ROCKY ROAD

Thighs started skating in 2016, around the time that her partner, Autumn Kent, came out as transgender. The transition came as a surprise to Thighs, who felt unbalanced by the change.

“It was really hard because I felt like...I had something really stable. And I’ve never had any stability in my life,” she says.

Thighs grew up in Austin, Texas, where her mother struggled with mental health and drug

problems and her stepfather was abusive. In 1993, when she was just 13, Thighs became pregnant. Though she wanted an abortion, she was not counseled on that option when she sought help at a Texas Planned Parenthood (this experience later formed part of the inspiration for Thighs’s work as a reproductive rights activist). Receiving little support from her family, she gave the baby girl to her boyfriend’s mother to raise. At 15, she took to the streets and started using heroin, an experience she recently detailed as a guest on the podcast, “Guys We F***ed.”

By her early 20s, Thighs had recovered from drugs and was working as a barista on Austin’s busy Guadalupe Street. It was there that she met Autumn. The couple were married in 2010, six years before Autumn, now an associate professor of mathematics at UW-Madison, came out and began transitioning. Thighs began looking for a healthy way to cope with the challenges of her changing relationship.

“I was feeling really alone, and I didn’t know what to do with myself,” she says. “I wanted something where I could take my mind off it in a healthy way.”

FEELS AND EIGHT WHEELS

Enter roller skating. Thighs had recently become fascinated by skaters on Instagram, where she followed groups like Chicks in Bowls and the Moxi Skate Team. Although Thighs herself had never roller skated, she was inspired.

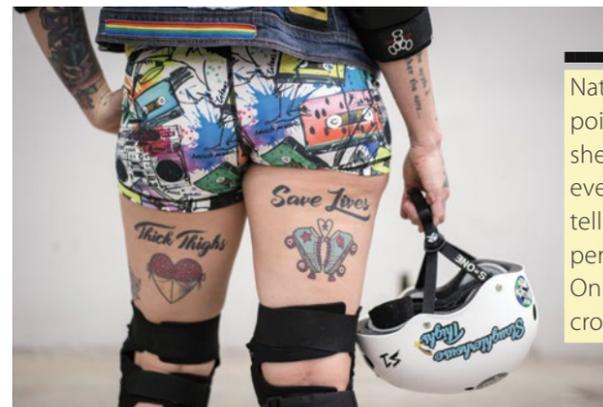
In late summer 2016, she bought a pair of basic black skates online, with very little knowledge about what to look for or how to skate. She naively got them in her normal shoe size, which meant the skates were too loose for controlled footwork. Thighs tried the skates out in the driveway and, after just a few attempts, fell and fractured her tailbone.

Despite the pain that resulted from her first attempt, Thighs continued to investigate the roller-skating community. At the encouragement of friends, she decided to take the introductory class offered by Madison Roller Derby’s recreational team, Madison Wreckers Roller Derby.

FINDING HER PLACE

Roller derby is unlike any other sport: part race and part contact blocking, with a lot of queer, punk, DIY attitude thrown in. The game plays out on a small, flat track, on which players known as jammers score points by lapping members of the opposing team (blockers) who try to impede their progress.

MRD is a nonprofit with both competitive and non-competitive teams spanning all skill levels



Nat skated over and offered a few pointers, reminding Thighs that she was covered in padding: even though her body was telling her to be careful, she had permission to contradict her fear. On the next few laps, the crossover finally clicked.

and a wide variety of gender identities, sexual orientations, and backgrounds. The teams practice at Fast Forward Skate Center, an obscure facility along a highway frontage road on the southwest side of Madison. The ceiling inside is low, with disco balls and strobe lights dangling over a floor that, until a recent renovation, was pocked by water damage, and in places patched with warping sheets of plywood. (MRD is raising funds and searching for a new, more up-to-date facility to host practices and competitions.)

At her first practice Thighs stuck close to the wall. Skating was harder than she had thought it would be, and she left wondering whether she would stick out the introductory course. She did come back, though, again and again. According to Thighs, the supportive MRD community made the difference: in her experience, derby skaters are more interested in sharing than in showing off, which makes new skaters feel welcome.

Thighs cites an experience with MRD skater Nat Splat (Natalie Kingsfield) as an example of that attitude. Nat, who skates with the Reservoir Dolls, one of MRD’s home teams, was helping lead the practice when she noticed Thighs struggling with a maneuver called a crossover. It requires the skater to lean her body toward the center of the track, alternately putting one foot directly in front of the other to navigate a curve.

The other new skaters got the hang of it, one by one, while Thighs lost momentum. Nat skated over and offered a few pointers, reminding Thighs that she was covered in padding: even though her body was telling her to be careful, she had permission to contradict her fear. On the next few laps, the crossover finally clicked.

FALLING—AND GETTING BACK UP—IN LOVE

Thighs fell more and more in love with roller derby. She attended MRD games in costume, acquiring a giant, three-dimensional blue-and-white “Grade A” milk carton to don when rooting for the Dairyland Dolls (the league’s all-star team) and a unicorn mascot head, which she pairs with silver spandex, to cheer on Team Unicorn. By the middle of her third training session, Thighs knew she had the “derby bug.”

is the sense of empowerment.

“I loved going to bouts and seeing these amazing, inspiring women who are so talented and so fast,” says Amerslam. “They’re such badasses, and watching them made me feel like I could be a badass, too.”

EMBRACING CHANGE

These days, Thighs also assists at practices. She finds herself offering tips on the basics like the ones she got from Nat Splat when she started.

Since Autumn came out in 2016, she and Thighs have been co-parenting their daughters and living together in an apartment on the East Side. The couple have separated romantically and are in the process of looking for separate, possibly adjoining units so they can continue to raise their children together. Thighs is also back on skates following her injury last Halloween.

In an Instagram post last fall, Thighs thanked the MRD community for the transformative impact it has had on her life.

“I found a community and a family,” she wrote. “I found something in myself that I’d never known was there. I found a support system that I have so desperately needed to survive very hard times. I’ve found friendship in those I would have never known otherwise. I’ve found freedom, strength, and courage. I found something that will not let me down when I need security the most.” ■



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ART INDIGENOUS QUEER

Like A Hammer

MMoCA brings a new, traveling exhibit by queer indigenous artist **Jeffrey Gibson** to their galleries as part of an effort to create spaces of empowerment.

REPRESENTATION MATTERS. MMoCA Curator of Exhibitions, Leah Kolb, knows this and consistently delivers art that tells stories otherwise omitted from dominant cultural narratives. Kolb offers contemporary museum visitors who identify as LGBTQ and allied sub-cultural aesthetics that they can connect with, made by artists who embrace their own identities.

For many people who have experienced the pain of exclusion, the success of Jeffrey Gibson—whose first major retrospective, “Like a Hammer,” is crossing the country’s contemporary art world—is a hero’s journey of intersectional identity. In bringing this Denver Art Museum-organized exhibit to Madison, Kolb is again expanding the role of the art museum from a place of education and enjoyment into what she calls “a space for empowerment.”

“Like a Hammer” offers visitors the opportunity to experience the buoyant and bright world of Gibson, a self-described queer Indigenous man, an outsider, and maker who layers the tropes of abstract art—shape, form, color, and line—with materials from the artistic traditions of indigenous North Americans, such as elk hide, birch bark, and tin jingles. He does so with great skill, confidence, and zhuzh.

Gibson received his BFA from the Art Institute of Chicago and an MFA from Royal College of Art. He samples liberally from pop cultures, queer cultures, and indigenous cultures to create a synthesized mash-up, expressing multiple aspects of his multiple identities, which include Choctaw-Cherokee, painter, sculptor, and gay.

In his work, American History (JB) for example, Gibson quotes James Baldwin’s statement, “American History is longer, larger, more beautiful and more terrible than anything anyone has ever said about it.” Gibson illustrates this bold truism, written by a gay, African-American literary giant in 1963, with bright plastic beads, tin jingles, and nylon fringe, all materials used in indigenous arts or ceremonies that Gibson is reclaiming and assembling in new ways. Punching bags and bright, gender-

less figures, likely conceived in the European raves, gay bar dance floors, gyms, and North American Pow Wows he has experienced, show that the American experience now is just as beautiful and terrible as in Baldwin’s time.

Critics have challenged Gibson’s free use of traditional materials from indigenous cultures because of the way the work decontextualizes objects from their traditional purposes and places. Artists are no longer insulated by the general assumption that if they are part of a community, they cannot exploit, misrepresent, or even unintentionally harm it. As Gibson pushes boundaries and experiments with materials, deepening his understanding of who he is and his own heritage, he acknowledges that he is using what he calls “Historic Materials of incredible power” in non-traditional ways.

Gibson responded to these critiques, explaining, “I would never address anything to do with ceremony. I wasn’t raised in a ceremonial lifestyle. I would never incorporate someone else’s story without their permission. I would never steal someone’s design. I would never copy anyone’s beadwork or quillwork.”

Instead, Gibson is telling his own story, of his own negotiated dance through different worlds, a story of vulnerability, self-exploration and acceptance; of becoming connected to his body and his culture; of experimenting, finding his place and making his home.

Kolb knows that there are myriad ways to respond to Gibson’s bold creations and she does not shy away from the complex questions his work raises about displacement, cultural appropriation, identity, and the history of racism and homophobia in the U.S. She sees art as an opportunity to create discussions we have not had before, in ways we have not had before, thereby fostering new insights about our interconnectedness and our differences.

Gibson’s vibrant artwork asserts the complexity of identity, inspiring viewers to mine the brightest parts of their own life experiences, create from them, and express the stories of their own places of belonging. —Karin Wolf

An opening reception for “Like A Hammer” will be at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art on June 7 from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m., and will be in the main galleries from June 8 through September 15, 2019.



Jeffrey Gibson (Mississippi Band Choctaw/ Cherokee), IN NUMBERS TOO BIG TO IGNORE, 2016. Glass beads, artificial sinew, copper jingles, metal studs, and repurposed wool army blanket over wood panel; 61½ × 43 in. Fried Family Collection, courtesy of Marc Straus Gallery, New York. Image courtesy of Jeffrey Gibson Studio and Roberts Projects, Los Angeles, California. Photograph by Peter Mauney.



HAPPY HOMEOWNERS

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FOOD COOKING COMMUNITY

Taste Beyond Boundaries

Katie Miller's new **The Good Table** shared meal series aims to provide a place for LGBTQ+ people of all ages to gather together and make connections over good food.

HELLO! MY NAME IS KATHERINE (Katie) Miller, I identify as a lesbian, and I prefer they/them or she/her pronouns. I grew up in Madison and spent most of my childhood roaming around the Farmer’s Market and helping out my dad at our family’s liquor store, Miller’s Liquor.

I became interested in cooking—specifically the significance of a meal experience—in high school, when my parents were going through a divorce. I felt that the best way to create a sense of normalcy for my younger sister, Hannah, was to consistently cook dinner for her, even though, all I knew how to make at that time. A few years later, in college at the UW, I decided to pursue a Bachelor’s of Science in dietetics after becoming increasingly interested in how nutrition was affecting my athletic performance. I completed my first triathlon, in Verona, on my 17th birthday. After a (very) brief collegiate track experience I decided to take triathlon more seriously.

By the time I graduated from UW in 2017, I had competed at Collegiate Nationals four times, finished my first Ironman before I was old enough to enjoy a post-race beer, and competed on Team USA at international world championship races. After college, I did what everyone else does in that situation: I went to graduate school. I received my Master’s of Science in pediatric nutrition and dietetics as well as my Registered Dietitian Nutritionist certification in 2018 from Saint Louis University.

GROWING AN IDEA

While in graduate school, I worked in as many kitchen settings as I could. I talked food, flavor, and freshness with anyone who was willing to listen. I stayed up late practicing culinary techniques and testing out original recipes—hoping to gain the skills I needed to be able to bring people together at my table. I developed my food philosophy, “Taste beyond boundaries.” For me, it means that, through a meal experience, we can all find at least one thing in common with each other.



After graduate school, I decided to come back home to Madison. Even though I had lived here for all but one year of my life, I felt like I was stepping into a totally new place. I wasn’t involved with the LGBTQ+ community before I moved away. Thankfully, I was taken out to a few Queer Pressure events and that changed for me. However, I still didn’t feel like I truly knew anyone off the dance floor.

CREATING CONNECTION

The Good Table is my effort to change this for the Madison LGBTQ+ community. It’s a pop-up queer event that seeks to foster connections by providing a safe, inclusive space for us to gather and share a meal together.

The Good Table seeks to follow my food philosophy and the flow style of all great meals: snack, refresh, comfort, savor, and indulge. I have been overwhelmed with the initial support of this venture, and I think this has shown me that the Madison LGBTQIA+ community has waited long enough to have a safe meal space that was curated just for us.

The first event will be a pop-up at Robin Room on June 16. It starts around 6:00 p.m., entry is free, however there is a bar there and all food items are cash-only. The menu is original and will be prepared by me. Specialty cocktails will be created by Megan Touhy, a bartender at Mint Mark and genuine flavor master.

Bring yourself, bring a friend, bring all the queer folks you know, and help me make this space special, warm, and welcoming. Please check out my Facebook page (facebook.com/TheGoodTableMSN) for event updates and more information. Come as you are—I can’t wait to see you all there. ■



UPCOMING EVENTS

→ UW CREDIT UNION FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SEMINAR

Date: May 16
Time: 5:30 - 6:30 PM
Where: UW Credit Union Corporate Office
3500 University Avenue

We’ll discuss how to develop a sound financial strategy, including how to:

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- Determine three components of a sound investment plan
- Calculate how much money you may need to retire
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→ OPEN AT THE MADISON MALLARDS

Date: July 11
Time: 6:35 PM
Where: 2920 N Sherman Avenue

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DRAG PERFORMANCE FUNDRAISING

A-Typical Drag

Gretta and **Garnet Grimm-Deville** have created a wildly inclusive, expansive, and downright delightfully weird performance with their monthly “Hysteria” drag shows.

TELL US WHO YOU ARE, AND WHAT’S YOUR INVOLVEMENT WITH HYSTERIA?

Gretta Grimm-Deville and Garnet Grimm-Deville are Madison’s spookiest alternative drag duo, and the creators and hosts of Hysteria. Gretta has been doing drag for six years, and Garnet celebrated their one-year dragiversary in January.

WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO CREATE THIS PARTICULAR SHOW AND WHY?

Garnet: We set out to create something that would stand out from other shows in Madison. We knew from the beginning that we didn’t want it to be just another show, but rather a fully immersive experience. Don’t get me wrong; standard drag shows are a total blast! But after a while, the repetition of it all can get a trifle dull. So we wanted to create a space where artists who exist autonomously from the world of drag could be celebrated alongside it, and integrated into it.

Another driving force behind Hysteria was to create a space which is not only accepting of alternative styles of drag and art, but also to represent minorities within the LGBTQ+ and performance communities. Unfortunately, there’s very little representation for AFAB (“assigned fe-

male at birth”) queens and performers, trans performers, drag kings, etc., despite their ceaseless efforts and undeniable talents. We wanted to carve out a space where those identities could finally be at the forefront.

Gretta: One other large part of our motivation was to give back to the Madison community. There have been a fair number of shows in the area that are organized with the intention of giving to a certain organization or charity, but we wanted to go a little further than a single show. We ask each performer to donate the tips that they are given by the audience members to our chosen charity or organization of the month.

WHAT SETS HYSTERIA APART FROM OTHER DRAG SHOWS IN MADISON?

Garnet: For each show, we recruit visual artists, as well as musicians, to add to the lineup so that there are various mediums of entertainment and talent to showcase. We also (with the help of the creative Jordyn Alft) have brought depth to the show with multimedia involvement (i.e. videos, countdowns, visual aid for drag numbers, etc.). Each show is also themed, which adds a creative and conceptual element to the advertising, the performances, and the costuming. It’s just an overall great place for weirdos!

Gretta: Each month we choose a Wisconsin-based LGBTQ+ organization, or an organization that supports the queer community in some way, to receive all of the tips that our performers are graciously given by the audience members. Thus far we have raised over \$2,000 for groups like Trans Law Help Wisconsin, Diverse & Resilient, GSAFE, and the Social Justice Center.

WHY DO YOU THINK PEOPLE SHOULD COME SEE IT?

WHAT HAVE SOME OF YOUR FAVORITE ACTS BEEN SO FAR?

Garnet: It’s inarguably a unique experience! And, as I said, it has a lot to offer aside from sick drag. I don’t know if I can pick a particular act as my favorite because they’ve all been stellar, but the March show was Myspace-themed, and everything about it was fantastic. Remember what it felt like to walk into Hot Topic in 2007? It was like that, but queerer.

Gretta: Hysteria has evolved through every single show. Even if the “vibe” of the show and the venue is not exactly what someone would gravitate toward normally, there will be an aspect of the show that will cater to you. Instead of having the normal bar experience while waiting for a show to start we have brought in some amazing local artists and a local band to add more of a complete experience to the night.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE, WITH THIS SHOW IN PARTICULAR AND FOR YOURSELF AS A DRAG ARTIST?

Garnet: Really, I think we just look forward to watching it grow and live up to its full potential as we continue to raise money for causes near and dear to us. It’s still a new show, but it’s gaining momentum, and the turnout has improved each time, which is really encouraging.

As an individual drag artist, I want to continue to raise awareness and provide opportunities for fellow AFAB, trans and non-binary performers who feel they’re underrepresented or treated unfairly in the scene. Then, eventually, when I have more than one year of experience under my belt, I plan to audition for a drag competition (NOT Drag Race) and will hopefully go on to compete and grow my platform through that.

Gretta: Each show has brought a brand new energy and fulfillment for my art that the drag community has not given to me in quite a while. We have all had a ton of fun collaborating with local performers and artists and I want to continue to bring in fresh takes on our themes and see what they bring to the stage!

For myself? I have been trying to delve a little deeper into my talents and take on more sewing projects. I have loved to sew since college and will continue to do some projects when there is time. ■

Shows are held on the first Thursday of each month.

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ORTHODONTISTS (left to right)

Dr. Audra Long, DDS, MS
Dr. David Allen, DDS, MS
Dr. Stephen Schasker, DDS, MS

ENDODONTIST

Dr. Nicholas Anders, DDS, MS

PERIODONTISTS (left to right)

Dr. Matthew Lorson, DDS
Dr. Amjad Nazzal, DDS, MDS



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May & June

We're more than ready to kick off our shoes and don our gay, short-sleeved apparel for some fun in the sun. Festivities abound as the warmer months bring opportunities to mix, mingle, learn, and explore!

For more LGBTQ-specific events, see our Organization Events on page 17.

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PRIDEFEST MILWAUKEE

Henry Maier Festival Grounds

The largest Pride Fest in the country returns for another long weekend of spectacular performances, live music, dancing, and lots of opportunities to connect with local community organizations and people. For the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising that helped kick off the modern LGBTQ rights movement, special themed events will be included throughout.

pridefest.com

MAY

9

WILLMA'S FUND SHOWCASE

Crucible Madison

Join supporters and revelers for an evening of over-the-top entertainment by Willma Flynn-Stone, Mercury Stardust, ZZ Topz, as well as music by Chromatic Kink, all to support the work of Willma's Fund. A project of OutReach, proceeds will benefit the nonprofit's work to prevent LGBTQ homelessness in Dane County.

cruciblemadison.com

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MADISON ROLLER DERBY SEASON 15 CHAMPIONSHIP

Alliant Energy Center

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madisonrollerderby.org

23

(THROUGH JUNE 2)

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frescooperatheatre.com

5

MILWAUKEE BREWERS PRIDE NIGHT

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brewers.com

14-29

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JUNE

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A Taste for Celebration

Jessica and Erika Jones of Giant Jones Brewing recount the history of their relationship and business partnership, and why the trials and tribulations along the way have all been well worth getting to where they are now—and where they'll go next.

CRAFT BEER TRANS* RELATIONSHIPS SMALL BUSINESS

WE RECEIVE PLENTY OF CONDITIONING, starting at a young age, that is worth unlearning. Putting off celebrating is chief among these often deeply ingrained lessons, and one that we are striving to overcome.

Too often we allow the mundane to set in, letting meals become the mere consumption of nutrients and calories, or we find ourselves focused on what will be at some distant time in the future. Of course we all find ourselves in dull routines at times, desiring and wanting to find

and experience fuller lives and to fully realize ourselves.

Yet we've found the common thread that weaves throughout our lives is one where we are claiming reasons to celebrate as often as possible. The future and our goals are always before us and we are always looking towards them. We are simultaneously grabbing the chance to transcend the difficulties or mundanity of the day by celebrating the moment. That's what keeps us vibrant and moving.

COMING TOGETHER

Early in our relationship, we bonded over a shared interest in food and beer. Taken separately, each offers boundless depths of flavor, creativity, and nuance. Paired together they are further elevated. We inspired each other to explore new cuisines and styles, and to express love by cooking and brewing. A common topic of conversation is who gets to make dinner rather than what to have. Dinner is regularly regarded as sacred time in our house, a chance for the cook to express love, to celebrate the bounty of the earth, and to connect with each other.

At Giant Jones Brewing, we are doing our best to disrupt the norms we have struggled to move past, and to be an example of a different way to move through society. Without visible examples, after all, it's difficult to see the possibilities. We can get stuck in deeply conditioned expectations of gender and societal roles and norms.

Each of us grew up with an interest in preparing food. Erika's go-to sleepover activity was to make tomato sauce with a friend and host an Italian restaurant for her family. Jessica started baking cakes as often as possible in the third grade, aspiring to make fancier and more intricate creations each time.

Through these early explorations, we each learned that the mere creation and sharing of food—the gathering of people around it—brings forth joy and celebration on its own. A fine meal and cake for a special occasion is well and good, but a fengreek sponge cake with sweet potato custard and maple-cardamon German buttercream is reason enough to have an impromptu party on a Tuesday evening.

Over the 13 years we have lived together, more often than not we have had people over to enjoy something delicious; sometimes a full dinner, other times just a beverage or dessert. For most of our relationship we have enjoyed having guests two to five nights of the week; mostly last-minute invitations based on who we happened to see or think of that day. We have continued to find that it is worth it to simply celebrate the day.

JESSICA: JOURNEY TO MYSELF

For all the rhetoric that flies around about innate qualities one is born with, it is ridiculous how long it takes in life to grow into yourself. The trepidation and struggle involved in shedding expectations and norms are substantial, and, assuming one gets through them, it can seem so obvious and simple once you let those norms go and live your own life. As messy as our society seems at the moment, things do seem better, if only because there are more examples visible of people living as themselves.

I started calling myself Jessica in my head early in second grade and was the only one who knew me by that name for nearly three decades. I had no language or context for the rich feminine life in my head, and eventually just began to assume everyone else thought

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Erika Jones (left) & Jessica Jones (center) of Giant Jones Brewing Company with Lisa Schueler (right), Heartland's Agricultural & Commercial Lender.

“We wanted to **create a business** that represents not only **our values**, but **who we truly are**. **Heartland believes** in both and **worked with us** to get us here.”

— Erika & Jessica Jones,
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constantly about life in another gender and dreamed about having different social roles and secondary body features. It was a central part of the world I knew, and without any visible examples of trans people before me, I just assumed this was the inner life everyone lived but never talked about.

Yet, as childhood wore into adolescence, my world became bleak. By early eighth grade I was completely consumed with shutting down the experiment that was me. So, one morning in early May I stayed home from school and lit my bedroom on fire with myself in it. This was the safest future and exit I could imagine. There was so much inside of me that I had no words for expressing, that a grand summation of my pain seemed the only option to fourteen-year-old me.



Clearly, that was the best failure of my life. I remembered, as the bed I laid on caught fire, that I forgot to let my beloved dog outside. So, I leapt across the fire, went to the basement, pulled the dog outside and hitched him on the chain in the backyard. As I opened the door to go back in, a firefighter turned the corner of the house and stopped me. After a stop in the ER, I finished eighth grade in the adolescent psychiatric ward at the local hospital.

Extensive evaluation followed. Eventually I was diagnosed with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and depression. The doctors said I had a loss filter between my subconsciousness and my consciousness and was on the obsessive side of the OCD spectrum and had become obsessed with my depression. No mention of gender dysphoria. Years of therapy and lots of psychiatric drugs later I was trained to choose obsessions to mute the depression and suicidal inclinations.

For years I followed short-lived paths of obsession with monkeys and robots, but learned that something tangible and expressible was the most sustainable type of obsession. I began pursuing culinary interests with long-term focus: exploring the depths of barbecue and other meat preparations, craft cocktails, beer, bread, dim sum, and pastry. Each pursuit brought me back to the idea that flavor was the sustaining focus.

Over the next decade, I pursued flavor to the full extent, along with my culinary interests. I dove deep into becoming a Grand Master Beer Judge in the Beer Judge Certification Program (BJCP) and an Advanced Cicerone—an expert on food and beer pairings. Through all these pursuits and passions, however, the depression remained as a constant, with the lingering possibility and wish for an end to my life.

The last time I yearned for the grave was November 22, 2016. I woke up on the 23rd excited to be alive for the first time since early childhood. I came out to myself and to Erika the night before, and to no great surprise that was actually the root of the depression that had plagued me for over two decades. It took another two years to fully get out publicly, and early press about Giant Jones Brewing Company referenced me by a different name. But I am finally the brewer and the me I have needed to be all along.

ERIKA: FINDING A PARTNER

I always loved food (and eating) and those joys became more joyous and exciting with a partner in the pursuit! As a child I dreamed of opening my own restaurant, and played at it with friends—making spaghetti sauce, ice cream sundaes, and eventually cooking weeknight



dinner for the family. I also loved being involved in the community—being part of something bigger than myself was critical—whether playing on the soccer team or participating in service projects. I had a strong feeling that the best way for me to make an impact in the world was to invest my time in the community where I lived.

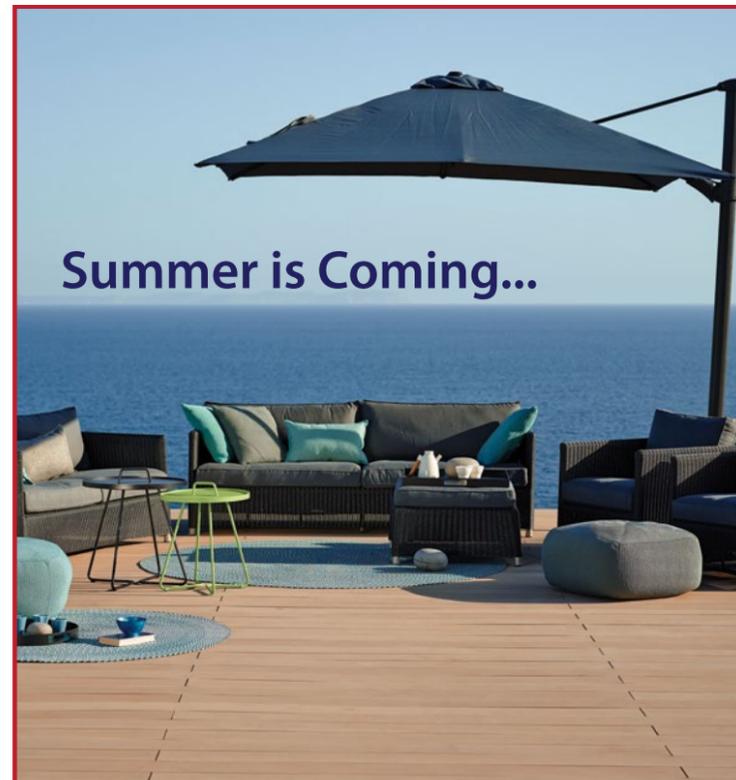
I remember meeting Jessica for the first time and being instantly drawn to her brilliant smile and buoyant energy. I was excited to get to know this magnetic human being. We worked together at a summer camp with lots of time together to get to know each other. I learned early on about her depression, but seeing someone so full of energy and life I didn't truly understand what it meant.

So, one morning in early May I stayed home from school and lit my bedroom on fire with myself in it. This was the safest future and exit I could imagine. There was so much inside of me that I had no words for expressing, that a grand summation of my pain seemed the only option to fourteen-year-old me.

We got married in 2006, and shortly after, I started to understand more about what her depression was all about. Early on, I had been instructed by Jessica to constantly ask her about her mental health—how was she feeling? Asking that question after coming home from a trip, I learned what “not well” truly meant. She was distraught, agitated, inconsolable, and uncomfortable all at once.

After asking what she needed, I called a doctor to help her set up an appointment—she couldn't make the call herself. She went to the doctor and received a new prescription of antidepressants, which helped her navigate that bout of depression. A few months later she was back to herself, but we held onto the prescription for the inevitable next time it was needed. Understanding the reality of depression meant that I knew it would return despite it moving to the background and allowing us to continue our pursuits. And I feared for my partner, knowing that, in fact, there was little I could do when it did come back.

We had moved to Berkeley, California and were immersing ourselves in the craft beer culture, thanks to some close friends and fellow home-brewers. Fueled by Jessica's obsessiveness, we were often the instigators of great adventures: traveling to breweries, attending beer festivals, or tasting our way through the beer styles in the Beer



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BUBBLING UP

Transitioning, trying to come out publicly, and opening a business is a ridiculous amount to take on at once. The impromptu gatherings to celebrate with friends that had punctuated our lives for so long happened far less often as we grew into these things. Excitement and fear permeated in equal measure, it seemed, throughout 2017 and 2018.

Jessica was feeling better about herself than ever before, yet socially it was a gigantic struggle to come out. “I am going by Jessica now, because I am a woman,” is a difficult and scary phrase to work into conversation. The tension of not being out, plus presenting differently at home and in public, often kept us from spending time with others; left caught between different ways of being and important parts of ourselves. Date nights at home with the shades pulled became the routine. Slowly we told close friends and family, but Jessica continued to function publicly in her assigned role.

Once buildout on Giant Jones Brewing began in earnest, a whole new world of stress opened up before us. Much of the tension that seemed to overwhelm us with Jessica’s gender transition was displaced. Each day brought new decisions, elongated timelines, expanding expenses, plus occasional moments of accomplishment.

Levels of exhaustion grew throughout the process. Jessica spent 13 to 20-plus hours per day pushing towards opening at the brewery. Each day filled with making expensive decisions about small details, getting local, state, and federal permits and licenses in order, and dealing with issues as they came up. The only real breaks were trips to Elemental Electrolysis to have facial hair electrocuted and plucked one by one.

We put as many things in Erika’s name for the business as possible, since Jessica still had a different name legally. Inefficiencies abounded, because Erika was still working full-time as the director at Fairshare CSA Coalition, and Jessica was solely focused on the brewery. Things

Judge Certification Program. We also enlisted our friends in our civic pursuits—volunteering at local parks, participating in coastal cleanup day, protesting Prop 8. We always managed to engage our friends and community to elevate the experience and create magical and meaningful memories.

Over time in our relationship, I noticed Jessica choosing feminine clothing, questioning gender roles and stereotypes, and I agreed with her. If we want our society and community to be a place that loves and cares for others, supplanting arbitrary rules that limit expression and creativity, and are designed to exclude people, is critical. The idea that we should constantly question and strive for a society that is more inclusive and just is part of our ethos. So when we realized Jessica was transgender, as surprising as it was, it was also not such a giant leap from the journey we had already been on together. And the relief from the threat of depression was a revelation.

ended up with Jessica’s birth name—many of which still need to get updated now that the government recognizes her chosen name, too.

By spring of 2018 we found ourselves looking out at the new reality we had set out to find. Jessica came out publicly at the end of March and was able to affirm her name and gender legally by the end of May. We brewed the first batch of beer on April 12 and sold beer for the first time on May 2 for a packed house at Brasserie V. Then, in mid-June, we opened the Tasting Room at Giant Jones Brewing and are once again throwing some of the best parties multiple times a week!

DOING BUSINESS DIFFERENTLY

At Giant Jones Brewing, we are doing our best to disrupt the norms we have struggled to move past, and to be an example of a different way to move through society. Without visible examples, after all, it’s difficult to see the possibilities. We can get stuck in deeply conditioned expectations of gender and societal roles and norms.

So we set out to create a business that celebrates that different way of doing this, all while making world class beer: A local, organic brewery, run by queer women, that pays real wages.

Our business model contradicts well-conditioned capitalist norms:

- We pay livable wages; if we cannot pay a livable wage to someone, we work more and sleep less ourselves until we get to the place where we can provide a real income and reasonable hours for them.
- We are a small brewery that aims to move 80% of our beer outside our tasting room. There are so many great kitchens and places in Madison—including your house—where we want you to enjoy these beers, so we focus our efforts there rather than on higher-margin tasting room sales. Further, we just work with small bars, restaurants, and stores; if it matters that the beer is brewed by an independent company, then it matters that it is retailed by one too!
- All of our beers are certified organic, because this is the only planet we have. Brewing organic beer is almost the opposite experience of making organic food. When you go to the farmers market and start using local organic produce, a whole new world of options and flavors opens up; there are endless varieties and options one has never encountered before. In beer, the number of malts and hops available narrows considerably. Further, organic certification in and of itself is extremely rigorous; moving through the process was the most grueling bureaucratic process I have ever gone through—and I say this as a trans woman who opened a brewery!
- The tasting room is an open, well-lit space, with single-occupant, undesignated toilet rooms. We purposely designed it to be safe and welcoming for everyone.

CELEBRATING TODAY

Now that we have gotten to this place—almost a year into running Giant Jones Brewing Company and Jessica living full-time in the appropriate gender—people often ask, “So things are going well? You are living the dream, right?” We have largely given up on feeding the fantasy they are trying to access, a life where everything is light, fun, and happy all of the time, because it’s exhausting to pretend that’s true even in casual conversation.

The reality is that it is all of the things all at once; exciting, mundane, stressful, thrilling, and arduous. Not all dreams are riding a unicorn through a field of daisies; that is what makes the moments we pull out of each day or week to inspire one another and experience something remarkable together all the more important.

There is always a need to look toward tomorrow and the eight thousand tomorrows beyond that, but that does not make today any less worth celebrating. ■

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The River Runs Deep

Charles McLimans, staff, and a legion of volunteers are helping **The River Food Pantry** expand its efforts to offer resources and a community of respect for Dane County residents facing food insecurity.

FOOD INSECURITY | COMMUNITY SUPPORT | VOLUNTEERISM



Charles McLimans in the onsite kitchen where hot meals are prepared.



THE RIVER FOOD PANTRY (2201 Darwin Road, Madison) is the busiest food pantry in Dane County, and it's in the growing stages of becoming a holistic hub for addressing household stability—"food, housing, health, and work/life"—for local people in need.

The River was "faith-founded" in 2006 by Andy and Jenny Czerkas. In 2017, Charles McLimans took on the role of President & CEO. McLimans has more than two decades of non-profit organizational leadership and philanthropy experience in the Midwest. His roots in hunger relief work started in 2006 when he began volunteering at Loaves & Fishes Community Service in Naperville, Illinois, where he eventually became the President & CEO for seven years before continuing on with the same title for Feeding America Eastern Wisconsin in Milwaukee. McLimans is also a consultant and co-owns New Health Chiropractic with his husband, Dr. Richard Merrion, with whom he shares their Madison home with their three cats.

With the input of hundreds of stakeholders, the core values of "respect, compassion, community, caring, generosity" were set forth in the 2018 strategic plan and preparations have been underway to develop strategic partnerships with other organizations that can offer complementary household stability services to clients alongside The River, under one roof.

It is too soon to share specifics, however McLimans hopes that the expansion can take place within two or three years, which will require a successful campaign to secure a 25,000–30,000 square foot facility.

"In order to be fully nourished, a human needs to be nourished in body, mind, and spirit," McLimans says, "and so we want to begin to introduce those elements in our current facility. We are also looking at expanding in order to fully live into this plan and to offer those collaborative services and to have a holistic service hub onsite."

"Food, resources, and faith to build a stronger community" is the guiding mission, and though the non-profit was "faith-founded," McLimans emphasizes that that definition of faith is inclusive.

"We have many different languages, many different cultures, many different faiths represented, and we want to welcome them and make them feel included and bring their interpretation of faith too, as they would do it. It also means that we have faith in our ability to make a difference. We have faith in our community. And we have faith that we are making a difference in making a stronger community."

McLimans refers to the food pantry as "The River" because, he explains, they are trying to get away from the "p-word."

"It doesn't adequately describe what we do," he adds.

COME TO THE RIVER

Any Dane County resident may come to The River. Clients self-report income, which must be 185% or below the federal poverty level. Out of its current 11,000 square foot facility, over the course of a single week, The River provides over 1,000 local families with access to groceries, clothing, and household items; a full-service kitchen serves 800 hot meals; and the MUNCH lunch program offers 400 packed mobile meals for school children and teens on all non-school days, excluding major holidays.

All of this emerges from the 65,000–75,000 pounds of product that moves through the facility every week. There are 15 paid staff, who work hard alongside hundreds of volunteers, all of whom are the engines of The River. In 2018 over 49,000 hours were clocked, which is the equivalent of 24 full-time employees.

Sharon Mohr is a retired volunteer who works at The River essentially full-time in the clothing area. She started volunteering in October 2012 and "fell in love."

"Volunteers are here because they want to be," she says.

Mohr witnesses the difference made by a little help and a friendly face. For example, she knows of a family with two kids and, between both parents, they are working five jobs and cannot pay for childcare. "These are people trying to make ends meet," she says. Mohr adds that clients are grateful for, say, access to clothing especially during transitional seasons when their kids need to wear different clothes but have outgrown what they had from the year before. Even if people might feel shy at first, by the end of their first session, she says that clients feel like they belong there.

The LGBTQ community is also disproportionately affected by food insecurity. According to a 2016 report, "Food Insecurity and SNAP Participation in the LGBT community," published by the Williams Institute at UCLA, food insecurity affects 27% of LGBTQ adults versus 17% of non-LGBTQ adults.

Maya, who wishes to use a pseudonym, is cisgender, femme-identified and often goes to The River with a friend. For her, it's not only about meeting needs but having community.

"I really loved the first time I went to the River because it felt like a party. It felt like a treat. I felt like it was a place where I was made to feel special," she explains. Maya's household has four adult college students (herself included), plus a minor and an infant. Although she owns a home, the burden of expenses to keep it, provide healthy food, and keep everyone in school is substantial compared to the income coming in.

"If we didn't live frugally, if we didn't have the help of places like The River Food Pantry, we wouldn't be able to get the good, healthy food and be able to cook at home, which is what we do," Maya says. "And one of the things we do to help our lives and to keep us tight as a family is we always have a home cooked dinner...we know and appreciate that that food came from donations of people who are helping and caring for others."

THE FACE OF HUNGER

There are a number of personal as well as systemic and institutionalized factors that may lead to food insecurity in someone's life, and disproportionately so depending on one's intersections. Still, it can be an invisible or misunderstood struggle.

"People still don't really know what the face of hunger looks like because you can't see hunger on someone's face," McLimans says.

According to the USDA, more than 1 in 10 families in Wisconsin are



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food insecure. According to the Wisconsin Food Security Project, “Not all households have the same risk of food insecurity. Groups at particularly high risk include the poor, African-American and Hispanic households, households with children, female-headed households, households in which no adults have completed college, and households with a disabled person.”

The LGBTQ community is also disproportionately affected by food insecurity. According to a 2016 report, “Food Insecurity and SNAP Participation in the LGBT community,” published by the Williams Institute at UCLA, food insecurity affects 27% of LGBTQ adults versus 17% of non-LGBTQ adults. The report states, “Contrary to popular stereotypes of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community as affluent, research demonstrates not only widespread economic diversity among LGBT people but also that lesbian, gay, and bisexual are often more likely to be poor than straight people and that transgender individuals face extremely high rates of poverty.”

Food insecurity is 60% more likely in LGBTQ seniors than non-LGBTQ peers, and among LGBTQ people, 42% of African Americans, 33% of Hispanics, 32% of American Indians and Alaskan Natives, 21% of Whites, 12% of Asian and Pacific Islanders, and 38% of “other”/multi-racial people reported not having enough money for food in the prior year.

“We do serve a very diverse population, and being a member of the LGBTQ community, I am aware of a number of people who come here,” says McLimans.

“We have tried to make it as welcoming as possible and let people know that we are a welcoming organization for everybody... We have seen young people who have been kicked out of their homes that are facing homelessness... we have seen other people who are struggling with trauma in their life, who may not be able to be fully employed, that use our services, and a number of LGBTQ seniors who may be facing health challenges that also use our services... I’ve seen a number of trans indi-



viduals who come here and shop. They like to come here and get clothing because they may feel more comfortable shopping here or they also may not be able to afford that—if somebody is going through transition, it’s extremely expensive. We want them to come here. They can get groceries and clothing once a week, they can get a hot meal here five times a week.”

“When I talk about household stability, I talk about it as a wheel with four sections and they are: food, housing, work/life, and health. If one of those sections falls out, you have a clunky wheel, and if two fall out, you have a completely flat household.”

Given the proximity of The River to Madison College, McLimans says that many of their clients are students. A report released in January by the U.S. Government Accountability Office assessed 31 different studies on food insecurity on college campuses; the estimates vary but average out to over 30% of college students facing food insecurity. That figure is consistent with a survey released last year about Madison College: 37% of students reported skipping a meal because of lack of money.

The River is also a fiscal agent for The Open Seat food pantry on the UW-Madison campus, where students can purchase food through Second Harvest Food Bank at a discount.

BUILDING COMMUNITY STABILITY

The River is located on the north side of Madison, which “has had and continues to have the highest density of poverty in Dane County,” McLimans says. “There are 11 subsidized housing sites in the area. Our mobile lunch program goes to eight of them and provides lunches to kids when they’re out of school.”

The University of Minnesota Law School published an interactive map, “American Neighborhood Change in the 21st Century,” and data from the 50 largest regions in the country show that “the most common form of American neighborhood change, by far, is poverty concentration. About 36.5 million residents live in a tract that has undergone low-income concentration since 2000.” Zoom in on Dane County, and one can observe the same concept in microcosm.

“Housing in Madison is a huge issue right now,” he adds. “The housing inventory is very scarce. I just heard recently that two of the large organizations that were resettling refugees in Madison actually have stopped offering those services because they cannot find enough affordable housing to bring people here anymore. So it’s a real issue. Housing prices certainly drive that.”

McLimans also saw a spike in clients affected by the government shutdown, adding “There are a lot of people that live just a paycheck or two away from where they would need our services.” Unexpected loss, vehicle repair, or illness can also lead to clients seeking out The River.

“We’ve talked about it all the time—the economy is going very strong but, you know, wage growth has been very slow,” McLimans says. For context, Wisconsin’s minimum wage is \$7.25 and hasn’t been raised since 2009. According to the National Women’s Law Center, about three quarters of minimum wage earners are women, and it is well known that the disparities for women continue at every income bracket. According to the National Women’s Law Center, for every dollar paid to a white man in Wisconsin:

- Hispanic women earn 52.8 cents
- African American women earn 61 cents
- Native American women earn 62.9 cents
- Asian women earn 69.5 cents
- White (non-Hispanic) women earn 78.5 cents

RIPPLE EFFECTS

McLimans says that though most clients at The River are working—and often multiple jobs—about a third are “chronically food insecure,”

meaning that they are on a limited, often fixed income. They may be seniors or clients with disabilities, without other means, and some clients are also without income and/or homeless.

This is one of the reasons that clients self-report income for services at The River, which follows policies set forth by the Emergency Food Assistance Program. The people who are most in need may not have proof of income to show.

“We provide the food but through the quality and quantity of the food and services that we provide, we are really providing housing stability,” McLimans says, noting that a typical family of four can save about \$200 of groceries per week by using the market at the River and coming in for hot meals. Putting that money back into a low income household is “providing household stability for them but it’s also providing community stability,” he continues. “When I talk about household stability, I talk about it as a wheel with four sections and they are: food, housing, work/life, and health. If one of those sections falls out, you have a clunky wheel, and if two fall out, you have a completely flat household.” Access to healthy and accessible food, therefore, ripples out.

We are always in flux, Maya reminds, and always in a dance of giving and receiving, even if it is not material: “There are times in life when people are able to give and where they need to receive. That’s what I love about The River. It reminds me of a saying that maybe people have heard before: when you have something that you no longer need and maybe somebody else needs it, you pass it down the river. That’s what we would often say in my neighborhood. I believe in passing it down the river.” ■

Visit riverfoodpantry.org to view The River’s latest strategic report, or to find information on volunteering, donating, or receiving services.



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Started from the ground up, **Vanessa Tortolano** and **Alla Shapiro**'s kombucha culture is spreading good taste and happy bellies.

FOOD & DRINK | WOMEN IN BUSINESS | ENTREPRENEURSHIP

NESSALLA KOMBUCHA may be an acquired taste, but its tangy effervescence is something that deserves a rightful place in the broader craft brewing industry. Bubbly, sometimes fruity and sometimes floral, their kombucha is always a little cloudy, and that's by design.

"It's got that CO2 kick to it, so it makes it more sparkling and dry," says Vanessa Tortolano, one of NessAlla's two co-owners and founders. "That and the price point is good for everybody, so everyone can make more money."

If Vanessa and co-owner Alla Shapiro don't sound like the two hip-pie mamas who founded NessAlla Kombucha over a decade ago, that's by evolution. Their homegrown company is the result of trial and error, learning and evolving, embracing change, and striving to be the best.

WHAT MAKES IT SPECIAL

NessAlla Kombucha is different than other options in the beverage cooler. It is craft brewed in smaller batches like in the craft beer industry. It's "tea-forward," which means its flavor comes from custom-blended Rishi tea, a Milwaukee-based company known for fair-trade, high-quality ingredients.

The kombucha is made from tea, sugar, and a symbiotic colony of bacteria and yeast called a SCOBY. It is unfiltered, "live and raw." The live cultures and yeasts are what Vanessa and Alla call "the floaty bits" and you'll find some in every bottle.

"It's fizzy, fermented tea," is their short description.

Vanessa expands on that, explaining, "It's a fermented product that

has probiotics, B vitamins, C vitamins, and amino acids that help your body detoxify and boosts your immune system. We can't lay any official claims to the health benefits because the FDA says we can't label anything that's untested. But people say it helps their bellies feel better. It helps them have a better day after they've had a night of drinking. Helps them feel regular. And it's a good post-workout beverage."

"It's a functional beverage," adds Alla. "That's our category."

"We're a true craft kombucha, done the traditional way," says Vanessa. "Just like your home brew, only on a larger scale. We don't filter it or strip anything out or add anything back in. The floaty bits are proof that it's true kombucha. Companies are all making kombucha differently now, but there aren't any gradations of brew. It's not like with beer where you have a pilsner or a lager or a stout. But that also means there isn't an official definition of kombucha."

VERY WITCHY

A striking theme through the evolution of their company is how steeped their history, process, and products are in the deeply feminine. It's worth noting that an original SCOBY is called a "mother." Secondary batches are then fermented with SCOBYs called "babies."

"It's very witchy, and all about women and birth. It's very feminine," says Alla.

"There were some other kombucha products out there that were made by BIG-big companies. But the first craft kombucha brewers were founded and run by women."

Even their first license to sell their brewed 'booch took nine months to obtain, when skeptical state Department of Agriculture staff had never heard of kombucha and required validation from food science experts at the University of Wisconsin. Their first license was approved the week after Alla's second child was born.

"When we first started, we were one of the first—if not the first—to do craft kombucha," says Alla. "There were some other kombucha products out there that were made by BIG-big companies. But the first craft kombucha brewers were founded and run by women. It wasn't until other companies figured out they could make a lot of money that they started popping up all over and investing regardless of their brewing experience."

THEIR OWN BIRTH STORY

Vanessa and Alla met in 2003 at Alla's ex-husband's art show. Alla was then a new mother and Vanessa was pregnant with her first child and singing with the band at the event. They quickly bonded over their love for organic food, natural birth, and growing herbs.

Over the course of their early friendship, they both were looking for ways to make money and to pass on knowledge which revealed their deep pull toward entrepreneurship and teaching. Their business partnership began when they started teaching classes at the Willy St. Coop.

"It was fun but it wasn't generating enough income, at least for the effort we put in," says Vanessa. "But then I started making kombucha and told Alla how cool it was. We said we should start doing classes in how to make it. Our first class in 2006 sold out and had a waiting list as long as another full class. So we did two back-to-back."

"When we started we had no idea what to charge for a class. So we charged five dollars," remembers Alla. "We realized it wasn't enough to just have the knowledge of how to brew the kombucha. Without the SCOBY you can't really do anything. Now it's not hard to come by, but

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back then it wasn't as common. We put out a sign-up sheet for people who wanted to get a starter SCOBY and, like, 60 people signed up."

"We sat out on our front porch all day on a Saturday with babies running around, all these people stopping by to pick up their kits," says Vanessa. "It was super grassrootsy. That's how we learned that we could include the kit in the class and charge more money. Everything we've learned, we've learned on our own. We've made mistakes, a lot of trial and error. But then we thought, 'there are no local kombucha companies. Why don't we start one?' How hard can it be to get a little stand at the farmers' market and sell it?"

After their long process of applying for a license to sell their brewed tea, they set up a stand at the east side farmers' market with a fold-out card table and a patio umbrella they took turns holding on the windy day. Market sales were strong, but not without challenges. Glass bottles of early recipes of the volatile, fermented tea filled with fresh ginger and juice exploded in customers' cars on the drive home.

"We even had to switch from the old bottles that sometimes leaked," Vanessa says with a laugh. "They were actually barbeque sauce bottles and were the cheapest we could find. Other companies copied us and their first bottles were for BBQ sauce."

MOVING ON UP

Their first brewery was in the basement of the Weary Traveler. They quickly outgrew that space in 2009 and moved to one on Winnebago Street. More growth prompted a move to Park Street where the company was in production for around six years.

The NessAlla team knew they couldn't grow more if they didn't move again, and an opportunity came with partnerships in developing the Garver Feed Mill building near Olbrich Gardens. The turn of the (last) century building was originally built for food manufacturing and

is now going to be embraced by artisan foodmakers once again.

"The Garver space is amazing," says Vanessa. "It's special because we designed it. About four years after we moved to our Park Street facility, we grew to where we started looking for a larger location. We called Baum (real estate development, specializing in historic preservation) and Bachmann (construction) when they were looking at Garver. They did all the restoration and build out, but we got to help plan it."

MADISON'S LOCAL BUSINESS SCENE: PROS AND CONS

Though NessAlla keeps growing, they aren't planning on leaving Madison for Milwaukee or another larger city any time soon. Their families and their community are here. But what makes Madison a unique place to run a local business has both strengths and weaknesses.

"The way the SCOBY works, it's a symbiotic community. You're ingesting that community into your body. Your gut is so important and people are just starting to realize how important gut health is to our whole bodies."

Vanessa laments that there are limits to growth and available capital, but she also is quick to say that "the best part of being a locally owned business in Madison is community support. But like any place, you'll have your lovers and your haters. I think had we been men we would have been more supported."

Alla agrees. "You just have to look at local publications with how many breweries are popping up and the write-ups they are getting—front page stories—compared to how many Vanessa and I have gotten in the past 11 years. People didn't really take us seriously when we

started. We were two women, mothers, and we looked like hippie-dippie moms at the time—not the suave businesswomen we are today—but we were doing something nobody had done before, something no one had heard of. But people were like, 'good luck.'"

Vanessa and Alla agree that while they were dismissed in the early days of their company, they also had little marketing knowledge and no investors. They learned everything from scratch and were entirely self-funded. Their initial kombucha classes at the Willy St. Coop became the seed of the marketing, word of mouth publicity, and funding they needed to grow in baby steps.

"It was inevitable that somebody from Madison was going to make kombucha," says Vanessa. "It's the vibe of the town, with Willy Street and the campus. It's just that we got to it first."

NOT JUST PRODUCT GROWTH

The growth of their business has meant they have had to change and grow, learn and let go. And it's fundamentally changed them both as people. Mostly, it's given them the weight of responsibility.

"You do feel responsible for the livelihood of your employees and your children and whether you're contributing back to the community that's been contributing to you," explains Alla. "My life has gone through complete changes; I've gotten a divorce after being married for 20 years, and now I'm in my mid-40s with a business and I'm rediscovering myself. Who am I in my guts? That's what's going to come through. The kombucha has been a central part of our world, our children's world. My youngest was strapped to my back for the first half of our company's existence."

Vanessa isn't singing with the band anymore, but still does a lot of performance through stand-up comedy and improv "with all this kombucha energy all the time," she says with a knowing smile.

"This is where I get hippie-dippie," she explains. "The way the SCOBY works, it's a symbiotic community. You're ingesting that community into your body. Your gut is so important and people are just starting to realize how important gut health is to our whole bodies. You're ingesting that symbiosis and it emanates. You start connecting with people in a new way, you start communicating and taking care of each other in a new way."

"I am a bisexual and polyamorous person. I have the man who I live with and raise children with, and I have a girlfriend who is amazing. I've become a better communicator. We're supposed to be connected to each other, sharing and taking care of each other. Love is cool. It's been a journey of discovery of ourselves."

NEXT STEPS FOR NESSALLA

As they settle into their new space at the Garver Feed Mill, they plan to continue to grow and experiment with flavors and emerging trends.

A new line of beverages launching this year includes three flavors of kombucha with cannabinoids, which they have been offering in kegs. CBD typically comes in an oil form and users are enjoying health benefits, pain and inflammation relief, and anxiety management. Because oil and water don't mix, their kombucha is a water-soluble infusion.

"The CBD-infused kombucha has a good amount of CBD: 25 mg per 16 ounces," explains Vanessa. "We're herbalists. We aren't adding something as a gimmick. It's something that can help people's lives and we want to help people feel better."

It's the goal of the NessAlla Kombucha team to become the best, most well-known kombucha in the Midwest because they believe their product speaks for itself. They also want to continue to give back to the community that has invested so much in the women who founded the successful company, and to their dedicated employees. ■

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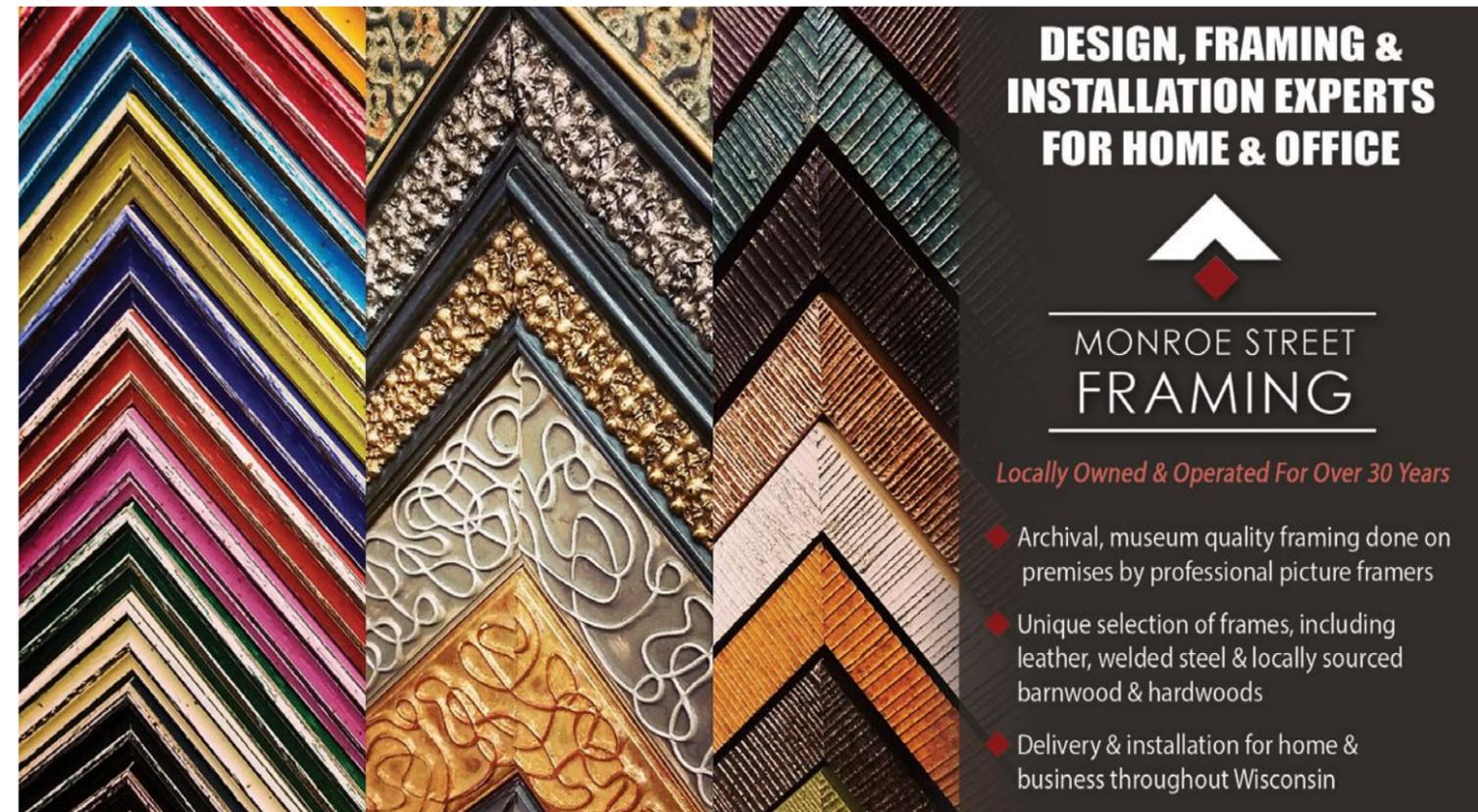
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Queer Third Spaces

Get to know some of the **LGBTQ-owned and/or operated food, drink, and dining businesses** in the Madison area.

FOOD & DINING | LGBTQ BUSINESSES | COMMUNITY

ALTHOUGH THE GAY BARS AND CLUBS in Madison and around the world have long been invaluable places to build community, live it up, or just feel at home, they shouldn't need to be the only game in town.

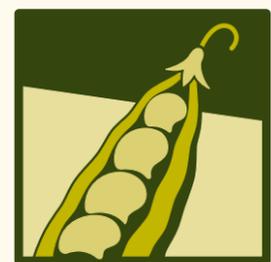
More and more people are aiming to make "queer space" mean something broader—because it can. Sometimes flying under the radar but always right under our noses, the countless food and beverage businesses owned and operated by LGBTQ folks in the Madison area are worth supporting and cherishing.

For night owls who are looking for the gay bar and club scene: you're in luck, as there are plenty of great nightlife spots around town, with variety in location and flavor—and many are included in this list. But if you're looking for an intentionally sober space, or simply somewhere to get a bite to eat or a cup of coffee—they're also everywhere, more ubiquitous than you might have realized.

The businesses profiled here include farmers' market vendors, food trucks, cafes, specialty food and beverage stores, and restaurants. From time-honored anchors of the Madison food scene to fledgling upstarts, from under-the-radar favorites of locals to those geared to dazzle your out-of-town guests (and overlap between the two), there's something for everyone. While some of these spots advertise themselves directly to LGBTQ customers, others are more understated about their community connections. Many draw in a wide swath of the general population. Since it would be hard to go very far in Madison without running into one or more of these businesses, consider trying a new-to-you spot on this list the next time you're wondering where to have a cup of coffee, meal, snack, or drink.

Of course, a list like this cannot possibly be exhaustive. If you know of other LGBTQ-owned-or-operated food and drink spots, please support those, too. Undoubtedly,

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more will only continue to spring up in our thriving, ever-changing food scene. Let this be a place to start.

CHOCOLATERIAN CAFÉ The café supplies sweets and then some: the iconic Ugly Cookie and Badger Bait live up to the hype, though they only scratch the surface. By all means, do the full survey of desserts; also try breakfast, weekend brunch, lunch, coffee, wine, and beer. Leanne Cordisco leads the café's crew in Middleton. Also an event space, Chocolaterian hosts live music. Want to share the love? Ship some goodies—like an entire "Box of Ugly" for fans of this rock-star-status cookie—from the store or by ordering online.

JAVA CAT on Monona Drive, owned by Renee Raspiller, sits right on the cusp of Monona and Madison. The cafe strives to be a part of and give back to the community in a multitude of ways, from participating in fundraisers to featuring a house guitar customers can play. Come check out the art and live music—along with coffee, breakfast, lunch, and a rotation of more than 125 flavors of house-made gelato that customers rave about. Making good on the animal-loving implication of their name, they've also got a dog-friendly patio.

DELTA BEER LAB The brewery opened early this year following owner Tim "Pio" Piotrowski's return from hiking the Appalachian Trail. As Pio told *Our Lives* in 2018 about the choice of name for his brewery, "Delta is the chemical and mathematical symbol for change, and Delta Beer Lab will tirelessly work toward forward change in our communities." Pledging not only to offer high-quality beer but also to pay employees above a living wage and "work to stop sexism, bigotry, and racism in whatever ways we can," the taproom on Badger Road is open to the public, and you may have started spotting their beers around town, too.

HARVEST & THE OLD FASHIONED Tami Lax owns Harvest and the Old Fashioned, Pinckney Street neighbors to one another, which offer between them the gamut of great downtown dining. The Old Fashioned, managed by Tami's partner Jennifer DeBolt, boasts a Wisconsin-forward menu with tap beers aplenty; definitely try the cheese curds, but also don't miss the addictive haystack onion strings. Harvest's farm-to-table menu and upscale-yet-accessible ambiance make for fine dining indeed. The restaurants each offer something different enough to fill diverse dining desires—but are tied together by their devotion to excellent Wisconsin food.

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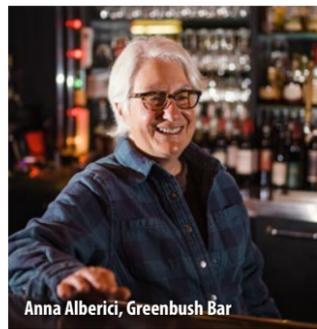
Leanne Cordisco, Chocolaterian Cafe



Mary Celley, Bee Charmer



Lynn Lee, Cargo Coffee & Ground Zero coffeehouses



Anna Alberici, Greenbush Bar



Tommy Hanna, Mediterranean Hookah Lounge & Cafe



Oscar Villarreal, Fuegos

FROMAGINATION A downtown paradise for cheese lovers, Ken Monteleone's Fromagination specialty shop on the Capitol Square showcases the finest of this state's offerings—and since this is Wisconsin, that's saying a lot. You will not go wrong any direction you turn, from one cheese to the next, and then on to delights to pair them with—crackers, of course; and meats, jams, and sweets. Don't stop there; try a sandwich, send a cheese-of-the-month gift to someone lucky out of town, and pick up some accessories for the next time you'd like to feel fancy eating cheese at your own home.

MICHAEL'S FROZEN CUSTARD Madison has been enjoying Michael's Frozen Custard for 33 years this summer. Three locations span the Isthmus and then some. The dedication of Michael Dix over the decades has paid off; the Monroe Street flagship store, born in 1986, still serves custard there; and Schroeder Road and Atwood Avenue locations complete the trifecta. Come for dessert, but stay for dinner—burgers, hot dogs, and cheese curds round out the menu.

SHAMROCK BAR & GRILLE The bar resprouted in 2013 in the same spot where the original Shamrock Bar had been rooted since 1985, making it Madison's oldest gay bar. Under the new ownership of Robert Mahr, who had been an employee of the original business, the new lease on life has come with an expanded seven-day-a-week food menu. Come by any day or night for a bite or a drink; at brunch time, catch a classic mimosa or turbo-charge your morning with their specialty "Shamosa."

COW & QUINCE You've heard of CSAs; now, it's time to get excited for CSRs (community-supported restaurants). Cow & Quince in New Glarus, owned by Lori Stern, is open to the public—no membership required. But if you want to participate CSR-style, you can become an annual member at one of two levels, with invitations to member-only events, discounts, and other benefits. The restaurant offers a regular menu as well as several annual prix fixe dinner events. If you like what you eat there, check out their market, where you can buy many of the same ingredients that went into your meal.

NAUTIGAL, CAPTAIN BILL'S, MARINER'S INN, & BETTY LOU CRUISES Robert von Rutenberg joined brothers Jack and Bill in the family business in 2000, and the three co-own the waterfront restaurant icons NauTiGal, Captain Bill's, and the Mariner's Inn. The three restaurants have got the north and west side of Mendota covered. But if you're looking for something more like a getaway (no hotel required), try a Betty Lou Cruise; the public cruises, which run from April through October, will whisk you away on a yacht for a couple of hours (food and drinks included), with options on both Mendota and Monona—so pick your favorite lake or try both.

SQUARE WINE CO. is perfect place to drop in for a bottle for Concerts on the Square, but visit any day of the week. Wine tastings are offered every Friday evening (6:00–8:00 p.m.) and Saturday afternoon (12:00–3:00 p.m.), along with special-event tastings sprinkled throughout other days. Andrea Hillsey, who owns Square with her partner Ashley Parr, brings on-the-ground experience in a vineyard and graduate-level hospitality studies to the table; rest assured you'll get expert-level advice, no matter your budget.

WILLALBY'S CAFE Owner Nate Prince took over Willalby's Cafe in 2010 after working there for a decade. A long-term player in the evolving dining and retail scene of Willy Street, this cash-only breakfast joint is an east side favorite. Willalby's is known for its charm, its gigantic chocolate chip pancakes, and its vegan biscuits and gravy. Formerly open late nights, Willalby's hours are now a little more standard—until 3:00 PM on weekends and 2:00 PM on weekdays, so plan accordingly and get your fix.

FAIR TRADE COFFEE HOUSE Coffee houses open at night hold a dear spot in the hearts of many a student; but they can also be a respite for folks looking for somewhere to go and be among others without alcohol. Fair Trade Coffee House is one that can fill this niche. As their name suggests, 100% of their coffee beans (including espresso) are fair trade certified, critical to those invested in the well-being of farmers and producers around the world. Owners Casey Thompson and Thomas Beckwith-Thompson purchased Fair Trade Coffee House in 2017 and have been bringing you coffee, tea, and food ever since.

CAFE SOCIAL is about quality. Omar Lopez, who co-owns the cafe with his partner Doug Swenson, is from Colombia and envisioned a Madison with the kind of coffee he knew and loved. The cafe sources all its coffee, grown without chemicals, from family farms in Colombia—following the Colombian Coffee Growers Federation's guidelines for quality. Breakfast, lunch, pizza, tea, and specialty drinks round out the menu at their Bedford Street location. You can also buy

whole beans—including green, unroasted beans, if you are curious to try your hand at roasting at home.

CARGO COFFEE & GROUND ZERO COFFEEHOUSES Lynn Lee co-owns both Cargo Coffee locations and Ground Zero coffeehouse with his twin brother, Lindsey; the three spots stretch from the near-east to near-west side of Madison, with the newer Cargo spot nestled among the new living, business, and entertainment development sprouting up along East Washington. As you sip your coffee or enjoy a house-made pastry or sandwich, sit back and appreciate the worldliness of the coffee trade and culture brought to mind by the world-map decor that ties the three locations together.

GREENBUSH BAR Starting more than 100 years ago, Italian immigrants made a home in Madison in the Greenbush addition. Since 1993, Anna Alberici has brought her memories of growing up in the neighborhood to life in culinary form (channeling her mother's love of cooking) through Sicilian food at the Greenbush Bar. Come here

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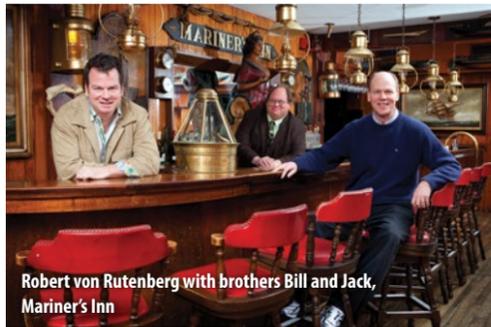
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Robert von Rutenberg with brothers Bill and Jack, Mariner's Inn



Lisa Nelson, Roots Chocolates

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MEDITERRANEAN HOOKAH LOUNGE & CAFE offers a chill environment with couches, low lighting, hookah in an assortment of flavors, and food and drink menus. Belly dancers perform weekly on Saturdays; karaoke is on Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday nights with more than 15,000 songs to choose from. Tommy Hanna co-owns the lounge with his brother, Simon. Together, they've brought the culture of their family's native Lebanon to Madison for a unique nightlife experience.

FUEGOS Open since 2017 on Willy Street, Fuegos captures owners Oscar Villarreal and Jordan Wegner's approaches to Latin-inspired food in a unique synthesis of dietary styles; as their website proclaims, this is "where carnivores and vegans graze together." They offer complete all-vegan menus for each meal in addition to omnivore-oriented menus; tapas feature prominently on both. The brunch menus for each type of eater are also large and varied.

PRISM DANCE CLUB Spring this year brought change to an anchor for LGBTQ nightlife on the east side of Madison: The club formerly known as Plan B reopened under new ownership as Prism. New co-owner Rico Sabatini was a former owner and co-founder of Plan B. He is joined by co-owner Apollo Marquez and program director Lili Luxe; they've been making community-friendly changes for the new brand that include low or no cover charges, depending on the night.

FIVE NIGHTCLUB Dave Eick's club, more than 20 years old now, remains a pivotal center for LGBTQ celebration of many flavors following a community-supported revival in 2015. Check out their gigantic dance floor if that's your jam—but there's also plenty else to do. Programming runs the gamut and includes burlesque and drag, Latin night, karaoke, sand volleyball tournaments, and even ZUMBA.

WOOF'S In a prime downtown location since opening in 2008, Dino Maniaci's WOOF'S on King Street is a different variety of gay bar: one that features sports, synthesizing two cultures for those who would seek a home in both types of venues. A variety of events, including fetish-related and otherwise themed (who's up for darts or pool?), populate their weekly calendar. While a sports-themed gay bar may seem slanted toward men, all are welcome at WOOF'S.

DAISY CAFE & CUPCAKERY Co-owned by Kathy Brooks, Daisy may lure you in with the promise of that last word in its name, and it won't disappoint on that front. But plan to be there longer and have a meal,

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too. Brunch offerings include some uncommon and tasty options, like their specialty stratas—these "egg casseroles" include a wide range of flavor options from french toast to chorizo pepper jack. Also open for lunch and (seasonally) dinner, including fish fry on Fridays. Just make sure you saved room for that cupcake, after all.

SIMPLY SERVED PERSONAL CHEF Jeanne Benink—serving Madison, Middleton, Sun Prairie, and McFarland—offers meals and more through Simply Served Personal Chef. Cooking lessons one-on-one or for groups, special event food preparation, and a simple pricing structure may entice you. Her menus are seasonal and flexible to omnivorous, gluten-free, and vegan diets. What does a personal chef do? Not just cooking; as she describes, "A personal chef will shop for the ingredients, prepare the meals in your home, clean up your kitchen, and store the meals in your refrigerator or freezer." Sold.

BEE CHARMER offers not just honey and beeswax products but also the source itself: bees! Consulting services are also on offer if you're wondering just how to keep your bees or how to solve a sticky problem. Owner Mary Celley brings to the table experience at the U.S.D.A. Honey Bee Research Lab, decades of Wisconsin beekeeping, and a horticulture degree with a focus on entomology. If beekeeping's not for you, but you're a fan of honey? Stop by the Bee Charmer booth at the Dane County Farmers' Market for a sweet treat or buy online.

LUNA CIRCLE FARM Luna Circle Farm's memorable purple awning welcomes regulars and visitors alike to the Dane County Farmers' Market on both Saturdays and Wednesdays, to which owner Tricia Bross brings more than a quarter-century of experience growing organic vegetables. Luna Circle also offers community-supported agriculture (CSA) market shares (two sizes available), where you pay upfront as with a traditional CSA, but you come to the farmers' market and get to choose your own veggies from the stand each week.

ROOTS CHOCOLATES Lisa Nelson is a fourth-generation farm owner, and with Roots Chocolates, she sources from the farm to create fabulous flavors in confectionery form. Based in Wisconsin Dells, Roots Chocolates are available at Metcalfe's Hilldale as well as several other spots and online. While there's no hurry to get through summer, with favorites like chocolate mint basil, it's also hard not to look forward to their unique fall seasonals—including aronia (starting in September) and squash with Wisconsin maple syrup (starting in October).

CARACAS EMPANADAS Caracas Empanadas will fuel you on your Saturday farmers' market tour; during the week, you can find the food truck on the Library Mall. A common thread amongst their plethora of five-star Yelp reviews is the urging to try, in particular, the Guasacaca (green cilantro) sauce. Owner Luis Dompablo's passion for Venezuelan cuisine comes through in the quality of the food and the devotion of Caracas Empanadas fans.

STUBBORN MULE CATERING Co-owned by Ryan Mueller, Stubborn Mule Catering runs on the belief in creating something unique: Menus are different for each and every event, so get ready to design something totally fresh with them. Got a big event? They're on it. But they also cater for as few as two with their personal chef services, so go ahead—think big or small. If you're wondering about the name, it's the good kind of persistence; as they put it, "Quality is what we're stubborn about." When possible, they source from the farmers' market and create their menus around local and seasonal food. ■



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LGBTQ HISTORY FRENCH CULTURE LITERATURE

Do You French?

Historian **Dick Wagner** looks back at the strong, and somewhat surprising, gay and lesbian roots of UW-Madison's French Department.

ON TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1969—the winter before the Stonewall uprising—UW-Madison's *The Daily Cardinal* carried a story: "Homophile League Issues Demands." The piece was an announcement, an early call to colors by Madison's gay people, that included nine demands. Among them was, "The French Department must be recognized as an official branch of the league." One might like to know, *why*?

Though perhaps not as widely known as it would become later, the department was a hotbed of scholarly research on homosexuality. For now, I want to focus on just two examples, though there were others like Jacob Stockinger who published in the 1978 groundbreaking *Gay Academic* on "Homosexuality: A Proposal."

The first was lesbian professor Elaine Marks. She would publish *Homosexualities and French Literature* in 1979, which she co-wrote with George Stambolian. While a graduate student in French literature, he had been persecuted during the 1962 purge at UW-Madison. He went on to study at the Sorbonne in Paris and taught French at Wellesley College.

In the book's introduction, they stated, "France has not only produced a great number of writers who discuss homosexuality, she has produced a remarkable number of writers whose works have encouraged, and at times forced, readers, critics, and above all, successive generations of younger writers to devote attention to it." Thus, it would appear that a major academic department of French like Wisconsin's could not help but work to dispel heterosexually dominant ignorance and force attention to homosexuality.



George Stambolian



Elaine Marks

The introduction also asserted that, "The French possess a strong tradition of writing on homosexuality which since the late eighteenth century has nurtured its own growth." The authors praised the lucidity with which "French writers have repeatedly elaborated, through explicit narrative and critical commentary, on various aspects of homosexual experience." They believed, "Because it perpetually questions the social order and is always in question itself, homosexuality is other."

Marks and Stambolian felt the focus of their book was language about homosexuality. The authors admitted if they had written it 20 years before, and if they could have then gotten it published, their title would not have been the plural "homosexualities" but a singular "homosexuality." But by the late 1970s the topic had been expanding and opinions were too diverse. The use of the plural invited readers "to rethink differences, as well as to think in terms of difference."

WOMEN WRITING ABOUT WOMEN

Marks' own essay in the book was "Lesbian Intertextuality." Intertextuality is a literary device where the shaping of one text and its meaning is expanded through use of references to other texts. Marks explored how French texts on lesbian portrayals used cross references and allusions to deepen presentations on homosexuality, among them the Sappho model. Earlier writings had often been by men who portrayed lesbians as the outlaw, but transformation occurred "when women begin to write about women loving women." This permitted the lesbian to no longer be seen "from an outside point of view. She is her own heroine."

Marks describes Colette as a foremother in writing how a woman could write about another woman, "as an object of pleasure

Marks explored how French texts on lesbian portrayals used cross references and allusions to deepen presentations on homosexuality, among them the Sappho model.

and without any excuses describe her pleasure." She observed Colette "with and against Marcel Proust." And that his publication of *Remembrances of Time Past* "encouraged her both to deal directly with homosexuality, male and female, and to present images of female homosexuality different from Proust's febrile Gomorrah."

Knowing how much homosexuality was repressed, Marks also wrote, "Space must be allotted for rumor." She credits Monique Wittig's writings with using "images sufficiently blatant to withstand



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 working on gay Wisconsin history and welcomes topics and sources.

reabsorption into male literary culture." Here was true lesbian feminism. As one of the founders of women's studies on the Madison campus she would help give the program an inclusive lesbian perspective. Marks' own distinguished career also included serving as President of the Modern Language Association.

Marks' friend and fellow academic at UW-Madison, Evi Beck, would observe it was Marks who gave her the insight "that what a person chooses to work on tells as much about him/her as about the subject s/he is researching." Beck and Marks would attend the first Lesbian Writers Conference in Chicago. Beck recalled Marks' "passionate engagement with lesbian texts." Beck also observed her shyness about being out even though she never denied her relationship with Yvonne Ozello and that the couple would join in Madison marches and rallies for gay/lesbian liberation.

LITERATURE AS LIBERATION

The study of gay literature which George Stambolian began at Wisconsin would remain with him throughout his life. His Wisconsin dissertation on the gay author Marcel Proust was published as *Marcel Proust and the Creative Encounter* in 1972. Stambolian would serve as editor of several volumes of the *Men-On-Men* series, showcasing the "best new gay fiction" in the late 1980s. In the introduction to the third volume in 1990 he wrote, "Although coming-out stories in the strict sense are found less frequently today, every work of gay fiction is a coming-out story in that it expresses truths about ourselves that many wish we would keep hidden." Thus, he still viewed homotexts as revelatory documents even if they did not have to be allusive as in the days of Proust.

In the introduction to the first volume of *Men-On-Men*, Stambolian

Madison After Stonewall

Scott Seyforth gives a sneak peak of an important upcoming exhibition of local items that highlight post-Stonewall activism in and around Madison.

University Archives and the Madison LGBTQ Archive project invite you to a reception for the exhibit, *Madison after Stonewall: A Legacy of LGBTQ+ Activism*. The reception is Thursday, May 16 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Memorial Library on the UW-Madison campus.

The exhibit, arranged by University Archives, will feature items donated to the growing collections of the Madison LGBTQ Archive

highlighting local post-Stonewall LGBTQ activism. The exhibit will be on display May 1–July 2, 2019 in the first floor lobby of Memorial Library. The exhibit is free and open to the public during regular library hours. Follow University Archives on Instagram at @uwmadarchives and on Tumblr at uwmadarchives.tumblr.com as they highlight items from the collections used in this exhibit. ■



observed the theory that "gay culture is to a large extent a made-up thing, an existential invention constantly proposing new values and code of conduct." On the learning of gay culture from abroad, as some Wisconsinites had done during the interwar years, he observes, "European cities were gay meccas at a time when American cities were still repressive."

Among Stambolian's contentions were that the "proliferation of gay books and their increasing availability throughout the country have also served to familiarize readers with the new signs, codes, and narrative forms of gay writing." Stambolian also saw that "This fundamental need to demonstrate the authenticity of the gay experience partly explains the strong autobiographical presence in many gay works...."

For these and several other reasons, the French Department at UW apparently did qualify as a branch of the early Homophile League. ■



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HEALTH CARE TRANSGENDER EDUCATION

“I’m Not Going Back”

Lack of LGBTQ education especially deters trans patients from seeking healthcare; advocates prescribe continuous education.

A PATIENT LISTENS as nurses holler names into the otherwise silent waiting room. Their leg anxiously jiggles while they wait to see a new doctor for the first time. Finally, they hear a name they recognize but haven’t answered to since they grew into their true identity.

They walk across the waiting room wearing an appearance that doesn’t match the name being called. They feel all eyes on them as they’re “outed” to 10 or 20 people, one of several painful experiences transgender patients receive in Wisconsin health facilities, according to Ginger Baier, OutReach’s Transgender Health Advocate.

Many transgender, nonbinary, and gender nonconforming (TNG) patients avoid stepping foot in medical centers out of fear of such situations and concern about what

doctors will do when they realize their patient is trans.

AN UNWELCOME FEELING

KC Councilor, who recently moved from Madison, Wisconsin to teach at Southern Connecticut State University, put off finding a new provider “for as long as [he] could,” both due to lack of notable transgender-friendly providers as well as this stress.

Councilor’s bumpy path through various doctors’ offices prompted him to put the experiences down in drawings. He recently published a comic book about his transition detailing events related to medical care, from being unable to donate blood to dealing with an unhelpful nurse when his partner was hospitalized.

One section illustrates a routine visit with a doctor, one he saw once a year to refill a prescription and check in on its effects. The doctor still brought up that Councilor was considered overweight now. Transitioning had meant gaining muscle, and it meant Councilor was now over the standard weight set for females (the letter “F” still glared on his charts). Weight, as so often with gender, is measured using a binary. Where does this leave those who fall in between?

Many other TNG patients, like Councilor, are afraid of seeking healthcare because providers are overwhelmingly unaware of how to make them feel comfortable. TNG patients largely report feeling like their identity is brushed aside, that doctors won’t understand TNG bodies or will discriminate against them. People procrastinate visiting doctors at all costs, worrying that even simple check-ups can turn into traumatic events. More and more patients avoiding care leads to higher health risks in the community and a need for outside organizations to step up and raise awareness of respectful care among providers.

A 2017 Wisconsin Transgender Youth



A *Journal of the American Medical Association* article reported the median number of hours medical schools nationwide spent on general LGBTQ+ topics is just five across four years.

Community Needs Assessment found 80.1% of transgender youth patients do not see medical providers who are competent about their needs.

While medical schools coach students’ physical skills, data shows curricula fall short in teaching how to treat all patients affirmatively. That means addressing patients and their bodies the same regardless of factors such as gender and, as Councilor puts it, “not having identity be a barrier to getting care.” In medical schools’ place, transgender advocacy organizations are gradually breaking down these barriers through continuing, outside education that coaches the basics of affirmative care.

STARTING TO UNDERSTAND TRANSGENDER BODIES

When Rowan Calyx first started transitioning while he lived in Milwaukee, he asked his provider what transition services they offered. The providers’ response? “We have nothing for people like you.”

“I’ve run into more healthcare providers who are uninformed or are pretty much relying on me to tell them what’s what,” Calyx, now an administrative support staffer at UW-Madison, said. “All minorities have been tapped to be someone’s go-to educator.

We’ve had cisgender people come at us and say, ‘tell us everything about being transgender,’ and it’s not the responsibility of people in marginalized communities to constantly educate the majority.”

When patients always have to explain their bodies to providers, they may be deterred from seeking further care. However, TNG people face more health risks than cisgender people. Jamison Green, the immediate past-president of World Professional Association for Transgender Health, said the fear of being treated poorly by providers as a result of social stigma leads to the greatest risk: untreated illnesses leading to increased health issues in the transgender community.

“Being afraid to go to the doctor to seek care not only spreads to disease, potentially, but makes the person sicker so that by the time they do seek care there may be real damage done to their health and may be much more difficult to recover,” Green said. “Living in a state of fear that makes you afraid to seek healthcare makes you feel like you’re not a human being, and that can lead to anxiety and depression.”

Depression and anxiety, in fact, disproportionately affect TNG people.

Councilor reached the point where he couldn’t wait to see providers. He needed glasses, braces, vaccinations and A.D.D. medication. He was met with questions from the nurse, like, “When was your last menstrual cycle?” to which he explained that he hadn’t had one since transitioning. Her response: “We’ll just put ‘other.’”

Doctors do not always understand transgender bodies, leading them to “other” people that don’t match “normal” expectations. Some may refuse to see TNG patients at all. The resistance is largely due to little education, both during their time in medical schools and after.

Many schools across the nation offer elective courses that touch on LGBTQ+ topics in general, but few require such coursework in as part of the main curricula. A *Journal of the American Medical Association* article reported the median number of hours medical schools nationwide spent on general LGBTQ+ topics is just five across four years.

According to Chris Barcelos, a UW-Madison Gender & Women’s Studies assistant professor whose research focuses on LGBTQ+ health, medical school students may not take transgender-related courses because they don’t want to “focus on that area,” not recognizing TNG people as

regular patients who seek care in all areas. Doctors in all specialties may eventually work with TNG patients, as will everyone in the facility, starting with administrative staff.

Councilor and his friend were marked as their gender as assigned at birth on their medical records, forms which often can’t be or are very difficult to get changed. Since administrative staff was most likely not trained on correcting or marking TNG patients’ records, wrong names and old, unnecessary information can be dug up, making the patient vulnerable during their appointment.

“An electronic medical record system doesn’t understand anything besides a binary gender marker, or doesn’t have a field to put in someone’s preferred name or their pronouns,” Barcelos said. “That means the front desk may call someone by a name that’s not the name they use, or give care that doesn’t meet the body or health needs they have.”

For Councilor, changing records and how administrative staff uses them is what affirmative care looks like.

“Ask patients how they identify and what they want to be called,” Councilor said. “If they don’t know the answer to something, say they’ll find out. But really, it’s just honoring and respecting someone for who they say they are, and listening.”

Green echoed that providers are stuck in “rigid, binary ways of looking at sex.” He also mentioned that individuals “high up in bureaucratic systems” of medical institutions and schools are resistant to change because they’re lodged in the mindset that something that’s stigmatized is wrong.

He said he was once told by a medical school dean, “You would never see any education on transgender-related care because schools will not waste any of a medical student or faculty’s precious time teaching something that wouldn’t be paid for.” This was true in Wisconsin until recently, when two transgender patients won lawsuits to gain coverage of transition-related care under Medicaid.

Green’s organization WPATH prioritizes education as an effort to see Medicaid restrictions for transition-related care lifted, something that could boost knowledge about TNG care.

“We feel that by educating more and more people, we can actually get some of this education to be translated into medical schools,” Green said. “More and more people are becoming aware that they need to know about this.”



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STUDENTS PUSHING FOR CHANGE

Wisconsin's two medical schools lack required LGBTQ+ courses, like most schools in the country, leading state organizations to create trainings with the same mission as WPATH.

It's not only medical schools that may be lacking in LGBTQ+ education. When a transgender man goes to the pharmacy to pick up testosterone, they risk the wrong name being called over the loudspeaker or having the incorrect gender printed on prescriptions.

UW-Madison's School of Pharmacy houses the one course within health science studies that teaches future providers how to handle these types of interactions. The class, called Topics in LGBTQ Health, is a cross-listed elective, so medical school, nursing, veterinary medicine, and pharmacy students can enroll.

Barcelos said changes in curricula are often student-driven. Health sciences students, in fact, voiced the need to dedicate a full course to LGBTQ+ content, leading to the pilot last spring.

One student-led initiative works to

boost both the quantity and quality of this education. Angela Ai, a leader of UW-Madison's medical student organization PRIDE in Health Care, agreed that precious few hours are spent on such topics in the classroom.

"That's why it's really important that we're working toward creating more space in the medical school curriculum to talk more about these topics," Ai said.

The sole course focused on the topic had a jam-packed syllabus, according to Molly Herrmann, an LGBT health consultant who instructed the course along with Dr. Cabell Gathman. They touched briefly on dozens of topics, from what Herrmann considered "LGBT 101" to pregnancy and childbirth and health disparities, but could not do any kind of deep dive in the once-a-week meetings. It was hard, she said, to design a curriculum for the first and only course, rather than a series of courses, focused on LGBTQ+ topics at UW-Madison.

START FROM THE BASICS

Part of Herrmann's consulting business involves training existing providers how to make their environments welcoming for

LGBTQ+ people, taking a "two-pronged approach" by educating both up-and-coming and veteran providers.

"One of my goals has been to get some ongoing training at all levels in healthcare systems," she said. "There's several interactions at appointment and if any of those don't go well people tend to say, 'I'm not going back to that place anymore.' My belief has been that people need at least a basic backbone training on LGBTQ inclusion so they don't drive people away."

Herrmann works with other local organizations to "attack [the lack of inclusion] at all these different angles to try and get change made." She developed trainings to coach providers through the basics of having better interactions with LGBTQ+ patients, similar to trainings offered by Jay Botsford, program coordinator for Wisconsin Transgender Health Coalition and the Transgender Youth Resource Network.

Both the Wisconsin-based and international transgender health trainings given by the above organizations begin with enforcing "the basics," as Botsford said, like asking for patients' pronouns and using

correct names. They also coach providers through proper use of medical forms, so, for example, they are no longer questioned about menstruating or called by an old name.

Baier brings groups of transgender people to sit down with medical students and professionals for mock new patient interviews in OutReach Madison's trainings. The "patients" offer feedback about what questions should and should not be asked.

WTHC mainly targets trainings at free clinics and Planned Parenthood, as well as other facilities where additionally marginalized TNG patients access care, so they can "make the most impact," Botsford said.

CONTINUING EDUCATION

In 2017 Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin participated in the training, bringing three clinicians and five educational staff members to learn from WTHC.

"We recognize that our transgender patients need to be treated with the same respect that we treat our other patients with, and we need to be able to provide our existing services to all patients in a respectful, inclusive way," PPWI Director of Community Education Meghan Benson said.

Continuing education is crucial for providers to treat TNG patients respectfully, Barcelos said. Herrmann, for example, offers quarterly trainings open to Madison city staff.

PPWI plans to use Botsford's teachings and his ongoing counseling to re-train all health center staff members across the state in the next 12 to 15 months. The national Planned Parenthood organization has additional online trainings for staff about working with LGBTQ+ populations.

Benson said the training explored topics about transgender-specific healthcare services, like hormone treatment and transition-related surgeries. PPWI clinics do not yet offer such care, but Benson said they're working with WTHC to get there in the next couple years.



SAMMY GIBBONS is a writer, yoga-doer, vinyl collector, and Wisconsin native. When she isn't cuddling her sweet puppy, she runs UW-Madison's newspaper, *The Daily Cardinal*. Between editor-in-chief duties she writes concert reviews for the paper's arts section. For another space to blab about music, she co-hosts an hour-long show on WSUM Student Radio. Sammy is graduating from UW in May with degrees in journalism and creative writing.

In the meantime, PPWI and WTHC are building a referral list of transgender-affirming health providers, many of whom are capable of offering transition-related, affirmative services both in Wisconsin and just across state lines.

A MORE HUMANIZED EXPERIENCE

With these efforts, gaps in medical school curricula and TNG health access are slowly being patched up, with the aim of ensuring that TNG patients always experience a comforting, understanding practice.

"There are not a lot of healthcare providers out there that are even transgender-friendly, much less able to provide transgender health services," Benson said. "I think we were able to bring that back to our health centers and recognize that there's really a gap for this population and one that we can perhaps step in and fill."

Councilor felt respectfully treated after a doctor's small, involuntary indicator that they were present and open: they blushed. He visited the doctor for the first time and was obviously nervous, and could tell by her face she was, too.

He wrote in his comic, "Dear Doctor, thank you for the flush in your cheeks that told the subconscious part of me that you were really there, and that I could be too."



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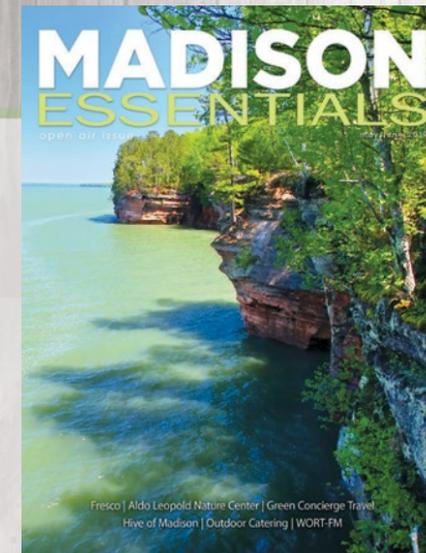


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QTPOC MICROAGGRESSIONS ALLYSHIP

Combating Microaggressions

What are microaggressions, anyway, and why are they harmful especially to people with intersecting minority identities? Guest writer **Sarah Stouffer-Lerch** offers insight and tips.

Dear Sami,

Can you explain to your readers why saying things like, “I have black friends” and “Are you actually queer?” to people of color in queer spaces is harmful?

From, *Mad About Microaggressions*

(This issue of *Dear Queer White People* is written by guest writer, Sarah Stouffer-Lerch)

DEAR QUEER WHITE PEOPLE,

First off, let’s talk about what microaggressions are. They are subtle, everyday acts of discrimination. Usually relying on stereotypes or snap judgments, they communicate hostile messages, particularly towards marginalized groups, and often lead to feelings of “otherness” or isolation.

Many people of color are familiar with being asked where they are from or told that their English is good. These interactions imply there is something about them that doesn’t quite belong. Given the long history of ostracization that marginalized groups have faced and are currently facing, knowing the impact microaggressions have on people of color in the queer community is important. That brings us to MAM’s request.

Prefacing any sentence with “I have black friends” (or any other marginalized group) is a microaggression because it attempts to remove the responsibility of any harm caused by the speaker by projecting the emotions, opinions, and thoughts of a single “friend” onto a whole group. This is called “tokenism.”

A fantastic research project by Camisha D. Fagan from the University of Nevada has linked several verbal microaggression phrases to their implied meaning. Tokenistic phrases like “I have black friends” send the message that someone’s words or actions cannot be

Feedback & Questions Wanted

Do you or someone you know have a question that could be addressed in a future column, or if you or someone you know might be interested in providing the response to a future question, please email: DearQueerWhitePeople@gmail.com.



Prefacing any sentence with “I have black friends” (or any other marginalized group) is a microaggression because it attempts to remove the responsibility of any harm caused by the speaker.

racist simply because they happen to have friends of color. In her book, *So You Want to Talk About Race*, author Ijeoma Oluo also describes microaggressions that “aren’t always delivered in words.” Examples include a woman who grabs her purse as a minority person passes by, or a clerk following a person of color around the shop.

Questions like “Are you actually queer?” are particularly harmful, especially when asked to a person who is both queer and from a racialized group. QTPOC* are often made to be spokespeople for their race, yet not always allowed to define their queerness in their own terms. In either case, a QTPOC is denied individuality through invalidating messages. These types of messages are conflicting and, as Oluo writes, “cumulative.” Over time, regular exposure to these microaggressive questions, statements, and body language can have real, lasting effects such as anxiety and depression.

Perhaps now some of you are thinking, Okay, I get what microaggressions are and how they can be hurtful. But how can I express interest in the QTPOC community without perpetuating microaggressions?

ILLUSTRATION BY RACHAL DUGGAN.

Keep in mind, there is nothing wrong with being curious about another person’s culture, beliefs, and identities. In fact, one of the best ways to avoid unintended insensitivity is getting to know someone from a group you

It is not the responsibility of the oppressed group to show you right from wrong. If you are called out, don’t be defensive. Even if it was not your intent to cause harm, listen: someone telling you how your actions hurt them means they trust you will consider their point of view.

wish to know more about. You should do so, however, with the intent to understand them as a person rather than a token member, and realize one QTPOC does not speak for all QTPOC, even if common experiences are shared within the group.

You should also acknowledge your own role. Anyone can perpetuate microaggressions, and it is not the responsibility of the oppressed group to show you right from wrong. If you are called out on a microaggression, don’t be defensive or cite that your one black friend said it’s okay. Even if it was not your intent to cause harm, listen: someone telling you how your actions hurt them means they trust you will consider their point of view. You are being given an opportunity to do better. Take that opportunity, and be better.

It is your responsibility to reflect on the emotions and expectations you feel toward a particular group. Do you act differently around a POC? Do you inadvertently doubt a QTPOC’s truths? The more you question your own feelings, the more aware you will be of actions, statements, and questions that have harmful consequences on members of marginalized groups. Use your own understanding to minimize—and ultimately eradicate—microaggressive language and gestures in yourself and others.

*QTPOC = queer and/or trans people of color ■



SARAH STOUFFER-LERCH is currently a senior at DeForest Area High School. A passionate logophile, Sarah is never without a book in her bag. She is an active member of the Pinney Branch Library Teen Writing Club, and enjoys sharing her writing at open mic events or at home to her audience of cats. As a foodie, Sarah is always on the lookout for the best bowl of ramen. After graduation, Sarah is looking forward to applying her love of learning by pursuing a degree in Public Policy Analysis.

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NEW RESTAURANTS THIRD SPACES VENUES TRANSGENDER

Letting in the Light

The old Sons of Norway building on the city's near east side finds new life as **The Winnebago**, a cafe and venue space infused with an ethos of inclusion.

TORI VANCIL DIDN'T SET OUT to be a construction worker or a cafe manager. He finds himself now able to call himself both, through his work with the newly opened Winnebago.

Located at 2262 on the street of the same name, tucked behind the new Union Corners development and between railroad tracks and the old-school neighborhood bar Woody & Anne's, The Winnebago occupies the 95-year-old cream brick building that was the former home of a fraternal group, the Sons of Norway.

Brothers Jake and John DeHaven bought the place last year and have since undertaken a massive and lovingly done remodel, including literally raising the roof. Tori, an old friend of Jake's, was moving back from a stint in California with his wife, Claire, when Jake invited him to be part of the project.

"We were living on a little winery and vegetable farm in the hills of Northern California," says Tori. "During that time I came to the realization that I needed to start my transition. So we were going to come home for that so I could be near my family and figure out our healthcare system—if anyone can do that."

The DeHaven's closed on the building in April 2018, the same month

PHOTO BY EMILY MILLS

Tori began taking testosterone for the first time. "It's been a year of change, for sure," he says with a smile.

Tori says that, despite his lack of major experience with remodeling or construction, Jake trusted him to do the work and gave him space to express his creativity. "He gave me space to just be myself, unapologetic. He made space for me in a world where, in my experience, trying to find jobs in construction as a young butch lesbian or a young trans man is not fun...This was the first time I felt really confident in using my skills and learning new skills, and Jake was a huge part of that."

The process ended up involving a whole group of friends and many long hours in the hot sun, redoing the roof, tearing down walls, and opening windows.

"It was so dirty and grimy," Tori says of the interior. They discovered a beautifully colored, handmade tile floor in the front room after powerwashing, and a lovely vaulted roof behind a drop tile ceiling in the back room that's now the live performance venue.

"All these windows were boarded up," he notes. "It was dark and no light came in here. I feel like it didn't see the light of day for like 60 years. We brought the light back in this building."

Part of that light is in the environment Tori and others have set out to create from the get-go. Several of the staff are LGBTQ+ identified as well, and Tori made a point to install a gender neutral bathroom, in addition to putting up signs encouraging patrons not to question people about their bathroom choices.

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"The biggest thing that I've really wanted to bring to the table here in this establishment is just a super inclusive space," says Tori. "A place where you can be yourself in all that you are and feel comfortable here, feel welcomed here, feel like there is space for you here."

That ethic is reflected in the programming for the beautiful back room, where a large stage faces an open floor dotted with tables, and a long wooden bar at the back. There's space for live music (including folk, queer punk, hip hop, and jazz) and dance parties, and Tori hopes to see theater and other performance as well.

The cafe is homey and inviting, with Kickapoo Coffee and Rishi tea on offer throughout the day. The breakfast and lunch menu is small but appealing, with a focus on comfort. The Shakshuka was a pleasant surprise to find, perfectly balanced, and with a chunk of delicious, locally baked bread on the side. Quiches, biscuits and gravy, an oyster mushroom melt, and sourdough French toast are all delicious. There are options for vegetarians and vegans, and grab-and-go items as well.

Tori is proud of the work they've all put into the space, and he's committed to sticking around and continuing to learn the ropes in his role as a cafe manager.

"I'm still learning! We're all learning together," he says with a laugh. "It means a lot to me that we've created a space here where the other staff members, the actual physical space itself, the management—it's all working. That's the goal, to have a diverse, unique, colorful group of people who are truly themselves and don't feel like they have to be anything else...Now we've busted open all the windows, we've unlocked the doors, and we just want everybody to come in."

See more at thewinnebago.com. —Emily Mills

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POLITICS ACTIVISM GAY YOUTH

Committed to the Long Haul

When he's not helping manage the Chocolaterian Café, college junior **Sean O'Brien** is busy fighting for progressive policies and learning the political ropes.

MY COMING OUT STORY is nothing special, nothing to make a headline in a newspaper or a magazine. I came out when I was 16. It was a cool summer evening, and my family was just about to sit down to a lovely dinner. As my mom and dad settled in for the meal, I just blurted out "I'M GAY!"

My parents both looked up, more than a little stunned. They asked me if I was sure, I nodded, and we moved on. Over the next several weeks and months tensions were high. Both of my parents told me they weren't really sure how to best provide support for me.

I am fortunate to have numerous LGBTQ+ mentors, family members, and friends who have all helped guide me to where I am today. First, my aunts, active in politics and government, have been strong, powerful figures who provided a view that the world can and should be a place where LGBTQ+ people can grow and thrive. My eighth grade social studies teacher, Abby Swetz, greatly shaped my views on social justice and my identity. We studied the Stonewall Riots, the labor movement, and the women's Suffrage Movement. Abby sparked my activism.

Finally, Leanne Cordisco, owner of the Chocolaterian Café, has been an extremely important mentor. While I was still deeply in the closet and terrified about coming out, especially at work, Leanne asked me—on my very first day at my very first job—if the gentleman who walked in behind me was my partner. I quickly answered no. She said, "Aw darn! You two would have been cute together!" It was then

that I knew the Chocolaterian Café would be home, a safe place for me to grow and learn. Leanne provided support not only through coming out but also through my schooling and my political career, all of which has been critical.

I was in 7th grade in 2011, the year of the Act 10 protests. On a cold February day, my classmates and I walked out of school and marched to the capital. During these protests there was not a day that I was not down at the capital. I stood in solidarity with 100,000 people, singing songs as we welcomed the "Fabulous 14" home. I knew then that the elimination of collective bargaining rights had hurt my friends, family, and thousands of others.

My fight against the Walker Administration continued into 8th grade with the recall election. At the end of every school year, O'Keeffe Middle School takes their 8th grade class on a walk around the lake. That year we carried banners calling for Governor Walker's recall. The results of the election were unfortunate, but my spirit was not dampened.

In 2016, I started my freshman year at Edgewood College. At the beginning, a friend of mine from high school who was also attending invited me to a College Democrats meeting. I was elected to be the Vice-Chair of the club. In this position I helped grow the group, which also involved teaming up with For Our Future PAC. I worked for them for several months, canvassing in support of Hillary Clinton.



Again, similar to 2012 and 2014, the 2016 election night was very difficult. The next few days felt like a bad dream. The students in my classes who supported the President Elect scared me. I didn't know what to do.

That loss motivated me to apply to Rep. Chris Taylor's office as an intern. It was my first foray into working directly in government, and a defining experience. It has reinforced my beliefs and interest in politics and policy. Rep. Taylor taught me about policy, how to debate it, write it, and turn it into reality. She was and continues to be a mentor and a beacon of progressive politics.

Most recently, I worked on Tony Evers' campaign for governor for a year. I traveled all across the state. It was a year of grueling, at times mind-numbing, exciting, and very rewarding work. It paid off during the very early morning hours of November 8, 2018 when Evers beat Scott Walker to become the new governor. My tears of joy from an eight-year fight flowed freely as my friends and I rejoiced.

Currently I serve as an intern in Gov. Tony Evers' office. I am a junior at Edgewood College, studying Political Science and Art during the week, and managing the Chocolaterian Café on the weekends.

There are discouraging moments in politics; when Governor Walker passed Act 10, when Trump locked children in cages, and so on. However, while these events are discouraging they are also my motivators, just like my mentors. It is my hope that, one day, I will be able to influence legislation to make the world a more equitable place for everyone. I want to become an advocate for the LGBTQ+ community, and other marginalized populations, as well as provide to the next generation of leaders the same kind of mentorship that has been modeled to me. ■



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