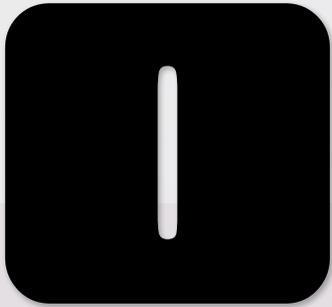


our lives



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Venus in Furs



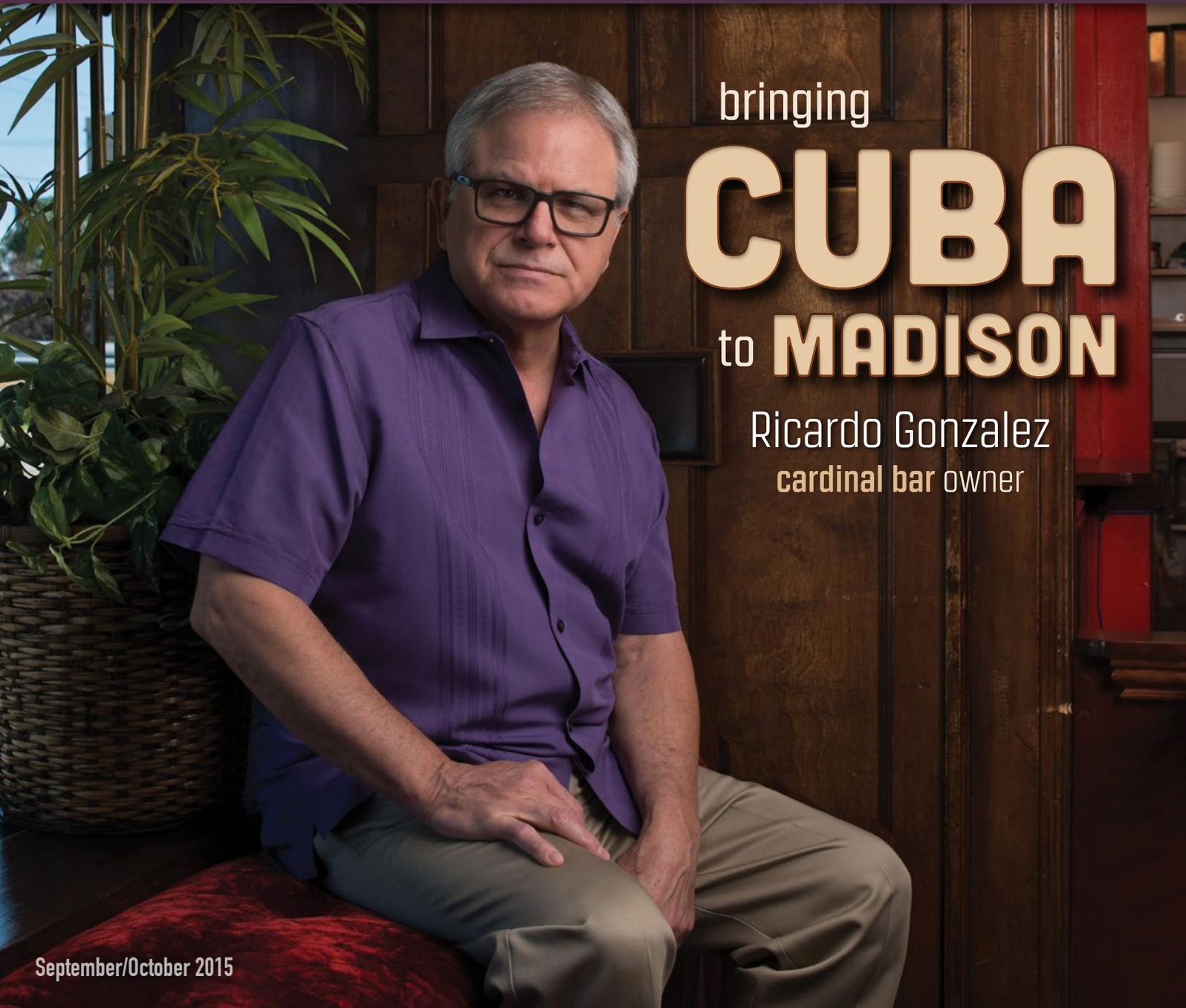
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Johannes Wallmann

ENTERTAINMENT

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Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine



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Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

Patrick Farabaugh
Publisher / Editor-in-Chief

Emily Mills
Editor

Virginia Harrison
Copy Editor

Contributing Writers
Karma Chavez
Abigail Churchill
Judy Dahl
Arthur Durkee
Will Fellows
Ricardo Gonzalez
Owen Karcher
Hallie Lieberman
Lili Luxe
Tamara Packard
Mark Pocan
shor salkas
Sheri Swokowski
Dick Wagner
Johannes Wallmann
Caroline Werner
Donnie Williams

Contributing Artists
Lois Bielefeld
Kelly Doering
Samantha Dutcher
Ian DeGraff

Account Manager
Sedrick Huppert

Business Manager
Matt Jelinek

National Advertising Sales
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CONTRIBUTORS



TAMARA B. PACKARD is a partner at Cullen Weston Pines & Bach LLP, where she helps level the playing field for employees and otherwise sides with the Davids against the Goliaths of the world. She is currently working alongside Lambda Legal in a lawsuit brought against Wisconsin officials to secure accurate, two-parent birth certificates for married same-sex couples and their children. In her free time, she enjoys Lake Monona, handstand pushups, and eating great food with her wife, Renee.

ARTHUR DURKEE is a composer, songwriter, photographer, artist and writer who works in multiple media, though music is at the core of everything. He plays several instruments and sings with Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus in Madison, who have honored him by commissioning and premiering several new works. Arthur's first published short story appeared in *Jonathan Magazine* this year, and a set of poems on being queer and disabled will appear in a new anthology this fall.

KARMA CHÁVEZ is a member of the radical queer collective Against Equality, an organizer for LGBT Books to Prisoners, and a host of "A Public Affair" on Madison's community radio, 89.9 FM WORT. She is co-author of *Madison, Wisconsin: A City in Nine Objects* published by Chicago's Temporary Services last year. A faculty member at UW-Madison, Karma is author of *Queer Migration Politics: Activist Rhetoric and Coalitional Possibilities* (University of Illinois Press, 2013).

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W. Earle Smith
Artistic Director

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What is your connection to the LGBTQ community?

Madison Ballet welcomes all to their classes and performances. We are proud to be an open and accepting company and strive to be a supportive school for any student interested in class no matter who they are. We have always enjoyed partnering with *Our Lives* in providing an "Out at the Ballet" experience/event for the LGBTQ community each season.

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We provide hundreds of complimentary tickets to community groups and other non-profits in support of their silent auctions and fundraisers. In addition, we participate in other programs that provide reduced-price tickets for families who would not otherwise have access to the Arts. Our Movement in Your World program, targeting the city's need-based Head Start classrooms, is provided at no cost to participants—and it puts one of our company dancers into the community to help foster a love of dance for all, regardless of income level.

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—Senator Tammy Baldwin



Superhero Strut

GSAFE’s annual **Walk/Run/Eat for Safe Schools** returns for another family-friendly day of activities and fundraising for a great cause.

TIME AGAIN TO JUMP INTO the proverbial phone booth, don your superhero costume, and spring into action: GSAFE will hold its 9th annual Walk/Run/Eat for Safe Schools on **SUNDAY, OCTOBER 11** at the Goodman Community Center and is recruiting caped crusaders to join the fundraising fight.

Participants range from toddlers to Silver Surfers, and there are options for a 5k walk, 5k run, 10k run, and kids’ 100-meter dash. A community meal will be served at the end.

“GSAFE’s Walk/Run/Eat for Safe Schools is a super fun, family friendly event,” explains Tim Michael, GSA Outreach Manager at GSAFE. “The LGBTQ+ community in Madison

doesn’t have a lot of really kid-friendly events, and we like to think that this provides that. People dress up and get to spend time outside, and all the proceeds go to expand GSAFE’s work in creating just schools for all students in Wisconsin.”

Bonus? All registered kids get a free cape (adults will need their own), as well as access to face painting and balloons.

Registration opens at 9:30 a.m. Online registration is open now, and if you sign up by September 12 you’ll get \$5 off each registration fee. Take on the superhero challenge and pledge to fundraise for GSAFE.

Learn more at GSAFEWI.ORG. ■

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Organization Updates

Madison-area LGBTQ service organizations share current projects, new faces in leadership, and their vision for future work.

Lance Bass and husband named honorary chairs of Wisconsin AIDS Walk

THE AIDS RESOURCE CENTER of Wisconsin (ARCW) announced that NSYNC star Lance Bass and husband Michael Turchin will be the Honorary Chairs of the 26th annual AIDS Walk Wisconsin & 5K Run.

"It is special to find a young couple who wants their marriage to serve a broader purpose right from the beginning," said ARCW President and Chief Executive Officer Mike Gifford. "We are proud to have Lance and Michael serve as our honorary chairs and are excited for their help with our AIDS Walk fundraising campaign. We look forward to celebrating a successful AIDS Walk and 5K Run."

Bass is a singer, actor and a producer for film and television who perhaps is best known as a member of the hit group NSYNC. In 2006 Bass revealed that he was gay in a cover story for *People Magazine* and later that year received the Visibility Award from the Human Rights Campaign. In 2007 he released his autobiography, *Out of Sync*, which chronicles his youth, his rise to celebrity status, his relationships and his struggle to keep his sexual identity private. He has performed on Broadway and was featured in the 7th season of "Dancing with the Stars," finishing in 3rd place.

Turchin is an aspiring actor, pop art portrait artist and model. He and Bass married on December 20, 2014 and they allowed their wedding to be aired on cable television, allowing gay youth to see a gay wedding take place and know that it could be possible for them as well.

"Michael and I are honored to serve as Honorary Chairs of AIDS Walk Wisconsin and 5K Run," said Bass. "It's exciting for us to be involved with the fight against AIDS in a state where fundraising is producing amazing results in HIV healthcare."

To help raise pledges for AIDS Walk Wisconsin, the Honorary Chairs will participate in a fundraising event the night before the Walk.

"We are eager to meet the people who sup-



Lance Bass and Michael Turchin will be in Milwaukee for the AIDS Walk on October 3.

port AIDS Walk Wisconsin, and we look forward to spending time with people who care about the things we care about. We are going to have a great time," said Turchin.

Over the past 26 years, more than 123,000 registrants have participated in AIDS Walk Wisconsin and raised more than \$11.9 million. One hundred percent of the pledges raised from AIDS Walk Wisconsin have stayed in Wisconsin to benefit people living with HIV in the state.

"Today, people with HIV live longer in Wisconsin than almost anywhere in the United States," said Mr. Gifford. "HIV is a complex and expensive disease and if we want to continue to see these results we have to register, raise pledges and turn out for events like AIDS Walk Wisconsin on October 3."

For the 26th annual event, a new website optimizes the user experience, making it easier to register and donate. The site is mobile phone-compatible. AIDS Walk Wisconsin will take place on Saturday, October 3 at the Summerfest grounds in Milwaukee.

"Don't wait. Register for the Walk/Run today at aidswalkwis.org and we will see you in October," said Bass.

Wisconsin Queer People of Color Conference coming in October



THE UW-MADISON LGBT Campus Center and the Multicultural Student Center are partnering to present the first ever Wisconsin Queer People of Color Conference, October 9-11 at the UW. Registration is free.

According to organizers, "The conference is a space for queer communities of color and allies to come together to engage in meaningful dialogues focused on the intersections of identities of queer people of color (QPOC).

"Participants will have the opportunity to engage in workshops, presentations and caucuses that will provide them with tools to navigate societal and institutional barriers that queer people of color encounter on campus and in larger communities. We will explore the complexity and critical necessity of coalition building through intersectional and social justice lenses."

For more information, go to msc.wisc.edu/msc/qpoc.

FEATURED GUESTS
Danez Smith & Coya White Hat-Artchoker



Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus brings in new board members

THE LONG-RUNNING ORGANIZATION recently announced a new president, Franzo Law II, as well as vice president Dan Jendrzejewski, secretary Marge Sutinen, and treasurer Mark Oldenburg. Board members are Rich Fluechtling, Matt Lenburg, Chris Mientus, Miri Pogoriler, and Janet Pugh.

Franzo Law II is currently a postdoctoral fellow at the UW Madison, in the psychology department, with a focus on language training. He has a PhD in Speech-Language-Hearing Sciences from City University of New York, and is also a member of the Wisconsin Chamber Choir.



Perfect Harmony is also preparing for next summer's GALA in Denver, an event that brings together LGBT choruses from around the world once every four years to make music together in a new city. This will coincide with Perfect Harmony's own 20-year anniversary season.

Alianza Latina provide advocacy and support for young LGBTQ Latin@s

THE ADVOCACY AND SUPPORT organization began its services in 2011 and was created by a group of eager entrepreneurs and activists that support LGBTQ rights in Madison. Alianza's initial main goal was to help young Latinos and Latinas that have questions or doubts about the gay community, and evolved to include the fathers and mothers of these teenagers, as well as allies.

Alianza Latina has collaborated with several organizations in Madison, either attending as



Alianza Latina in the OutReach Pride Parade.



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guest speakers in workshops to talk about the LGBTQ Latino community or supporting initiatives toward equality and human rights. Alianza Latina receives financial support from the City of Madison, The Capital Kids Fund, and donations from the community. The group serves the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning community, their families and allies; supporting and focusing on educational programs in regards to safety, discrimination and mental health. Once a month, Alianza Latina holds educational meetings for the Latino community at OutReach. If you would like to attend or are interested in supporting the organization, go to alianzalatinamadison.org.

EN ESPAÑOL: Alianza Latina nació gracias a la iniciativa de un grupo de emprendedores y activistas a favor de los derechos de la comunidad LGBTQ en Madison. Alianza Latina estableció sus servicios en el año 2011. Su meta principal fue, en un inicio, ayudar a los jóvenes latinos y latinas que tenían preguntas y dudas acerca de la comunidad gay. Con el paso del tiempo, varios padres y madres de estos jóvenes—así como otros aliados—se unieron a la causa, haciendo que el grupo se expanda y los servicios se incrementen.

Alianza Latina ha colaborado con varias organizaciones en el área de Madison en diferentes aspectos, ya sea brindado talleres educativos acerca de la comunidad LGBTQ o apoyando iniciativas a favor de la igualdad y los derechos humanos.

Alianza Latina recibe financiamiento para sus iniciativas gracias al aporte de algunas instituciones como City of Madison, The Capital Kids Fund y algunas donaciones particulares. Alianza Latina sirve a la comunidad latina de jóvenes gays, lesbianas, bisexuales, transgéneros y con dudas (LGBTQ, por sus siglas en inglés), sus familias y aliados, con apoyo y enfoque en programas de educación sobre la seguridad, discriminación y salud mental. Una vez al mes, Alianza Latina lleva a cabo reuniones educativas para la comunidad latina. Las reuniones se realizan en las oficinas de OutReach. Si desea asistir, por favor mire el calendario en la página de internet, alianzalatinamadison.org. Toda la comunidad está invitada a participar. ¡Pase la voz!

DID YOU KNOW

Dane Buy Local partner ULLA EYEWEAR was recently chosen as one of America's finest optical retailers by industry magazine Invision. The store, located at Hilldale Shopping Center since 1998, was chosen for its high quality service and products, as well as for its ardent support of other local businesses, its charitable giving, and high rates of both customer and employee satisfaction. SOURCE: inversionmag.org.



OutReach Pride Parade raises money, spirits

THE SECOND-ANNUAL OutReach Pride Parade, held Sunday, August 9 in downtown Madison, raised about \$25,000, plus an additional \$10,000 in in-kind donations, for OutReach's services in the Madison area. Sixty units participated, including local businesses, sports leagues, faith groups, activist organizations and more. Total attendance was estimated to be around 2,000.

"The OutReach Pride Parade is important because it brings together dozens of LGBT organizations and thousands of individuals for one day to celebrate our pride and power as a community," reflected Steve Starkey, OutReach's executive director. "It helps to develop relationships between individuals and organizations and promotes cooperation and collaboration to make our community stronger. It also demonstrates to the general population the size, power and clout our community has, politically, economically and socially. It is a visible statement of our presence and our determination to fight for our legal, political and human rights."

UW System honors faculty and staff for achievements on behalf of LGBT community

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN System has announced the 2015 recipients of the Dr. P.B. Poorman Award for Outstanding Achievement on Behalf of LGBTQ People.

The P.B. Poorman Award was established to publicly recognize UW System faculty, staff, students or community members for their excellence in advocacy, research, teaching or service on behalf of the LGBTQ communities. The award honors the memory and legacy of Dr. Paula B. Poorman, a faculty member at UW-Whitewater who played an instrumental role in the foundation of the UW System's Inclusivity Initiative.



AIDS Ride co-chairs Christopher Henry and Josh Siedschlag present the check to ARCW President and CEO Mike Gifford at the closing ceremonies for ACT 13.

AIDS Ride Rallies Big Support

The ACT 13 Steering Committee would like to thank all riders, crew, volunteers and sponsors for a great ride this year. The 300+ mile bike ride across south-central Wisconsin raises money to support the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (now merged with AIDS Network) in their efforts to provide quality healthcare services to those dealing with HIV/AIDS in the state. This year, the ride raised nearly \$183,000, bringing their thirteen-year total to \$3.4 million dollars raised. Donations for this year will continue to be accepted through the end of September at www.actride.org. "Extra special thanks to our host school in Horicon," ride organizers note, "who liked us so much they've invited us back. We are extremely fortunate to have such an awesome community! We look forward to seeing you all at ACT 14, July 28-31, 2016."

This year marks the expansion of the P.B. Poorman Award from a single recipient for the entire UW System to honoring a recipient from each institution.

"The UW System is committed to providing a safe, welcoming atmosphere for all our students, faculty, and staff. Those we are honoring with this award remind us how individual contributions can make a real difference in promoting respect and understanding within the university and the broader community," said UW System President Ray Cross.

Recipients will be formally recognized on Oct. 9 in Madison at an awards ceremony and luncheon, held in conjunction with UW System's presentation of the Outstanding Women of Color in Education Awards.

The 2015 honorees are:

- Lisa Hager, Associate Professor, English, UW Colleges (UW-Waukesha)
• Christopher Jorgenson, Director, Women's & LGBTQ Resource Center, UW-Eau Claire
• Stacie Christian, Coordinator, Inclusive Excellence & Pride Center, UW-Green Bay
• Jay Lokken, Senior Major Grants Officer, University Advancement, UW-La Crosse
• Gabriel Javier, Director of LGBT Campus Center and Assistant Dean of Students, UW-Madison
• Roy Badger, Project Manager, University Information Technology Services, UW-Milwaukee
• Liz Cannon, Director, LGBTQ Resource Center, UW-Oshkosh
• Kim White, Advisor, Advising & Career Center, UW-Parkside
• Todd Savage, Associate Professor, Counseling and School Psychology, UW-River Falls
• Andrew Stoner, Assistant Professor, Communication, UW-Stevens Point
• Jeanne Foley, Professor, Mathematics, Statistics and Computer Science, UW-Stout
• Debbie Cheslock, Student Program Manager for Gender Equity Resource Center, UW-Superior
• Cynthia Konrad, LGBT Coordinator, Student Affairs and Academic Affairs, UW-Whitewater

UW institutions submit nominations for the awards, which highlight each recipient's contributions to diversity, equity and Inclusive Excellence. Those contributions may include advocacy, activism or scholarship that has fostered social justice and organizational change; positive transformation within their institutions and/or community to achieve the goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion; and efforts to improve the climate for and visibility of LGBTQ people.

Remembering community activist Dennis Bergren

DENNIS BERGREN DIED PEACEFULLY and surrounded by family on August 22, 2015 after a long battle with cancer. At the time of his death he was living with his son's family in Charlotte, North Carolina.

Dennis was born in Madison, Wisconsin and lived here most of his life. He graduated from the University of Iowa in 1961 with honors in history. He taught German and Social Studies at LaFollette High School.

Dennis was also active with several nonprofit organizations in Madison. He was a member of the Gay-Bi Fathers group and served on the board of Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice for many years. He was a long-time volunteer and donor for OutReach LGBT Community Center, in addition to volunteering for the Earl Greely Memorial Library for many years.

He also initiated the LGBT portion of the Wisconsin Books to Prisoners project and staffed



it for several years. By 2007 he had responded to about 40 LGBTQ book requests; by 2013 he had reached over 2,500 people in prisons across the nation, many of whom wrote to him regularly. The project eventually took over his entire home, yet Dennis cheerfully and determinedly worked to meet the reading interests of the queer community in prison, showing compassion and care with every package he sent. OutReach was the fiscal sponsor for the program, which has provided LGBT literature to hundreds of prison inmates nationally over the past decade. The program has now been adopted by a new team of people that carry on

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Advertisement for Chokolaterian magazine, featuring the magazine cover and text: CHOCOLATERIAN EVERYDAY. CHOCOLATE. 2004 Atwood Ave Madison, Wisconsin 53704. Madison Public Library 201 West Mifflin St. chokolateriancafe.com



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Dennis's vision of helping LGBT inmates through literature.

Dennis was also a board member of Art and Soul Innovations, the parent organization of Proud Theater, of which he was a longtime supporter. His work and contributions to the community are too numerous to name, but Dennis was recognized publicly for his dedication several times: he won the David Runyon Man of the Year award from OutReach in 2011 and the Linda Sundberg Civil Rights Defender Award from Community Shares of Wisconsin in 2012.

Dennis was a kind, caring, generous man, and a joy to work with. In the last few years his health was challenging, but he still thought about people that were less fortunate and gave back to his community.

Steve Starkey (OutReach) and Melissa Charenko (LGBT Books to Prisoners) contributed to this remembrance. ■



Madison Gay Softball places second in national tournament



The Madison Big Cheese, a team comprised of 11 athletes from Madison's Badgerland LGBT Softball League, battled away the nay-sayers and fought their way to an impressive second place finish in Division C of the 39th Annual NAGAAA Gay Softball World Series (GSWS) in August.

The team had entered the division after pool play ranked as the 35 seed, but went on to defeat squads from Providence, Fort Lauderdale, Columbus, Minneapolis, and top three seeds including Knoxville, San Diego, and Seattle.

The Big Cheese went on to battle it out with Austin, Texas in the final game of the series and fell 14-3, making them the first team from Madison to both make it to the finals and finish as National Runners Up in the C Division.

A whopping 185 teams from all over North America competed in five divisions of tournament play, and Madison represents one of the smallest market members in the NAGAAA.

Team member and Five Nightclub owner Dave Eick had nothing but praise for his fellow players and the experience overall. "This team played for the Pride of Madison and Wisconsin," said Eick in an email. "They had the smallest roster with 11 players in the series and five of the players played with torn hamstrings and never gave in. People throughout the GSWS community and in Columbus were referring to us as the Madison Miracles as NO ONE ever gave this small market team a chance to do this. By the end of the series, after a week of games, people from near and far were cheering our motto: Everything's Better with Cheese!" ■

Looking for Balance

Will Fellows interviews author **Ray Rigoglioso** about his new book aimed at gay men and the event Fellows is helping to organize in Milwaukee to feature the work.

NOW THAT GAY MEN have made so much progress toward equal rights and treatment, where do we go from here? Raymond Rigoglioso offers compelling ideas in his new book, *Gay Men and The New Way Forward*. In anticipation of the author's October 4 event in Milwaukee, organizer Will Fellows asked him a few questions about his work and the book.



In this era of LGBT, why are you inviting gay men to focus on the G? Each group in the LGBT umbrella has distinct gifts, shaped by our different lived experiences.

Many of gay men's distinct gifts derive from the fact that we are male, we are socialized as men, and we can serve as a bridge between men and women. In order to explore and embrace our distinct gifts and our social roles, we must sometimes gather with those who have the same lived experience.

What's the essence of The New Way Forward? Restoring balance between the masculine and feminine. Gay men possess an innate balance of masculine and feminine, and the ability to seamlessly invoke each as the need arises. When we honor the feminine and masculine within ourselves, we will honor it as it manifests in others and the natural environment. We will leave behind the hierarchies and patterns of dominance/subjugation that characterize patriarchy for more peaceful, collaborative and respectful ways of relating with each other.

You say that even with societal acceptance, being a gay male will always be hard work. Why? We will still grow up not seeing critical parts of ourselves reflected in our families. Our energy and ways of being are fundamentally different from that of other boys and men. We will always be a minority.

We occupy an in-between place: between men and women, bridging the masculine and feminine, integral to the human family yet with one foot on the outside. We will always straddle these two worlds. This position takes strength and courage to navigate. It's not an easy path.

How ready are gay men for your message? I've been really pleased with the strong, positive response from gay men of all ages. I've felt the palpable excitement in the rooms I've presented in. I believe that gay men are very ready for this message.

Ray Rigoglioso will present a book reading and workshop in Milwaukee on Sunday, October 4.

Visit www.gaymenofwisdom.com for more information.



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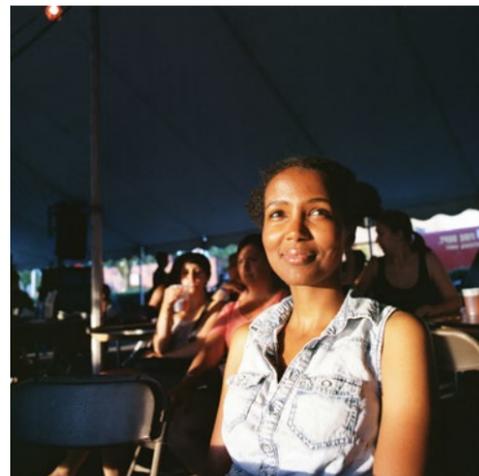


Photo Realism

Arthur Durkee takes an in-depth look at the searching, revealing photographic work of artist **Amber Sowards**.

IN PHOTOGRAPHY there is the idea of the “decisive moment,” where the photographer waits until just the right time to release the shutter and capture the momentary image within the flow of action. Amber Sowards’ photographs are filled with decisive moments — or perhaps they are isolated sentences from a story so compelling that you want to know what was going on before and after the photograph was made. Again and again her portrait subjects are caught mid-gesture, in the midst of an ongoing situation, revealing an intensity of feeling in their eyes that the viewer can find uncomfortably intimate. The photographs are compassionate, yet also clear-eyed and unromantic. You hunger to know the rest of the story.



Amber Sowards

the greater community’s philosophy on the environment, their level of education, and their white liberalism.” Contrast this with her ongoing photographic series “Private Property,” in which she documents her family in Baltimore: “My mother, father, sister and five-year-old niece, who all reside in a one bedroom apartment in Baltimore, Maryland. The decision to document them came from a deep desire to understand from where and from whom I come. For the past 10 years, I have been numb to my families’ lifestyle, accustomed to their downward spiral of addiction, poverty, unemployment, imprisonment and depression. I longed to see their humanity.

“The camera allowed me the safety of distance to look into the eyes of each family member and have a moment, a connection. In the end, I understood a mother’s strength, a father’s regret, a sister’s beauty and a little girl’s fearlessness. All together it added up to a family’s will to survive.”

THE OTHER AMERICAN COWBOY

In her series “The Other American Cowboy,” Amber creates a photographic narrative that

asks where, in the classic American landscape—familiar to us from endless Hollywood myth-making—are the African-American subjects? She writes, “Being half African American, the idea came from a personal question I have had since I was a child. Where do I belong? In ‘The Other American Cowboy’ project, I combine iconic American landscapes of the Southwest, Deep South and Midwest with African-American environmental portraiture. The aim of the project is to break stereotypes of African American imagery found in the all-too-familiar environments like the inner city, sports arena or jail. These images, which are portrayed in mainstream and even in the fine art photographic world, only perpetuate the stereotype of the oppressed, violent African American.”

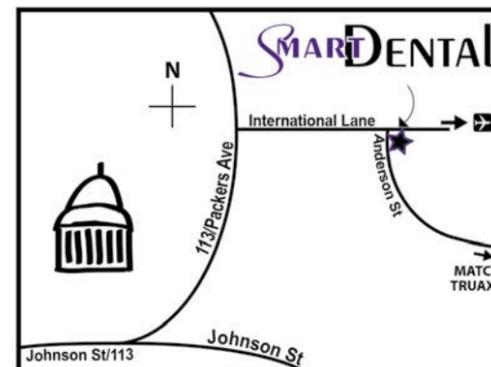
The pairing of person and place in ways that are fresh because they surprise—for example, people portrayed bicycling or playing guitar on the streets of Madison, next to an iconic abandoned building in the desert Southwest—highlights the reality of everyday lives that are not “types” at all but living human beings.

There have been many photographers who ask the big questions: who are we, where do we come from, what does life mean? Amber Sowards adds depth and grace to this lineage. ■

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Saving Five Nightclub

The community rallied to save a beloved LGBT space, and now owner **Dave Eick** is working hard to bring about a brighter future for the club and its wide spectrum of patrons.

THE CARDS AND PERSONAL LETTERS lining the walls of Dave Eick's office at Five Nightclub remind him daily of what his beloved club means to the LGBT community and its allies. They're from people near and far who wrote to support the #FIVEForever fundraising campaign that saved the club earlier this year.

When he announced on April 14 via Facebook that he planned to close the club for financial reasons, Eick didn't expect the outpouring of community support that followed. "People traveled distances to share stories, stop in for an afternoon visit, or just to shed some tears and

shake my hand and tell me they were here to fight with me to save it," he remembers.

The stories all touched and humbled him, but a few stand out for Eick, including that of a grandfather who drove more than 80 miles from Mauston. "He handed me some cash and said he felt he needed to make the trip," says Eick. "His two grandsons are gay, and even though they live in Texas, he felt it necessary to help out other young gay people here who need places like this."

From the moment Eick hit "post" on Facebook the community was abuzz with face-to-face and cyber commentary, from "It can't be true, can it? I was just there last night," to "I had heard something was up and all the pictures of 'RuPaul's Drag Race' queens were taken off the walls."

#FIVEFOREVER

Patrons past and present mobilized, asking Eick how they could help save Five Nightclub, which for many was one of

the few safe places where they could be themselves. The club had been a refuge for Eick when he'd first nervously walked in 13 years earlier to be warmly greeted by then-owner Ed Grunewald. Grateful that he'd been able to maintain the safe-haven environment Grunewald had created—and that Eick had helmed since Grunewald's untimely death in 2008—he decided to fight for the club.

He ordered #FIVEForever T-shirts—which were hugely popular—friend Brian Ponce created a GoFundMe donation page, drag queens volunteered for benefit shows, and a group held a carwash/pizza fundraiser. Legions of other supporters proposed ideas for attracting funds, some of which panned out and others that were, shall we say, a little out there, but appreciated nonetheless.

Money flooded in. "I didn't expect such support, but I'll be forever grateful for it," Eick says. "People handed me fives, tens, or whatever, and some just hugged me and said, 'Please save our home.' There are too many to mention, but each one was touching and will be forever in my mind."

On April 26, an epically packed night at Five Nightclub, Eick was able to announce that he'd reached his \$40,000 fundraising goal and that the club would stay open. He spoke moving words that brought tears to many eyes. "I am so proud to announce that because of you...all of you, from those buying a soda to those making donations, you have turned what I had imagined for months as one of the worst days in my life and a very sad day for many into an unreal and historic celebration."

Amidst the deafening roar of the jubilant crowd a small-business owner from Oshkosh leapt on stage to hug Eick. "He told me he understood the struggles of a small-business owner, and after what he'd seen and heard, he wanted to be part of supporting another small business," Eick recounts. "From that hug I knew he also had experienced the same struggles. If helping us somehow gave him faith in his business, it was great."

PHOTO BY KELLY DOERING



A NEW BEGINNING

Knowing he needed an updated business model to thrive in today's dynamic marketplace, Eick met with consultants to develop a strategic plan. Consequently, he added several key people to "handle aspects of the business that were draining my attention from focusing on the big picture."

And first and foremost came the rebuilding of staff ranks and preparing for summer volleyball, which—as usual—attracted numerous enthusiastic players and spectators. He's bringing back the big theme

The stories all touched and humbled him, but a few stand out for Eick, including that of a grandfather who drove more than 80 miles from Mauston. "He handed me some cash and said he felt he needed to make the trip," says Eick. "His two grandsons are gay, and even though they live in Texas, he felt it necessary to help out other young gay people here who need places like this."

parties so many had asked for; the Fourth of July, Circus, and Christmas in July events were all a resounding success.

As of early August, Eick was planning to launch other improved offerings over the coming months. "The business model is evolving into more of what the community told me they're looking for, so the club can better serve everyone," he explains.

"We're adding two new exciting elements to FIVE that I feel will really help change up the current business model as well as allow people from the community a space for private groups, parties, and events, while still allowing us to serve our customer base without interruption," he adds. "Cosmetically, the changes will begin inside the club at the end of August and hopefully by mid-October, a brighter, more welcoming space will greet all of our customers."

As for the future? "The community handed me the keys and I have the responsibility now to turn their faith and ideas into something that Madison can enjoy for an extended future," says Eick. "It's my intention to turn FIVE into an environment where everyone—LGBT, straight, Latino, young, more seasoned—feel welcome and want to come enjoy an evening that's anything but ordinary."

Vive la FIVE! ■



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

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Get Your Freak On

The Inferno became a safe haven and creative space for Madison's fringe. With its closure, one of its flagship events—**Leather & Lace**—moves to a new chapter and a new space at Plan B.

ON APRIL 22 MADISON'S nightlife changed forever when Apollo Marquez, owner of Inferno Nightclub, announced that the longtime institution would be closing its doors. A very touching closing statement went viral on social media as people from all over the world expressed their sadness at the loss of such a special space in our community.

"Thank you to my loving family and the many great friends and patrons over the years who have helped with numerous remodels, setups, and who have shown up to the crazy things we have done here; to the numerous bands, singers, performers that have taken one or both of the stages; to the artists and the creative displays on the walls of the club, and to the past and present staff. It really has not been your average night." —Apollo (via closing statement)

For many patrons the Inferno was a home, a place where you were comfortable expressing yourself, whether you were out on your own or surrounded by friends and family. The Inferno was known for its killer parties and themed events that served a variety of area groups and genres of music. Whether it was a lounge night with sultry singers or a foot-stomping hard industrial night, everybody was always welcome. Madison mourns the loss of an inclusive space—a truly rare find indeed, especially for those in the LGBTQ+ community.

The last public event at the club was **Leather + Lace**, Madison's infamous night of debauchery, hosted by DJs Mike Carlson and Whiterabbit

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(Josh Lenius). Apollo and Josh came up with the idea in July of 1997 and Mike came on board in 1999. The final L+L event sold out in two minutes, so it was no surprise when rumors started circulating that the event would continue on even though the Inferno would not.

In early May, Josh announced they had a "Plan B" and on the first Saturday in June, like it has for the past 18 years, **Leather + Lace** lived on in its new location at the Williamson Street gay bar. For some, the new location seemed an illogical choice, but for others it was a refreshing change. L+L was never a specifically LBGTO+ event but the diverse atmosphere and zero-tolerance harassment policy at the Inferno made it a place where anyone could have fun. It doesn't matter if you're into latex or banana hammocks, or prefer white collars to dog collars, L+L is a one-of-a-kind dance party for everyone.

Any promoter will tell you that it's rare for an event to easily move from one venue to another, but Corey Gresen and the staff at Plan B have welcomed us with open arms. They have allowed the L+L staff—from security to bartenders—to take over for the night, and for five hours every month we get a piece of our home back. And for once, Apollo Marquez, now the host of the evening, can truly enjoy the party he's worked at for the past 18 years. ■

LILI LUXE currently runs Luxe Productions hosting events and producing shows at various venues in and around Wisconsin. She is also the featured performer at **Leather + Lace** and also performs with **Les Cougars Variety Troupe**. Look out for big things in 2016 as her plans to open a new LGBTQ+ space downtown come to fruition.



The Mitzvah of Inclusion

Members of **Madison's lesbian and allied Jewish community** recall how they've worked to build a more inclusive community of faith over the last several decades.

THIRTY-FIVE YEARS AGO, lesbians who wanted to practice their Jewish faith in Madison had few places to go.

"There were no congregations that were outwardly welcoming," says Karen Shevet Dinah, 67. "We didn't feel part of the Jewish community."

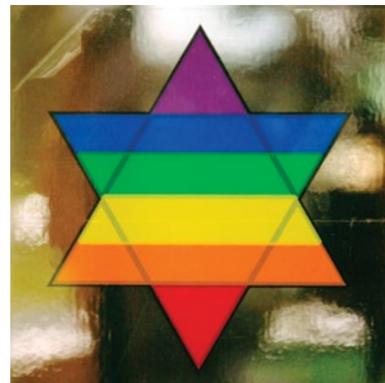
The feeling of alienation meant that Jewish lesbians either went to traditional services and hid their sexual identity or avoided services altogether. Barbara Brown, 57, recalls that she was out to her friends but not to the general Jewish community.

"I worked at Beth Israel as the Youth Director, but I was very closeted. I would have been fired [if they'd found out]," says Brown. "I went to a gay pride march and just avoided cameras."

Instead of resigning themselves to being without a communal home, a few women banded together and created their own formal Jewish lesbian group in the 1970s. Women met once a month for Shabbat dinners, celebrated Jewish high holidays together, and created their own space for Judaism and lesbianism to coexist.

But in the late 1980s, the Jewish lesbian group dissolved, just as a new congregation was being formed. Its first meeting was held at the historic Gates of Heaven synagogue on Madison's East side in November 1989. About 30 people showed up to this initial meeting, three of whom were lesbians. Each person spoke about their history with the Jewish faith, but Shevet Dinah had another detail to share.

"I decided to just be really out at that meeting. I said that I was a lesbian and I wanted to convert. I wanted to practice Judaism in a



form of Judaism, began allowing the ordination of gay and lesbian rabbis. However, it was not without controversy. Rabbi Jonathan Biatch, 60, of Madison's Reform Congregation Temple Beth El, says that when he attended rabbinical school in the early '90s some faculty members disapproved of the ordination of gay and lesbian rabbis.

"There was basically a 'don't ask, don't tell' policy when it came to being a student at Hebrew Union College. They basically said, 'Look, your sexual orientation is your business. It's not any of ours,'" says Rabbi Biatch.

Rabbi Biatch's views on gay marriage have shifted since the '80s and early '90s, when he was opposed to it.

"When I became a rabbi in 1992 and began to look at some of the human rights issues, my consciousness was raised. Reading Evan Wolfson's Why Marriage Matters drove me to learn about [gay marriage] and embrace it."

Since then, he's been a vocal defender of gay marriage. In fact, in 2006, he attended the hearing on the proposed amendment to Wisconsin's constitution that defined marriage as between a man and a woman. Although he was there to protest the amendment, the announcer mistakenly declared that Rabbi Biatch was supporting it. Applause erupted among the fundamentalist religious leaders, as they believed that a prominent member of the Jewish community was opposed to gay marriage. A few minutes later the mistake was corrected, and the people sitting next to him grumbled.

"The hearing room was filled with fundamentalist-type people, and they were expecting me as the rabbi to make a positive statement about this amendment which I couldn't, didn't and wouldn't," Biatch said.

The Conservative congregation Beth Israel was the last to follow suit in accepting the LGBTQ community, only becoming welcoming in the early 2000s, around the time that the Conservative movement began ordaining LGBTQ rabbis and allowing them to officiate at gay marriage ceremonies.

"For that reason, in 2008 when Beth Israel was interviewing candidates to be our Rabbi, we were very intentional about asking whether each candidate would [officiate same-sex marriages], as we knew it would be important to our community that our Rabbi was willing to perform same-sex marriage ceremonies. That was when we hired Rabbi Ben-Gideon," says Cynthia Hirsch, President of Beth Israel Center from 2011-2014.

But Madison's first openly LGBTQ-friendly congregation, Shaarei Shamiyam, continues to draw and retain lesbian members, in part because of the type of Judaism practiced there. Reconstructionist Judaism "has a very specific goal to be welcoming to the LGBTQ community," says Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman, 41, Shaarei Shamiyam's Rabbi, who was also Madison's first openly lesbian rabbi



Reconstructionist Judaism "has a very specific goal to be welcoming to the LGBTQ community," says Rabbi Laurie Zimmerman, 41, Shaarei Shamiyam's Rabbi, who was also Madison's first openly lesbian rabbi when she became their rabbi in 2003.

place that felt safe and supportive," Shevet Dinah says. As she anxiously awaited the response to her revelation, she saw a heterosexual couple across the way from her break into a broad smile, and she immediately felt at ease.

The new congregation was called Shaarei Shamiyam, meaning "gates of heaven." It was the first Madison congregation to be LGBTQ-inclusive, in part because its members decided to affiliate with the Reconstructionist movement, a politically progressive branch of Judaism that split from the more traditional Conservative movement in the 1940s.

Around the late '80s the largest branch of American Judaism was becoming more inclusive, too. The Reform movement, a modernized

when she became their rabbi in 2003.

"It made me really feel welcome that the Rabbi is a lesbian and there are definitely other out lesbians in the congregation," says Flora van Wormer, 42. But in a sign of how far the Madison Jewish lesbian community has come, van Wormer says that being a Jew who happens to be a lesbian "is not a big deal. It's just part of who we are."

About 10 percent of Shaarei Shamiyam's members are LGBTQ, according to Rabbi Zimmerman.

"We would be really interested in having more gay and lesbian members, but it's not really clear to me how to do outreach to the gay and lesbian community," says Zimmerman.

Three decades ago, Jewish lesbians felt so alienated and unwelcome that they created their own space to worship. Today, nearly all temples welcome them: Reform, Reconstructionist and Conservative. There's only one holdout: the Orthodox Chabad movement, which does not accept gay and lesbian members. Their rabbi declined to comment for this article.

In a sign of how cohesive the Jewish community is about LGBTQ issues, when Rabbi Zimmerman married her partner Rabbi Renee Bauer soon after she began her position at Shaarei Shamiyam, "People at [conservative synagogue] Beth Israel were sending donations to Jewish Social Services in honor of [their] marriage. It was just exciting. That wasn't something we could have imagined in 1985," says Shevet Dinah. ■



HALLIE LIEBERMAN is currently writing a book on the history of sex toys. In the fall, she will begin a position as a Teaching Fellow at Lebanon Valley College, teaching writing through the lens of junk food and popular culture. She received her PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 2014.



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OCTOBER 2

OutReach Awards Banquet

MONONA TERRACE Madison's LGBT community center holds its annual awards dinner and celebration, featuring prominent guest speakers, reception, cash bar, and full dinner. Celebrate our community and the individuals and organizations that make it strong. www.lgbtoutreach.org



OCTOBER 9-11

Wisconsin Queer People of Color Conference

UW MADISON The conference is a space for queer communities of color and allies, particularly students, to come together to engage in meaningful dialogues focused on the intersections of identities of queer people of color (QPOC). msc.wisc.edu/msc/qpoc-2



OCTOBER 11

GSAFE Walk/Run/Eat 2015

GOODMAN COMMUNITY CENTER This event is fun for the whole family, featuring a 5k walk, 5k run, 10k run, kids' run, and a community meal. New this year: kids' run, 5k stroller run, costumed superheroes, face painting, and balloons for the kids. All to benefit GSAFE programming. www.gsafewi.org

ORGANIZATIONS

A representative sampling

AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin 600 Williamson St., Madison (608) 252-6540 aidsnetwork.org

Alianza Latina facebook.com/alianzalatinamadison

Dairyland Cowboys & Cowgirls dcandc.org

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

GSAFE 122 E. Olin Ave., Madison (608) 661-4141 gsafewi.org

Gay Softball League badgerlandssoftball.com

Gay Volleyball League madisongayvolleyball.com

Hermanos Latinos sneal@aidsnetwork.org

Lez Talk Yahoo Group leztalkmadison@yahoo.com

LGBT Books to Prisoners lgbtbookstoprisoners.org

Madison Gay Hockey Association madisongayhockey.org

Madison Minotaurs Gay Rugby minotaursrugby.org

New Harvest Foundation newharvestfoundation.org

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

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

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

Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus perfectharmonychorus.org

Proud Theater (LGBTQ Youth) proudtheater.org

StageQ - Madison's Queer Theater stageq.com

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

Wisconsin Rainbow Families wirainbowfamilies.com

AUGUST 9 OutReach Pride Parade



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This Filthy World: An Evening with John Waters, October 15, Mills Hall, UW Madison School of Music Provocative and often controversial filmmaker and author John Waters comes to the UW campus for an evening that's sure to be highly entertaining and elucidating. Waters 2014 book, Carsick: John Waters Hitchhikes Across America, will be available for purchase. lgbt.wisc.edu

Madison PFLAG Celebration of Leadership, September 20, Turner Hall, Madison Madison's long-running chapter of PFLAG holds a special meeting and celebration to recognize the people who've contributed so much to the organization over the years. pflag-madison.org

AIDS Walk Wisconsin, October 3, Milwaukee Join Honorary Chairs Lance Bass and Michael Turchin on Milwaukee's Lakefront for the annual AIDS Walk & 5K Run. aidswalkwis.org

Milwaukee LGBT Film Festival, October 15-25, UW Milwaukee Presenting regional premieres of films by, for and about the LGBT+ community, the 30th annual festival includes features, documentaries, short films, experimental work, presentations from visiting artists and more. uwm.edu/lgbtfilmfestival

Peaches, October 16, The Majestic The provocative musician-producer-filmmaker-performance artist returns to Madison for what promises to be an in-your-face night of electro-dance beats and a creative, nothing-held-back performance. majesticmadison.com

Garbage "20 Years Queer" Tour, October 18, The Orpheum, The Madison band is celebrating their 20th anniversary with a tour that will highlight the works from their debut, self-titled album, featuring hit songs like "Queer," "Stupid Girl," and "Only Happy When It Rains." madisonorpheum.com

OUT AT OVERTURE - Shaping Sound, November 4, Overture Center for the Arts Overture presents a special edition of their Get Social series with an LGBT-specific night at a performance of "Shaping Sound." overturecenter.org

Natasha Nicholson: The Artist in Her Museum, Through November 8, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art The work of contemporary artist Natasha Nicholson will be on display in this unique exhibition that showcases her sculptural work while giving visitors special insight into her creative process and the spaces she inhabits during them. mmoca.org

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Cuban, Libre

Cardinal Bar's founder and longtime owner **Ricardo Gonzalez** recounts his experiences with revolutionary Cuba during his childhood, and his journey toward self-sufficiency and acceptance throughout some of the most tumultuous decades of the LGBT movement in the U.S.

THEY ALL GASPED WHEN they saw me coming into the living room wearing my mother's evening gown and high heels. After all, I was only five and it wasn't the sort of thing a boy would do, but the dress lay on her bed and I instinctively put it on, slipped into the shoes and out I paraded in front of company no less! To this day my older brothers remember the scene and kid me about it, realizing that it wasn't just mischievousness, but the first sign of my being different.

Growing up in Cuba, especially in Camaguey—one of the island's most conservative areas—middle class boys did not grow up to be dancers, actors or artists, let alone drag queens; yet that was what I wanted to be until the realization hit me that if I pursued those dreams I would be called a maricon and I knew that was bad. So then I took refuge in the Church, becoming an altar boy and announcing to my parents that I wanted to be a Marist brother. I must have been about 10 or 11, and their response was to wait and see how I felt about it in a few years. But by the time I was 13, all I wanted to do was dance and party.

By the fall of 1960, the word on the street was that the government was planning to take children under 16 away from their parents and send them to Russia for communist indoctrination.

We grew into a young adulthood rather fast. The drinking age in Cuba may have been 16 or 18, but no one paid attention. A boy, especially, would start drinking whenever he wanted. For me and my friends that happened around age 13; we would go to parties at someone's home or at the social club and there would be rum and cokes—and dancing! There wasn't any dating as such, but we were already thinking about girls. Being a social butterfly, I had to have a girlfriend and so began courting. Never mind that my fantasies were all about my boyfriends, I would learn to keep those deeply buried and carry on with the charade of being the Latin lover until finally coming out at 22.

In spite of that earlier display of drag, I was always rather masculine in my behavior. I did my share of sports but wasn't really athletic, being more interested from an early age in history, geography and politics. When the Cuban Revolution triumphed on January 1, 1959, I was only 12 but immediately identified with it and became an ardent supporter, going as far as raising funds for the new agrarian reform. Soon I would learn that such legislation was hurting my father's business and that of many of my friends whose families owned ranches and sugar plantations. It was a heady time in Cuba, and many changes were under way that would affect my life forever.

COMING TO AMERICA

However, my interests then were all about social dancing and developing what would become a life-long obsession with Cuban music.

Looking Back to Move Forward



RAPHAEL KADUSHIN, EXECUTIVE EDITOR
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN PRESS

I think one great literature trend is the rediscovery of important LGBT artists from the past. The UW Press, as part of its wide-ranging LGBT list, is publishing a biography this fall on Romaine Brooks, the pioneering lesbian artist who was at the center of the Paris expat movement in the Twenties. Author Cassandra Langer conveys how innovative Brooks' art was, along with a lifestyle that was brave and unfettered for the times. Understanding and appreciating our past is a crucial part of building our future.

Connecting Art with Life



CARRIE VAN HALLGREN, MANAGING DIRECTOR
AMERICAN PLAYERS THEATRE

Our audiences have always been incredible listeners and thinkers, but this year we are finding that they are going out of their way to engage even deeper with the material on our stages. Topics like apartheid and "Antigone," the atrocities of war and Homer's epic "The Iliad," are being discussed in a more formal manner in our extremely popular Beyond the Plays programming. But we also find the conversation extending into the lobby, on the path to the parking lot, and in downtown Spring Green. Now more than ever, there is an urge to experience a story together, as a community, and really unpack the way that story resonates in our contemporary life. Our performers feel it, too.



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Dec 8 Afro-Cuban Jazz

For additional information on the Arts Institute's residency and partner events presented by Madison World Music Festival, Overture Center, Office of Multicultural Arts Initiatives, and Wisconsin Science Festival, visit go.wisc.edu/juandemarcos





TIPS & TRENDS

Breaking Down Barriers



EARLE SMITH, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR
MADISON BALLET

Dancers are teaming up with other artists, like actors, singers, comedians, acrobats—to put on a showcase or event in a very unique space or setting. These events are typically spontaneous and pop up in no time at all. I am sure the financial environment has fostered them, but artists are wanting to break down the genre barriers and open themselves up to innovative and creative ideas and collaborations. Sometimes they're rough around the edges, but the flow of creativity is exciting and fun to watch.

Mixing It Up



KATHRYN SMITH, GENERAL DIRECTOR
MADISON OPERA

American opera audiences are increasingly hungry for a greater breadth of repertoire, wanting new pieces mixed in with the classics. Most opera companies, including Madison Opera, are responding with newer works, especially those written in the last 20 years. Our upcoming season includes operas written in 1881 ("The Tales of Hoffmann" by Offenbach), 1896 ("La Bohème" by Puccini), and 1998 ("Little Women" by Mark Adamo). The other strong trend is for free performances in parks, and Madison Opera has been a leader in that field. An audience of 16,000 people attended Opera in the Park 2015, giving us the highest per capita attendance of any such concert in the country.



Ricardo, at age five, reciting poetry at a school event in Cuba.

The person who would most influence this development was my nanny, Brigida, by getting me into dance reviews which required choreography. Thus, I learned to dance well from an early age. She always had the radio set to the popular music stations and would encourage us to watch variety shows on TV, so I became familiar with the leading bands of the time. Shortly after my 13th birthday I actually organized a dance party at a public place, hired our esteemed choreographer to play music on a reel-to-reel tape player, got Brigida to make some appetizers, and charged everyone \$1 to attend—which I collected by going to each of my friends' homes. And there was a bar to boot!

By the fall of 1960, the word on the street was that the government was planning to take children under 16 away from their parents and send them to Russia for communist indoctrination. My parents decided to send us to the U.S. until things calmed down; after all, the U.S. would not allow a communist government to take hold in Cuba, or so was the conventional wisdom. The result was that by November I was in Miami with a younger brother, staying with an uncle whose wife was a fidelista! Their daughter was about my age and soon provided my first sexual experience of sorts.

Since my brother was younger, I considered myself his keeper and assumed a serious and responsible attitude. Our youth had been thwarted and within months I had to get a job. My parents came, and we settled in Miami right after the Bay of Pigs invasion in April 1961. My oldest brother had joined the invasion forces and was captured and jailed in Cuba, adding considerable drama to our initial years of exile.

Those were hard times. New arrivals from Cuba were coming daily, many of them people we knew. In spite of the hardship, the exile community was united in its hatred of Castro and what he had wrought upon us. People helped each other find housing and jobs, and soon a new community began taking shape—one that would become the most successful immigrant group in U.S. history. But that would come later. For now, it was the early 1960s and jobs were getting scarcer to find in the Miami area, prompting the Cuban Refugee Center to offer exiles the opportunity to settle elsewhere in the country. Entire families would accept help from church groups and move to places like Indiana, Oklahoma, Iowa, and other states that many had never even heard of.

GO WEST, YOUNG MAN

My girlfriend's family moved to Oklahoma City early in 1963, and I convinced one of my older brothers to join me in pursuit. The Refugee Center provided us with a one-way plane ticket and a winter coat, and with \$20 that my father gave me, I set out to begin a new life. The only thing I knew about Oklahoma was the movie musical which I had seen in Cuba. The relationship with my girlfriend, such as it was (after all, she was only 14 and I was 16), didn't last long but my brother and I

decided to stay the course in Oklahoma. We got jobs, and I finished high school. During that year, with my oldest brother back from prison in Cuba, the family moved to San Antonio, Texas.

My wish was to attend the University of Oklahoma at Norman, but it would not accept me as a state resident which meant paying out-of-state tuition, something completely beyond my means. A high school teacher suggested I try a small college in Tishomingo and I set forth and enrolled at Murray State Agricultural College, a two year school in the heart of "Little Dixie" in southeastern Oklahoma, where I became the 500th student to enroll—and the first Cuban. The student newspaper did a story on me, and I became a sort of celebrity. It was the fall of 1964, and my first presidential election was in full swing, with me supporting the GOP candidate, Barry Goldwater. That would be the last time I would support a Republican for president; by the time I graduated, I had gone from archconservative to ultra liberal, and my anti-Castro attitude was being challenged by new awareness caused by U.S. intervention in Vietnam and the raging civil rights movement. By the '70s, I was a committed anti-imperialist and had come to conclusions that I still hold dear.

RIPON, WI

Politics was indeed my other obsession. It was to be expected, given the politicization caused by events in Cuba. Within my family I was called "the lawyer" for always having an opinion; in fact, going on to law school was a given until life presented other options. Moving to Oklahoma at 16 had been a big change and had set me on the road to self-sufficiency. When I graduated from college, I fully intended to go on to graduate school and had picked the University of Missouri for its political science program, but after a summer job with Green Giant, I was offered the position of personnel manager at Ripon, WI and promptly accepted.

TIPS & TRENDS

Smoke-Free Future



MISSY TRACY, MUNICIPAL RELATIONS COORDINATOR
HO-CHUNK GAMING & CASINO

Ho-Chunk Gaming-Madison has become the first casino in the state to offer a 100% smoke-free gaming facility effective August 1, 2015.

The Wisconsin Statewide Smoke-Free Air Law went into effect in July 2010 and requires restaurants, bars and entertainment venues to be smoke-free. However, as the Ho-Chunk Nation is a sovereign nation (self-governing on our tribal lands), we exercised our inherent sovereignty and made the transition to a smoke-free environment completely of our own volition. We believe that we are among the first business choosing to do this on our own, rather than being publicly mandated to do so. We hope this bold move will lead the way for all casinos in Wisconsin to consider going completely smoke-free as it follows this mainstream trend.

Art for Change



KARIN WOLF, ARTS PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
MADISON ARTS COMMISSION

Social practice artists are not only changing the art world, they're changing the world in general. Social practice artists engage with the community to create participatory and collaborative art. Artists like Theaster Gates, Swoon, Rick Lowe, and many others, are known for this transformative merging of aesthetics and social activism.

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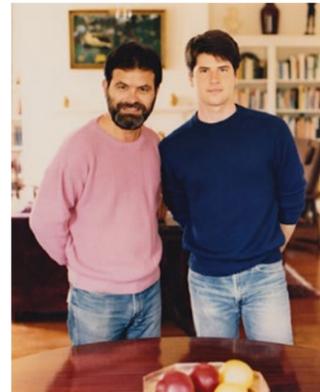
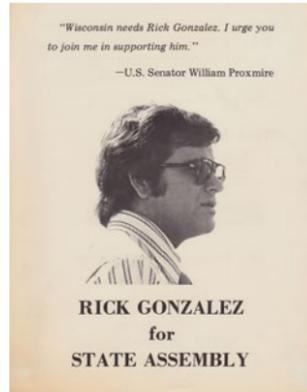

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LEFT TO RIGHT: With dance partner in Cuba, 1960. Official campaign poster, 1972. With his partner Brian, 1985. With the original Cardinal Bar staff, 1974; from left-right: David Jindra, Ricardo, Pablo Meyer and Nicholas Miller

This was 1968 and I was about to turn 22, still a virgin and deeply closeted. But Ripon had surprises in store for me. I loved my job and thoroughly enjoyed the responsibility for overseeing the hiring of over one thousand seasonal workers, most of them college students during the pea pack (June/July) and Mexican migrants for the corn pack (August and September). The contact with the mejicanos would have a deep effect on my sociopolitical thinking as well as my health. I empathized with them and proceeded to bring about changes and improvements in the way the company dealt with them, but halfway into the first summer, I contracted TB and had to spend the next seven months in repose, first at a sanatorium and then later at home in San Antonio.

Imagine! Full of life and ambition at 22 and struck by a disease that 20 years earlier would have killed me. It turned out to be a blessing in disguise, however, as the rest gave me the opportunity to read and get more acquainted with what was going on in the country, especially the protests against the Vietnam War. I participated in the San Antonio

Moratorium march, and somehow my picture made the front page of the local paper—totally scandalizing my mother who became convinced that I was a communist and leading to many arguments. Frustrated with the home scene and having pretty much recovered from the bout with TB, I decided to go visit some friends in Washington, DC. The experience would prove catalytic.

SELF RECONCILIATION

A former girlfriend had given me a copy of Andre Gide's *The Immoralist* and I began to read it. In it, the main character was stricken with TB and also had to deal with his homosexuality. In Washington, after touring the White House and walking around for a while, I went into a bookstore and came upon the current issue of TIME magazine which featured a cover story on "The Homosexual in America." Wow! I thought, scared to pick up a copy, but doing so eventually and devouring the story based largely on the events of June 1969 at the Stonewall Inn.

Rewind to the spring of 1969. I had befriended the owner of a men's clothing store in Ripon soon after my arrival and, even though he was effeminate and reputed to be gay, I had rented a room in his house and soon found that he was friends with a group of interior decorators from Madison. On Memorial Day weekend, we drove down and stayed at their home on Jenifer Street, where I had my first adult homosexual experience. As such, it was mellow with no real passion, nothing like I had dreamed, but the genie was out of the bottle. The material I read later that year only spurred me to become more curious and determined to finally come out.

After returning to work, I gave myself to the life of going to gay bars. It was the early 70s, and coming out was still a very iffy thing to do. All I really wanted was to experience the new sexual freedom, although certain aspects of it gave me pause. By 1978, even after having the Cardinal Bar for a few years, I became convinced that the so-called "advocate experience" of multiple sexual encounters did not really amount to freedom. My apprehensions turned out to be prophetic with the advent of AIDS.

My first significant other was a teacher who lived in Ripon, and we would get together with other friends for dinners and outings. It was during this period that the idea for the Cardinal Bar was born, as we would get high and dream of having a place that would overlook water and be the most beautiful bar. Our fantasy name for it was "Moon Lake Casino," as in the nightclub in Tennessee Williams' *Streetcar Named Desire*. It would take three years for me to run into the Cardinal and realize that the dream had come true.

But politics took precedence. In 1972, I got totally involved in the McGovern campaign for President and ended up becoming a candidate myself for the Wisconsin Assembly in what was arguably the most conservative district in the State. My boyfriend was adamant that I not come out on account of his parents who lived nearby, but I still ran a very progressive campaign focusing more on national rather than local issues. Even by today's standards, I would be considered a radical in that district, advocating for consumer protection, environmental regulations, amnesty for war deserters and a woman's right to choose an abortion. Needless to say, I went down in flames.

MY MADISON

That brought to an end my career with Green Giant, which had become alarmed at my increasingly radical views on corporate farming and migrant workers. Without a job and licking the wounds of my political loss, I decided to move to Madison. I was already in love with the city and had envisioned living here one way or the other. Even then, Madison had a burgeoning gay culture with young, beautiful and smart people. I was ready and soon found employment as an affirmative action officer for the State of Wisconsin. It was a great job that put me in contact with the Latino community for the first time while also affording me the opportunity to build a new life as an openly gay man.

However, the dream for "Moon Lake Casino" would not go away, and soon I was itching with the desire to open my own business. Following a vacation to Key West in the summer of 1974, I came into my

office one day and looked in the classifieds under "Business Opportunities" and there it was: "Tavern for lease, décor ca. 1912, overlooking the lake, near State office buildings." Eureka! I immediately called and made an appointment to see it and, as they say, the rest is history.

Looking back on the past 40+ years, there is no question that the Cardinal was heaven-sent for me to achieve, not just the dream of owning a bar, but the creation of a very unique space that would provide a political forum and a place to exert all my energies, whether they be sexual, entrepreneurial or artistic. It would become a base from which to launch

The Cardinal was heaven-sent for me to achieve, not just the dream of owning a bar, but the creation of a very unique space that would provide a political forum and a place to exert all my energies, whether they be sexual, entrepreneurial or artistic.

myself into local and national politics, but most importantly, the Cardinal would be a place for a community to gather for fun and entertainment, while doing serious and important business.

To be sure, the Cardinal has had ups and downs throughout its history. Built in 1908 as a railroad hotel, it survived the urban decay of the post war years and was spared any major remodeling, thus preserving its beautiful architectural

features. Even a fire in a third story room in 1981 and the subsequent major renovation in 1986 did not affect the continuity of the bar.

There are many things I may do differently now, if given the opportunity, but I do relish the trajectory that my life has traveled. I can only point now to the positives of sharing a life with Brian (my partner of 31 years), to the success of the Cardinal Bar, to a loving and understanding family and to having had the great fortune of living in one of the most civilized and beautiful places on Earth.

And then there is still Cuba, beckoning! ■

Attorney Christopher Krimmer



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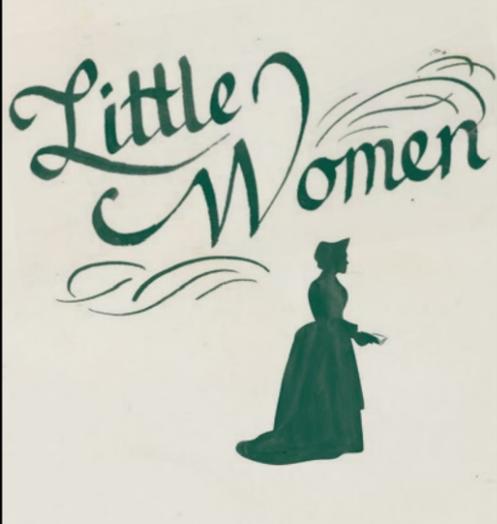
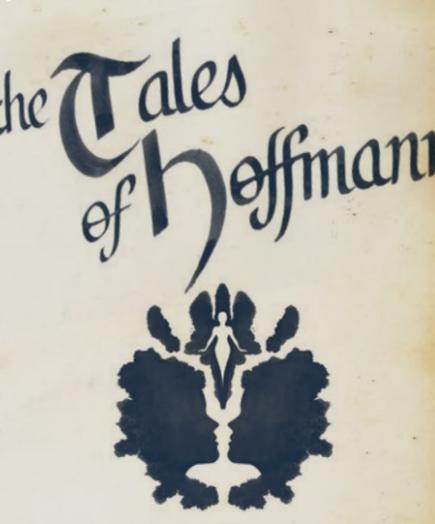


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Rock 'n Roll Family

Local surf-rock band **Venus in Furs** are doing it all, from releasing a new record to having a baby, while blazing a musical trail based on close friendships and rad riffs.

THE KEYS TO LONG-TERM musical success—to being in a band that’s more than just you and your instrument—are much the same as those that unlock the secrets to a healthy relationship: trust, communication, collaboration, compromise.

In a band, you get to add rocking out to the equation. And if you’re in that band with your best friends and significant other, it’s even better.

Bassist Natalie Hinckley and guitarist Victoria Echeverria weren’t a couple when they first started surf-rock outfit Venus in Furs along with drummer Marlo Dobrient back in 2010. Their relationship began soon after, though.

“It was really distracting, trying to play and she’s throwing herself at me,” Nat says with a laugh. “I just thought it would be a terrible idea. I’d just broken up with my ex, and I was thinking, ‘We have this fucking awesome guitar player, it’s going to be Fleetwood Mac: it’s going to destroy the band if we get together.’”

“I think it makes you more like ABBA,” Marlo interjects wryly.

For Victoria, making music with Natalie makes perfect sense. “It’s part of why we fell for each other—playing music together,” she says. “Growing up, my dad used to play guitar with me. And Natalie being a musician, it just felt like, ‘Oh, this is family.’”

The band has since added former Screamin’ Cyn Cyn and the Pons

guitarist Cynthia Burnson, a line-up that makes for a fuller sound as well as an additional voice.

Begun with the mission to “play surfy dancy punk enthusiastically, loudly and in 30-minute increments in the service of encouraging drinking, jumping, dancing and being happy for everyone,” Venus in Furs has largely remained true to that glittery dream. Their debut 2011 album, *Welcome to the Club*, was a delightfully gritty and danceable ode to classic surf rock, with elements of disco, punk and garage to mix things up. There are instrumental numbers to enjoy with abandon, and lyrical numbers that run the gamut from silly fun to in-your-face political.

The band is now preparing to release their second full-length effort, *Just Try It On*, with a record release show September 26 at the Frequency in Madison. The new album promises to build on their eclectic passions while maintaining a fierce commitment to having a good time.

“I really love the songs that we’ve written over the last year. I feel like the songs have gotten much more complex, musically,” says Vic.

“You can really tell the difference between the ones we all wrote together and the older songs,” Cynthia agrees.

The band worked with engineer Meghan Rose, herself a musician,

They describe their sound as being like the soundtrack to a B-horror movie beach party with feminist zombies, and it’s an aesthetic that has won the group a solid fan base.

at Clutch Sound (in the former Smart Studios) to record the album in a professional setting. For Marlo, it was the first opportunity she’d had to experience that kind of set up, and she says it paid off. Marlo also provides vocals on a track for the first time, on the sly ode called “Rodeo.”

As for their hopes for the new record, Nat says, “Well, Marlo is about to have a baby, so we’re going to give her space for that. But we’re definitely going to shop it around town, play some shows when we can.” They hope to go back out on tour as soon as they’re able, too.

Venus in Furs have hit the road before. An east coast tour after Cynthia joined the band brought them to a much wider and more diverse audience. For instance, Screamin’ Cyn Cyn front man and queer raconteur Shane O’Neill (aka Shane Shane) set them up at a queer showcase in New York City, which resulted in at least one particularly interesting fan interaction.

“I got asked out on a Facebook date because of that show,” Cynthia laughs. Another band on the bill joked that Shane had told them Venus in Furs was “75% lesbian. And they joked that they wanted to know which six hours of the day we all dated men.” Shortly thereafter, a stranger who’d been at the show reached out to Cynthia on the social networking site: “He said he hoped I was the 25% straight part of the band.” Which she is, but she’s also married and has a kid.

“I feel like 90% of my musical career has been based on riding the coattails of queer people,” she quips.

The band likes to note that their songwriting process is very collaborative and egalitarian, explaining with no small amount of Madison-self-awareness that vocal duties are “shared communally via a vocal wheel posted in a prominent place in a shared space.” They rarely argue. No one person is considered the front person.

They describe their sound as being like the soundtrack to a B-horror movie beach party with feminist zombies, and it’s an aesthetic that has

Light It Up



ANDREW LARSON, DJ
SATURNS 8 DJs ENTERTAINMENT CO.

One of the most exciting trends in the world of wedding reception DJing has been venue up-lighting. Lights have become affordable, easy to use, lightweight and glamorous. The lights are wireless, LED and can be controlled remotely by a skilled DJ. What is truly exciting are the colors that are available—a virtual rainbow—and couples are going to find that up-lighting for a reception is going to be as common-place as air conditioning in automobiles!

Girls to the Front



FORWARD THEATER COMPANY
JEN UPHOFF GRAY, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

It has been fascinating to see gender parity in theater becoming a big topic nationally within our industry. Although in the past three years only about a fifth of professionally produced plays were written by women, there is real momentum building to change that ratio. Annie Baker (author of “The Flick,” which won the 2014 Pulitzer Prize), Sarah Ruhl, Liz Flahive, Liz Duffy Adams, Anne Washburn, Lauren Gunderson, Lynn Nottage, Amy Herzog, Lisa Kron—these (and so many others) are writers to pay attention to. This is not so much a trend as an exciting evolution in theater, and we welcome it (and we’re proud that works by most of these women have been—or will be—seen at Forward Theater)!

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TIPS & TRENDS

Neighborhood Murals to Increase



SHARON KILFOY, DIRECTOR
DANE ARTS MURAL ARTS

We now have a county-wide mural program that is part of county government: DAMA (Dane Arts Mural Arts)—a program within Dane Arts. Our mission is to utilize the transformative nature of art, particularly mural making, to create a sense of belonging by beautifying communities and humanizing neighborhoods. We are training local artists to be community artists who will build community and beautify neighborhoods while positively engaging youth. We are developing a trauma-informed curriculum that targets disenfranchised youth who are affected by poverty, racism, LGBTQ discrimination and the opportunity gap.

Wisconsin Book Festival is Expanding



CONOR MORAN, DIRECTOR
WISCONSIN BOOK FESTIVAL

Over the past three years, the Wisconsin Book Festival has found its home at Madison Public Library. In that same time, many touring authors have found new outlets for their work here in Madison. By expanding the Festival to include year-round events, we are able to present work as it's being published. In the past year alone, almost 30,000 people had attended Book Festival events, not to mention all of the author events at local bookstores and on campus. Publishers are taking notice and making Madison a stop on many more tours.

won the group a solid fan base in the city and beyond.

People seem to especially appreciate that commitment to silly good fun mixed with the occasional serious subject. Their songs address issues that impact their lives, from the current state of affairs in Wisconsin and government influence (on songs like “Left Mitten” and “Fan Death”), women’s rights (“70 Cents,” “Future”), and gay rights (“Disco,” “Crimson”).

“There is so much going on in our world right now,” explains Vic. “There’s no way we could sing soft and sweetly about things. We have to scream.” ■ —Emily Mills



Queering the Scene

We profile a handful of the queer-identified musicians, DJs and bands that make the Madison music scene all the more colorful.

SHE SHE SHESHE is a Madison-based trio that plays eclectic alternative rock. The band released their debut album in December of 2014 and have been nominated for six Madison Area Music Association awards. They are Julia McConahay on violin, Dana Perry on guitar and lead vocals, and Shannon Callaway on drums. [facebook.com/shesheuniverse](https://www.facebook.com/shesheuniverse).

ONE NOTE AND THE RHINO One Note and the Rhino have played in several different configurations but the main members are Sandy Eichel and Hillary Barnes. Other members have included Anna Wicks, Nicky Sund and Barbara Chusid.

JOEY BROYLES Joey Broyles writes and performs original pop music with intelligent and provocative lyrics. At July’s Madison Area Music Awards, Broyles took home several coveted awards including Best Electronic Performer, Best Electronic Album (*Future Pop Revolution*), and Music Video of the Year (“Burn the Money”). [facebook.com/JoeyBroylesOfficial](https://www.facebook.com/JoeyBroylesOfficial)

DAMSEL TRASH Damsel Trash is the hard rocking, filthy, fun, unapologetically feminist trash punk duo of Meghan Rose and Emily Mills. Their debut album, *Soup for Sluts*, won the Madison Area Music Association’s award for Hard Rock/Punk Album of the year (2015), and the hit single from that record, “More Drunk, Less Pregnant,” took home the MAMA for Hard/Rock Punk Song of the Year. [damseltrash.com](https://www.damseltrash.com)

ANNABEL LEE Annabel Lee is: Annabel Lee on lyrics and vocals, Dylan Randolph (Seattle) produces the beats, and Gregory Stanton (Guess Prefontaine) is featured in live shows as back up vocals and as a rapper. [iheartannabel.com](https://www.iheartannabel.com)

LADYSCISSORS Ladyscissors is a Madison-based rock band fronted by three female vocalists/musicians. The sound blends oldies doo-wop with a healthy dose of punk raunchiness. Their debut CD, *Glitterbox* is a good representation of their always fun live show. [ladyscissors.com](https://www.ladyscissors.com)

ARTHUR DURKEE Arthur is a solo artist whose main performance instrument is the Chapman Stick Touchboard. He also sings and occasionally writes for Perfect Harmony Men’s Chorus. He’s a member of the Madison Music Collective, as well. [arthurdurkeemusic.com](https://www.arthurdurkeemusic.com)

WE ARE THE WILD THINGS We Are the Wild Things is a rock quartet that strives for harmonies and rhythmic drive. They are Ginny Kincaid, Beau Osland, Adam Steinquist and Gerard Smith. [facebook.com/WeAreTheWildThings](https://www.facebook.com/WeAreTheWildThings)

TINY DINOSAUR Tiny Dinosaur’s special blend of fuzzy-dino-folk-rock is cooked fresh daily and served with a side of whimsy. Tiny Dinosaur’s lyrical viola solos and sugar-sweet vocals will keep audiences roaring for more. [facebook.com/tinyDINOSAURmusic](https://www.facebook.com/tinyDINOSAURmusic)

SKIZZWHORES Skizzwhores is a Madison-based three-piece punk band featuring Q on guitar/vocals, Dave on drums, and Evan on bass. Skizzwhores are proud to announce Grrrls Kick Ass Fest III at the High Noon Saloon on September 4, also featuring Tigernite, Sexy Ester, Ultrahazard, and Meghan Rose. [facebook.com/getskizzd](https://www.facebook.com/getskizzd)

COLOR ME ONCE Color Me Once features the soulful voice of Johnice Miller and the intricate and melodic accompaniment of Kaleb Nelson on guitar. [facebook.com/ColorMeOnceBand](https://www.facebook.com/ColorMeOnceBand)

THE SIGOURNEY WEAVERS The Sigourney Weavers are a versatile group formed to play a fundraiser show for Madison’s Girls Rock Camp. Pam Barrett (guitar) and Sandy Kowal (drums) trade duties as lead vocalists, Julie Kiland on bass, and Ellie Erickson on lead guitar. They are the perfect combination of rage and love. [sigourneyweavers.com](https://www.sigourneyweavers.com)

DJ BOYFRRIEND Joey Bee, aka DJ Boyfrriend, is a queer, feminist DJ—one of the organizers of the Loose Cannon queer dance parties—and part of the recently ended She Said parties at Plan B. [facebook.com/DJBoyfrriend](https://www.facebook.com/DJBoyfrriend)

FERN MAYO A band of “failed bounce musicians,” Fern Mayo is a Madison-based duo and just released a split with ZE called “We Are All Animals.” [fernmayo.bandcamp.com](https://www.fernmayo.bandcamp.com)

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Queer Little Theater

Encore Studio for the Performing Arts Executive Director **KelsyAnne Schoenhaar** talks about her own journey of unexpected discovery at the crossroads of theater, disability, queer identity, and a million other things that make people who they are.



Let the beauty of what you love be what you do.

—Rumi

SOMETIMES I FEEL as if embody the definition of queer. I'm talkin' multiple definitions of that wild and wonderful word:

queer IPA[kwir]
adjective

1. *strange; odd* "She had a queer feeling that they were being watched." *Synonym: odd, strange, unusual, funny, peculiar, curious, bizarre, weird, uncanny, freakish, eerie, unnatural, unconventional, unorthodox, unexpected, unfamiliar, abnormal, anomalous, atypical, untypical, out of the ordinary, incongruous, irregular, puzzling, perplexing, baffling, unaccountable, fishy, spooky, bizarre, freaky*

2. *slightly ill*

3. *homosexual*

I can't begin to summarize all the times I have been judged within the context of the above definitions, but I can say it's been on more than one or two occasions. It just seems, in my life, I've run the gamut. And, for the most part, I'm proud of it.

I've spent my career working with people with disabilities and in the arts. I began my career as a musician at age 12 and played with "working bands" (playing in clubs and bars and for weddings) until I began college. I had several scholarships, and they often obligated me to play for theater performances. I got hooked on theater and ended up working with several professional summer stock companies in the Chicago area. Within a few years, I wrote, directed and produced (on a very small scale) theater for children. I am still using those techniques today—that is, I write to the highest level of talent and to the personalities of any actor I work with. The results have been very honest and compelling performances.

While I was working on my degree in music, I began working with people with disabilities to make ends meet. It quickly became something much more than a part-time job. In the first 12 years working with people with disabilities, I stumbled upon some important perceptions. I discovered that the collective voice of people with disabilities was muted at best and stifled at worst. Since most of the other people I knew communicated their thoughts, wishes and desires freely, this seemed criminal. There was simply little opportunity for people with disabilities to be themselves and be represented as they are. Not as children. Not as caricatures. People. (It seems so obvious.)

ROAD TO DISCOVERY

Insight in life seems to come at different times and for different reasons. It came to me as I was fleeing death threats from the conservative town my family and I were living in at the time. It was a no-brainer. We pulled up roots and moved to Madison. Shortly after we arrived, I took a position in lower-middle management working with people with disabilities. Perhaps it wasn't the best of gigs based on my experience and education, but it was a foot in the door. It was also my first public job as Kelsy.

Within weeks of starting that position, I heard a murmur of some seed money and a pet project of my supervisor's boss. She was motivated to find someone to start a theater company for people with disabilities. I jumped at the opportunity. Yes, I was socially awkward, but in completing my graduate work (an MBA), I discovered I was a pretty fair writer and a good administrator. But the much larger factor,

Diversity on Stage



TIM SAUERS, VICE PRESIDENT OF PROGRAMMING
OVERTURE CENTER FOR THE ARTS

You're going to see diversity. The most notable is "Hamilton," a hip-hop staging about the life of Alexander Hamilton featuring an African-American and Latino cast. The life of Cuban-born, pop icon Gloria Estefan and her husband takes the stage with "On Your Feet." Big stars come to "The Color Purple" starring Jennifer Hudson, and a backstage look at the first Broadway musical to feature an all-black cast: Eubie Blake's groundbreaking 1921 "Shuffle Along," starring Audra McDonald. Another fascinating project is "Allegiance," a story set during the Japanese American internment of World War II inspired by the experiences of George Takei, who stars.

Balancing Daring with Safe



STEVE NOLL, PRESIDENT
BARTELL THEATER

Does anybody want challenging art anymore? It seems like the biggest financial successes are tried-and-true shows. Several companies over the last few years have produced daring, provocative and well-reviewed shows only to perform them to nearly empty houses—and not-for-profit arts companies can't survive that way. So many have turned to well-known (and safe) productions in order to make the money to keep doing lesser-known and more satisfying work. Is that what audiences continue to want? Myself, I'm doing two known shows ("The Boys in the Band" and "Rocky Horror") as my way to help two theatre companies try to balance their seasons.

NATASHA NICHOLSON THE ARTIST IN HER MUSEUM

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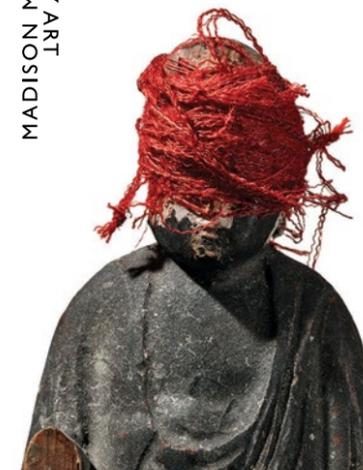
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Silent Buddha (detail), 2014.
Wood, fiber.
Photography © Mike Rebholz.



TIPS & TRENDS

DIY Production Works



DONNA PECKETT & DANIELLE DRESDEN, ARTISTIC DIRECTORS
TAPIT/NEW WORKS ENSEMBLE THEATER

Playwrights are taking matters into their own hands and producing their own plays. That might not sound like news in Madison, but it's not the case everywhere. At TAPIT/new works, it's a shift we applaud. We've also noted the increasing popularity of techniques, such as site-specific work and audience-driven narratives, which bring home the point that every live performance is an event unlike any other. We went the site-specific route ourselves with "Convenience," our 2014 co-production with Fresco Opera.

The Local Touch



AARON ROGERS, ON-AIR PERSONALITY
IHEARTMEDIA (FORMERLY CLEAR CHANNEL)

Although we live in an era of "instant gratification," within the past year or so I've been subtly reminded of how important it is to establish a local connection with our audiences. What separates local radio personalities (from essentially what I would say are jukeboxes) is the constant and eminent effect we have on our peers at a day-to-day level. Living, experiencing, enjoying the same ups and downs in life that you do. Whether you are right here in Madison or around the country, it's what makes you and me unique and unites each other as companions on a local level. We all have numerous amounts of stories to tell.

the factor that changed everything, was that I was finally able to be myself. I had a voice. And that was absolutely freeing. I had a lot to say, and now I wasn't afraid of saying it—and I wanted that for others, too.

As an avid theater buff, composer and aspiring playwright, the gaping hole in theatrical repertoire was obvious. There were very few plays about people with disabilities, and of the ones that did exist, people without disabilities performed 98.9 percent of them. No one was holding up a mirror to this significant part of our society. Sure, there have been some historic representations. There have been "special" stories. The heroic. The saccharine. The pitiful. But those weren't the people I knew. First of all, the people I knew weren't any more or less special than I or anyone else was. Sex. Drugs. Happiness. Depression. Abuse. Kindness. All of it! The good, the bad and the ugly—and no one was telling their stories. No one was holding a mirror up to nearly 20 percent of our society. Talk about underrepresented!

FINDING CONNECTION

I was lucky enough to be able to combine my careers about 15 years ago when I became the founding Artistic Director for Encore Studio for the Performing Arts. Encore is a unique organization that supports and fosters the talents of actors with varying disabilities, including physical disabilities, cognitive disabilities, and people dealing with mental health issues. We also support many people within the spectrum of Autism. This is an area in which I have a very strong connection.

Finding connections in this world is often difficult. As a transgender lesbian living at the edge of the autistic spectrum, I have a keen understanding of the complexities and complications this can manifest.

Finding connections in this world is often difficult. As a transgender lesbian living at the edge of the autistic spectrum, I have a keen understanding of the complexities and complications this can manifest. Before I was out as queer, I was aware of being on the spectrum (although I didn't call it Autism at the time). Me, my parents, my siblings and my children—the genetics are strong. This connection not only helps me to relate to the people I support, but I think it helps the people I support relate to me. We've found our natural habitat—or perhaps created it.

Encore is a repertory company that sees the world through a different set of lenses. It's my home and where I feel comfortable. Supporting the talents of the people I work with—which include the Encore Studio repertory company, the Encore staff, and the other community actors we have the fortune to work with—is a joy. This is not to say it's easy. It's been said that nothing good comes easy, and I would say, in many cases, this is true. We work very hard, all of us: the directors, the coaches and the actors. And the work we do is important for even the most liberal Madisonian to the most conservative Wisconsinite (both often present at our performances).

Queer and theater go together like Batman and Robin—um, Ernie and Bert... Ellen and Portia? You know what I mean. My point is that this is no different when the repertory company is comprised of people with disabilities. Because we write to our actors' talents and experiences, we have covered many issues that relate to the LBGTQ community.

In one of our earliest performances, one of our actors came out. He was in his late forties, and it was his first time saying it. It was very public. It was controversial. It was wonderful! There was joy in his voice. There was absolute pride. Cathartic moments often happen for actors, and that expression is what changes perspectives in this world—such as

seeing people with disabilities as having sex lives or being queer.

Encore is one-of-a-kind, and its soul comes from the actors, directors and playwrights (and what a soul it is). That said, we need even more people involved. There are so many people with so much to say. I have consulted and written for other organizations and have been amazed by the community support they have received. I think some attend out of pity, or in hopes they will see something "special." But "special" is not what I get when I interview these amazing groups of people, and it's not what I write. This surprises people. If we're lucky, they leave saying the most commonly exclaimed phrase I've heard since I began in this field: "It isn't what I expected."

THE STORIES ARE THE PEOPLE

Pam (not her real name) is a person with autism and several mental health issues. She was well known in the world she lived in. You could say she was notorious. She said what she thought whenever she thought it. It was sad that many people would tend to avoid her if they could. She was one of Encore's first actors and hers was the first story we told. We spent a lot of time one-on-one as I interviewed her and she told me incredible stories. Not sweet, not heroic, but compelling and real. And no one in the world could tell them like she did. It was the beginning of something big. Since then, Encore has produced over 50 original pieces—many full-length.

I've now been working 36 years in the arts and nearly 28 years with people with disabilities—15 of which have been at Encore. In that time, I've learned more from the people I support than I have from any professor, any elaborate training or any supervisor. I learned that people are people. I learned there is little understanding of the lives of people with disabilities. I learned there is little repertoire for actors with disabilities. It wasn't what I expected, either. ■

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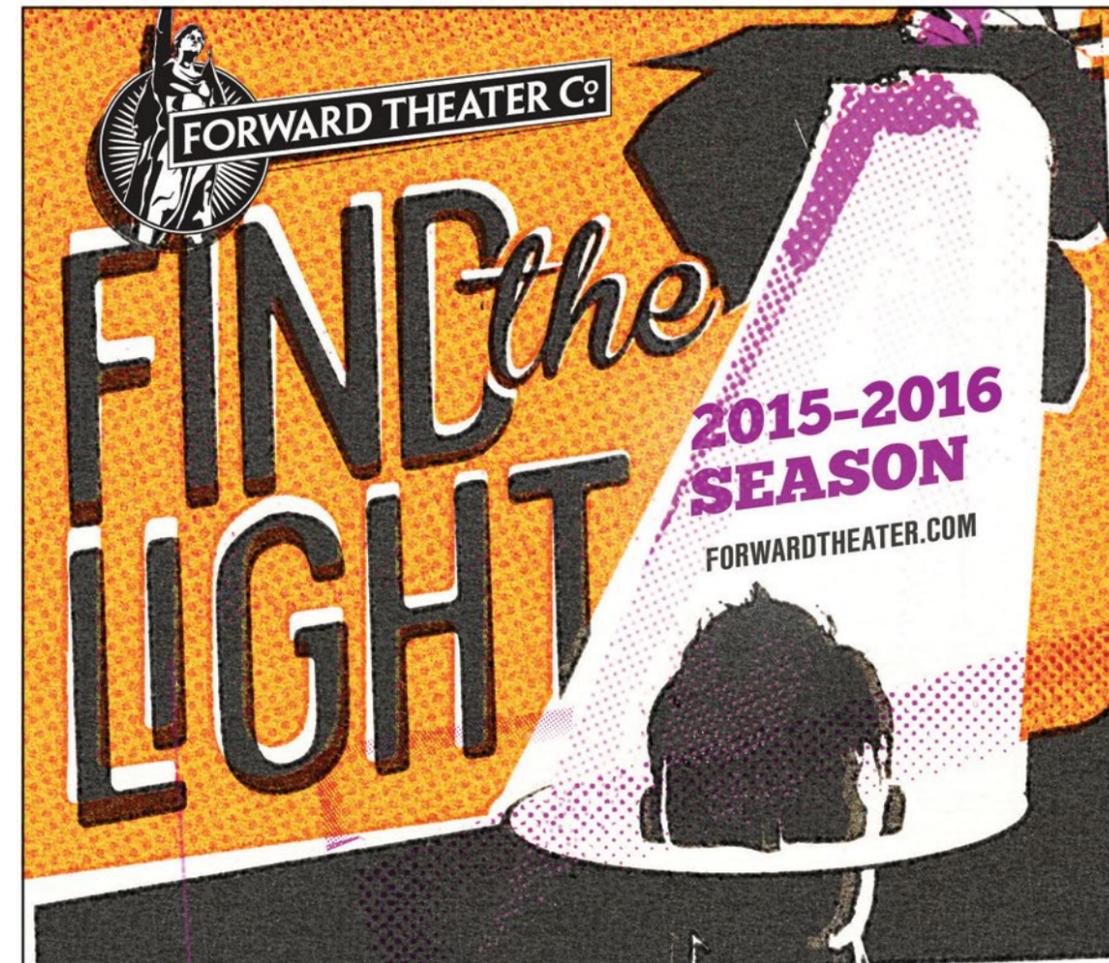
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The Jazz Man

Music has always been a major part of UW Director of Jazz Studies **Johannes Wallmann's** life, and he is determined to see wider LGBT representation within his genre.

I'M A JAZZ PIANIST AND COMPOSER, and a jazz studies professor at UW-Madison. You may have heard or seen my bands at local clubs, on the radio, at Jazz at Five or at the Isthmus Jazz Festival. Or maybe you recognize my husband Keith and me as one of the plaintiff couples from the ACLU's lawsuit that brought marriage equality to Wisconsin (we were honored to play a very small part in that suit when a few couples were added to the original plaintiffs as part of a legal strategy that sought to turn an expected legal win into the most comprehensive ruling possible). Today, there are still very few openly gay musicians in jazz, but I hope that my story helps

more young musicians believe that they can be themselves and have a place in the music that they love.

I was 13 years old when I heard jazz for the first time. I still remember the day like it was yesterday. I must have heard some jazz on the radio before then, but this time, the music struck me like a thunderbolt and change my life.

I had been playing classical piano for seven years and classical guitar for a year or two, and my mom had even enrolled me in an early-childhood music program when I was very young, so I've played music for longer than I can remember. I liked playing classical piano, but I didn't love it. Practicing in particular seemed like a necessary evil to get to the fun part of playing, but wasn't really enjoyable in its own right. When I was growing up in Germany, my mom and dad loved classical music and often listened to classical music radio and to their own record collection. My friends and I mostly listened to whatever was popular on the radio in the '80s: A-Ha, Erasure, Pet Shop Boys—a lot of British pop, with a smattering of American R&B and Rock 'n Roll. Later, my parents divorced and I gained a third parent when my mom married my Canadian stepfather. We moved to Vancouver Island, where I discovered Def Leppard, AC/DC, and Guns 'N Roses.

JAZZ AWAKENING

I was waiting for a guitar lesson at the local college's community music lesson program while two very mature-seeming college boys were hanging out, playing music for each other on a boom box (this was the '80s, after all). But the music they were playing sounded unfamiliar and unlike anything I heard: complex, urbane, with a groove much deeper than any of the music I knew, and a seemingly endless supply of cool. After a few minutes of eavesdropping, I got up the nerve to ask the college students what they were listening to.

"Man...that's Miles Davis."

Even though other musical genres have long been safe havens for LGBT musicians, jazz, for reasons not clear to me, has often not been a welcoming environment for LGBT players.

I didn't know what to say, but listening to Miles's music on the students' boom box I knew right there and then that this music would become the focus of my life. That week I got my mom to drive me to the record store and in the jazz section I found a large selection of Miles's albums. This new world of jazz was a large one, and without anyone to guide me, I picked two albums with striking covers, the 1958 classic *Milestones* and Miles's current release *Tutu*.

Within days, I was back at the record store for more, and I soon discovered Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Chick Corea, Oscar Peterson (the Montreal-born pianist was a national icon in Canada), Charlie Parker, Dexter Gordon, McCoy Tyner, and many other artists who came to profoundly influence my life through their recordings.

My high school had a very good jazz program and soon there was an opening on piano. I didn't really know how to play jazz yet, but my classical background allowed me to easily read the written parts. The more experienced players helped me out, and anything that required improvisation (which in jazz, is almost everything) I figured out through trial and error. It wasn't until much later that I realized that the countless hours I spent at the piano in those years improvising and "figuring stuff out" were also called "practicing." Good thing I didn't know, or I might have not wanted to do it.

Interactive art and artists



ERIKA MONROE-KANE, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
MADISON MUSEUM OF CONTEMPORARY ART

An exciting development is the direct interaction taking place between museum visitors and the living, working artists with exhibitions on view. At MMoCA several recent exhibitions invited visitors to engage with the artists while they work in a studio inside the gallery. In some cases, individuals have actually contributed to the creation of an artwork. Our upcoming exhibition, "Natasha Nicholson: The Artist in Her Museum," will provide several opportunities to talk with the artist. This exhibition is a rare look into not just the work of an extraordinary artist, but also into her world through the recreation and installation of her personal spaces.

The (local) artist experience



MICHAEL VELLIQUETTE, INDEPENDENT ARTIST

Madison museums often import their exhibitions from outside the region. While these shows keep a vital dialogue open between us and the larger art world, it often feels like the work being made here gets overlooked. That's why it is such a breath of fresh air to see that several exhibitions this fall highlight artists who also live and work in Madison—"Natasha Nicholson: The Artist in Her Museum" at MMoCA (see above); "Squad: The Calling of the Common Hero, Photography by Faisal Abdu'Allah" at the Chazen Museum of Art; and "Harmonious Spaces: Wei Dong and Feng Shui Culture" at the Ruth Davis Design Gallery.



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This was music I loved, and it became the focus of my life. I loved playing in my high school's big band, and I formed a quartet that won some awards. Performing was fun, and even rehearsing and practicing was a blast! All that "work" got me a scholarship to go to music school in Boston, and that's where I really doubled down and started thinking about wanting to have a career in jazz.

LOOKING FOR AUTHENTICITY

During high school and most of college, it never bothered me that there seemed to be no gay jazz musicians. I hadn't figured out yet that I was gay, so I just didn't give it much thought. In hindsight this seems absurd to me, but the couple of moderately successful relationships I had with girls allowed me to ignore the crushes I had on guys—as far as I or anyone else knew, I was straight.

The great jazz composer Duke Ellington titled his autobiography *Music Is My Mistress*, reflecting both his deep love for music, but also the enormous personal sacrifices of a life lived on the road and the challenges of maintaining a family. I haven't spent much of my life on the road—most jazz tours these days last a few days to a few weeks—but any serious aspirant pursuing a career in music spends many hours in the deeply solitary act of practicing their instrument. Add to that the days in college classes, afternoon rehearsals, evenings on the bandstand, nights in recording studios, and "the hang" with fellow musicians (important for building professional connections), and before I knew



In the U.S. immigration law is federal jurisdiction, and DOMA meant that Keith would be barred from sponsoring me for a green card, even if we were to get married.

it, putting romantic relationships on the backburner seemed like a rational and even virtuous decision. Especially when I had feelings I'd rather ignore.

After college, in 1995 I moved to New York City, ostensibly for the graduate school that also provided the student visa that kept me legally in the U.S., but really with the intent to become a professional jazz musician in the city known as the "Jazz Capital of the World." It worked out as I had hoped: within a few months I was regularly performing in third- and second-tier venues (later getting some higher-profile engagements), and by keeping my expenses low during a time when the outer edges of New York were still hospitable to a musician's budget, I was able to pay my bills just by playing jazz. I had become a professional jazz musician!

Life in a new city also gave me the freedom to define myself anew, make new friendships and seek out new experiences. I acknowledged to myself that my crushes on guys weren't going to go away, and I started trying to make gay friends, for companionship and possibly romance.

I also started coming out to some of my musician friends, who were surprised but—to my great relief—supportive. I told my family, and they were wonderful. Pretty soon, I had a difficult time keeping track of who among my friends knew and who didn't know. I didn't like asking my friends to keep secrets on my behalf, and while I didn't have a boyfriend yet, I also didn't want the future Mr. Right to have to deal

PHOTO BY MICHAEL R. ANDERSON

with my lingering coming-out drama.

So on my 22nd birthday I made the years-in-the-making snap decision to just tell everyone. Most of my friends and musical acquaintances were accepting and supportive. I hadn't been sure what to expect: on the one hand, we were all young artists in New York who generally shared progressive beliefs. On the other hand, in the mid-1990s, young men still worried that having gay friends would make people suspect that they were also gay. Ellen hadn't fully come out yet, public LGBT role models were almost non-existent, and anti-gay politicians were using the devastation of the AIDS epidemic to attack gay men as over-sexualized threats to public health.

I started to notice that the jazz world had few role models for a young gay musician like me (any of my female colleagues should greet this with a big yawn, as women continue to be woefully underrepresented in jazz bands from high school up to the pros). Among the hundreds of jazz musicians I knew of, only two were openly gay (since then, the list has grown a bit, but not by a lot). There were some others who were rumored to be out to their musician friends, but since I wasn't in their circle, I could only consider these to be unsubstantiated rumors.

I also heard stories about older, established musicians who were openly anti-gay. Jazz is a gigging economy where every musician is a freelancer who depends on one or often many bandleaders to hire them. I knew that some musicians not wanting to work with a gay pianist could still be okay for me, as long as there were enough other bandleaders for whom it wouldn't be an issue. But rehearsal hall and post-gig banter wasn't all that encouraging as offensive jokes about gays were common. Those jokes stopped around me when I came out, but to what degree they continued behind my back and maybe about me, I don't want to know. Even though other musical genres have long been safe havens for LGBT musicians, jazz, for reasons not clear to me, has often not been a welcoming environment for LGBT players.

I didn't know where to find gay mentors to help me navigate this new challenge. However, I discovered that as a bandleader, a role I had always enjoyed, I had more control over my destiny, so I kept booking gigs for my own group, which consisted of a rotating group of musicians I liked to work with and whom—presumably—also liked working with me. The gigs kept coming, and as I formed close musical relationships with some great New York players through my own gigs, I also became more confident in my ability to find a place in this music.

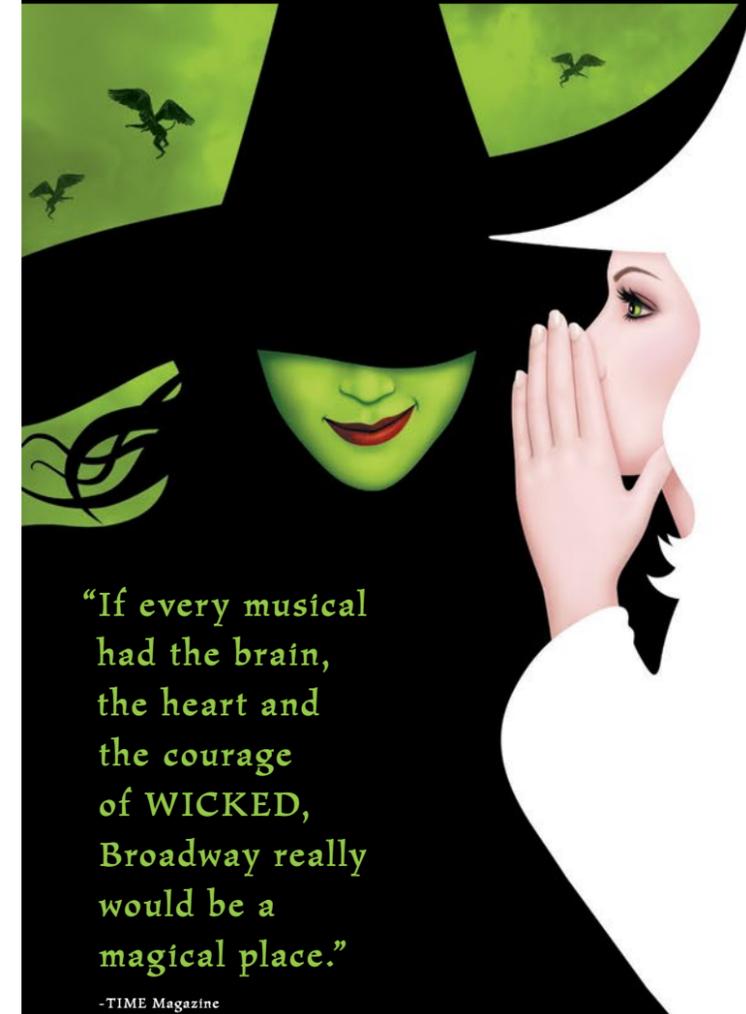
Even though it created some obstacles in the career I had worked so hard for, I never regretted coming out when I did. I opened myself to the possibility of finding love, and a couple of years after I came out, I met my husband Keith, a classically trained singer who has since become a yoga instructor who now travels the world to train other yoga teachers. We have been together for almost 17 years now, and are celebrating our 8th wedding anniversary this month.

A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Over time, my career has shifted from mostly performance-based to primarily academic. That first experience with graduate school led to an adjunct position teaching jazz piano at NYU. I discovered that I really enjoyed teaching students to play the music that I loved, and that I seemed to be good at it, too! After a few years of freelancing in New York, I went back to graduate school to earn a PhD in Jazz Studies.

It wasn't only my love of teaching that led me back to grad school. I had lived my entire adult life in the U.S., but as a Canadian citizen on a continual but ultimately unreliable series of student visas and work permits, there was no "path to citizenship" available to me. Freelance work and even part-time teaching at my university wasn't going to qualify me for a green card. Jazz, which originated in the Af-

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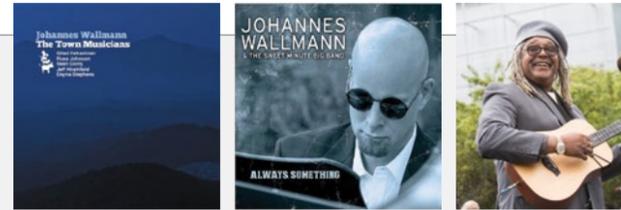
rican-American community, has spread around the world and become a global music, so many of my friends and colleagues were immigrants in similar situations. But they knew that if they were lucky enough to meet their future spouse, they would be eligible for a marriage-based green card. For Keith and me, the so-called Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) made that an impossibility. My home country, Canada, began legalizing same-sex marriage in 2003, and a few U.S. states started following suit soon after, but in the U.S., immigration law is federal jurisdiction, and DOMA meant that Keith would be barred from sponsoring me for a green card, even if we were to get married.

But my doctorate did open up all kinds of new teaching opportunities for me that eventually led to my first full-time, tenure-track position at Cal State East Bay, a university near San Francisco. I got the opportunity to build a new degree program in jazz studies. I also finally had the job that would sponsor me for a green card, so Keith and I no longer had to worry about immigration-status uncertainty. We got married in my hometown on Vancouver Island just before we moved to California, and within a few months of our move, California began recognizing marriage equality. There were some Proposition 8-related legal hiccups, but for most of those years, we were recognized as a married couple not only by our friends and families, but also by the State of California.

Three years ago, Keith and I made another big move, when I joined the faculty of UW-Madison's School of Music as Director of Jazz Studies. We did a lot of research on Madison and thought that the city would be a good home for us. On campus and in music, yoga (Keith's work), and ice hockey (my passion away from music), we have been welcomed with open arms, and we have made many good friends.

Incidentally, I later learned that Cecil Taylor, a musical giant and an iconoclastic innovator of the free jazz movement, taught one of the first jazz courses at UW-Madison as a visiting lecturer in the late '60s. In the '80s, Taylor was the only openly gay jazz musician of any stature, before a small number of others joined the gay jazz ranks in the mid-'90s.

As a teacher/academic, I continue to perform, compose and record. I recently released two new recordings I'm very proud of: a small group album with some of my New York friends (who are among the very best jazz players in the world now), and a big band album featuring many of the top jazz musicians in this region (we really do have some great players here!). As a teacher, I'm constantly looking to learn more about jazz and to improve my musical practice—exactly what I would be doing as a performer anyway—and to share those discoveries with my students. I know how lucky I am to be playing music with great colleagues, composing, and teaching passionate students in a welcoming community, and I can't imagine anything I'd rather be doing. ■



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Always Something (2015) showcases Wallmann's newest ensemble, the Sweet Minute Big Band, with a contemporary, innovative take on jazz's big band tradition. The hard-grooving, 16-piece band consists of top improvisers from the Madison and Milwaukee scenes.

ARTIST IN RESIDENCE Each year, the UW-Madison Arts Institute brings major artists from around the world to Madison for its Interdisciplinary Arts Residency program. This fall, UW School of Music Professor Johannes Wallmann, together with the First Wave program, host Afro-Cuban musician **Juan de Marcos González**, the acclaimed musical director and producer of the Afro-Cuban All Stars, Buena Vista Social Club, Ruben Gonzalez, Ibrahim Ferrer, Sierra Maestra and many others. For a full schedule of public lectures and concerts during the Cuban music star's first residency at a U.S. university, visit artsinstitute.wisc.edu/iarp-upcoming-fall.htm.

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FEATURE → OUR HISTORY

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Don't Cast That Stone

In light of the recent marriage equality ruling and its blowback, **Dick Wagner** runs down the history of religious organizations and individuals that have worked for LGBT rights in Wisconsin.

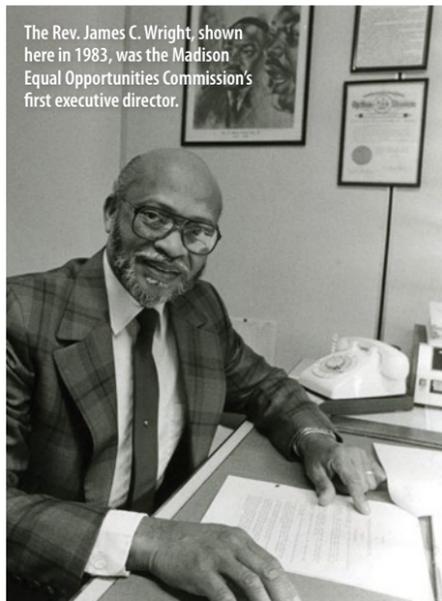
FOLLOWING THE SUPREME COURT ruling for marriage equality there has been an attempt by some to find relief from its effects by claiming some vague refuge in the concept of religious liberty to practice discrimination. But I would like to take my gentle readers back to a time when many religious leaders were forthright in their opposition to discrimination against lesbians and gay men in Wisconsin.

The strategy of engaging religious voices in the fight for gay rights has deep roots in the state. The Rev. James Wright, Director of the Madison Equal Opportunities Commission (and a pastor at Mt. Zion Baptist Church), was a leading force during the mid-1970s in enacting Madison's ordinance banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. He worked closely with Mayor Paul Soglin to achieve this victory in 1975.

When the City of Milwaukee in 1980 was considering its ordinance banning discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation, a powerful statement was issued by the Greater Milwaukee Conference on Religion & Urban Affairs: "We support equal protection of the law for all people, including full civil rights for persons of homosexual orientation." Signatories included Rabbi Barry Silberg of

The General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in 1978 adopted a resolution stating, "The Christian Community can neither condone nor participate in the widespread contempt for homosexual persons that prevails in our general culture."

Congregation Emmanu-el B'ne Jeshurun; Dr. A. C. Schumacher, President of the Southern District of the American Lutheran Church; the Rt. Rev. Charles Gaskill, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Milwaukee; the Rev. Carl Simon, Executive Presbyter, The Presbytery of Milwaukee of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA; the Most Rev. Rembert Weakland, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Milwaukee; and other religious leaders. The leaders pledged themselves, "As pastoral



leaders in the community we ask for our constituencies to join us in this support."

To help explain the correctness of support for non-discrimination, Weakland wrote a column in July 1980 for *The Milwaukee Catholic Herald Citizen*, titled, "Who is our neighbor?" Weakland drew on the 1976 pastoral letter of the American Catholic Bishops called, "To Live in Christ Jesus." The bishops wrote, "Homosexuals, like everyone else, should not suffer from prejudice against their basic human rights. They have a right to respect, friendship, and justice." Weakland's own statement was, "We have to see Gay people not as an enemy to be battered down but as persons worthy of respect and friendship." When Dane County was considering its non-discrimination ordinance in 1980, I placed copies of Weakland's column on all the supervisors' desks. The ordinance passed.

Since I was born in Good Samaritan Hospital back in Dayton, Ohio, the parable of the one who fulfills biblical law to love one's neighbor by caring for the outcast has always had a strong appeal for me. In the archbishop's writing, gay persons could know, "deep down there is nothing to separate him or her from God's love or care."

To generate ongoing statewide support for gay rights within the religious community,

in the early '80s Leon Rouse of Milwaukee organized the Committee for Fundamental Judeo-Christian Human Rights. Rouse's action plans included finding ministers in various legislative districts to persuade swing votes.

Nevertheless, Weakland and other religious leaders saw a statewide sexual orientation non-discrimination bill as a delicate issue. He and many of those willing to support non-discrimination legislation still maintained and publicly stated that homosexual activity was wrong. Bishop Marjorie Matthews of the Wisconsin Conference of the United Methodist Church in her statement noted their teachings "do not condone the practice of homosexuality," but she also wrote, "Homosexual persons no less than heterosexual persons are individuals of sacred worth...."

The context on how to view homosexual persons was undergoing a sea change among many in the religious community. In '76 the Episcopal Church had adopted a statement that "homosexual persons are children of God who have a full and equal claim with all other persons upon the love, acceptance, and pastoral concern and care of the Church."

The General Assembly of the United Presbyterian Church in 1978 adopted a resolution stating, "The Christian Community can neither condone nor participate in the widespread contempt for homosexual persons that prevails in our general culture. Indeed, beyond this, it must do everything in its power to prevent society from continuing to hate, harass, and oppress them."

The Executive Minister of the Wisconsin Convention of American Baptist Church, (sometimes erroneously called the northern Baptists) cited their doctrine that "God loves every person" to lend his personal support.

Lutheran Bishop Robert Wilch cited his denomination's 1970 statement, "Persons who engage in homosexual behavior are sinners only as are all other persons—alienated from God and neighbor. However, they are often the special and undeserving victims of prejudice and discrimination...."

Further letters of support came from the United Church of Christ (Congregationalists) and a trio of Unitarian ministers including several from the suburban Milwaukee area. Sister Naomi Schoen, S.S.S.F. wrote



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

THE CAPITAL TIMES ARCHIVES

on behalf of the Milwaukee Archdiocesan Sisters Council.

So why could these religious leaders in the 1980s feel comfortable supporting Wisconsin's first-in-the-nation non-discrimination bill without resorting to claims of religious liberty? The draft bill had a special section to make clear state law could not supersede federal law regarding the National Guard. However, there was no provision in the draft for religious institutions. That was because none was needed. Existing statutory law in Wisconsin had an employment exemption in discrimination law for creed by religious organizations. The provision had and has worked for many decades.

Archbishop Weakland closed his column urging compassion so "no one is treated as a second-class citizen or as somehow 'contaminated.'" He drew on another familiar biblical parable. The story was the woman caught in adultery who the crowd wished to stone, which was the correct biblical penalty for the case. The teacher challenged them to let the one who was without sin cast the first stone, and then proceeded to write their own failings in the sand. Those today claiming religious liberty should listen to Weakland's closing statement: "Come write in the sand with me. Who is going to throw the first stone?" ■

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NAME(S) Kenzi, TC, Rico, Nubbins, Iddy
OWNER(S) Renee and Shari
HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR PET? We found Rico wandering the streets. Nubbins the kitten was found in Beloit on the street.
AGE 6 and 1
SEX Female
BREED Chihuahua, calico cat
BIRTHPLACE WI
RESIDENCE Laps
OCCUPATION Snuggle provider
FAVORITE TOYS Wubba
FAVORITE LEISURE ACTIVITIES Sleeping, looking after the tortoise
FAVORITE FOODS Apples
PET PEEVES Wubba stealing, tail holding
LEAST FAVORITE PHRASE Who is a good boy?
IF PETS COULD TALK, WHAT WOULD YOURS SAY? "I am Rico Suave."

NAME(S) Claire
OWNER(S) Marcelle Richards
HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR PET? Bull Terrier Club of America breed rescue
AGE 11
SEX Female
BREED English Bull Terrier
BIRTHPLACE The South (She was in a puppy mill in Arkansas.)
RESIDENCE Madison, WI
OCCUPATION Claire's a Marathon Dreamer and Reluctant Celebrity
FAVORITE TOYS Raw bones, bullie sticks. And given the opportunity, any paper, pens, backpack straps, or leather left unattended.
FAVORITE LEISURE ACTIVITIES Sunbathing, car rides, nature walks, neck rubs
FAVORITE FOODS bell peppers, tomatoes, and fried eggs
PET PEEVES Having to get up from a perfectly good nap to go to the bathroom while it is raining or snowing.
LEAST FAVORITE PHRASE "You already had your dinner."
IF PETS COULD TALK, WHAT WOULD YOURS SAY? "Sigh."

NAME(S) Norma
OWNER(S) Sandy Thistle
HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR PET? Found and adopted in January through Petfinder and Shelter From the Storm
AGE 5 1/2
SEX Female
BREED Boxer/Bulldog
BIRTHPLACE Mystery
RESIDENCE House in Madison
OCCUPATION Being a dog.
FAVORITE TOYS Food, running cats, running squirrels, running bunnies
FAVORITE LEISURE ACTIVITIES Reading books and cuddling with my mom
FAVORITE FOODS Raspberries
PET PEEVES Drivers who don't use blinkers
LEAST FAVORITE PHRASE Tweeking
IF PETS COULD TALK, WHAT WOULD YOURS SAY? "I'm in love."

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Intersectional Equality

Organizer **Karma Chavez** explains the importance of recognizing and including multiple identities and realities in the fight for true, comprehensive equality.

EQUALITY MARYLAND ANNOUNCED on June 30 that it was considering cutting significantly or stopping its daily operations. The reason? Despite all the work that the organization says it has accomplished, it reports that “funding from individuals and major donor sources dropped significantly after securing marriage equality,” which Maryland has had since 2012. While this fact may surprise some readers, many queer and trans people of color and poor and disabled queers and allies are anything but shocked.

The gay and lesbian movement’s limiting of “equality” to the issue of marriage (and before that open military service and hate crime protections) has had devastating impacts on many members of the LGBTQ community for a long time. In 2010, journalist Lisa Dettmer talked to several leaders of LGBTQ organizations who served the

When we craft a political agenda based only on one form of oppression (sexual orientation) while minimizing other forms of oppression and privilege, we bolster our own privilege, and reinforce the structural disadvantage others suffer.

community on issues ranging from health to low-income housing for people with AIDS to youth homelessness. They all reported difficulty securing funding from foundations and individuals who only wanted to support the issue of gay marriage, at the same time that states were cutting their funding. Many closed their doors. The lesson? Single-issue politics informed by the agendas and needs of the most privileged are not just narrow; they actually have negative material consequences for the most oppressed among us.

Many radical queer activists like the collective Against Equality have tried to draw attention to problems with the mainstream gay and lesbian movement’s definition of equality. That definition centers the experiences and needs of those who suffer oppression primarily based on their sexual orientation, ignores the needs of those marginalized

in multiple ways (race, class, gender identity, ability, education and citizenship status), and sidelines how capitalism oppresses all people regardless of sexual orientation.

In short, the mainstream gay and lesbian rights movement has fed us an anti-intersectional definition of equality. Intersectionality has become a buzzword, but it means more than just saying facets of identity like race, class, gender and sexuality are important. Intersectionality, as introduced by women-of-color feminists in the ‘60s and ‘70s, is the idea that the interlocking nature of oppression (but also privilege) impacts how we view the world and how the world lets us exist. When we craft a political agenda based only on one form of oppression (sexual orientation) while minimizing other forms of oppression and privilege, we bolster our own privilege, and reinforce the structural disadvantage others suffer.

Several statements released by queer and trans people around the country after the Supreme Court decision on marriage made this point. The local groups, Young Gifted and Black and Freedom Inc., issued a statement to clarify their position after supporters of marriage equality attacked some of YGB’s leaders in heated exchanges on social media for refusing to celebrate the decision. YGB’s and FI’s position does not go as far as some others, but they offer insight into what it means to lead an intersectional movement through the lens of queer and trans Black people. One way they offer is to broaden definitions of family.

They write, “Based on our experiences in Black communities we know that grandparents, neighbors, even whole communities are often doing the work of family, including getting food on the table, taking care of elders as they age, caring for ill loved ones, putting kids to bed at night, helping with their homework, and just generally keeping things together. We also know as queer folk



that people in a variety of relationships, whether romantic or not, including those who are single, in polyamorous relationships, in families with nonresidential stepparents, or in families with loved ones who are incarcerated, in communally raised families, in communities of friendship, and those in the foster system, continue to experience discrimination...”

An intersectional approach to equality considers these factors in creating a political agenda, recognizing that state-sanctioned marriage disregards people who exist in alternative families, and may reinforce their marginalization. In fact, already there is talk in Wisconsin about ending domestic partner benefits now that marriage is legal, a move that has happened elsewhere. Ending domestic partnerships could be devastating for disabled people who cannot marry because they

Already there is talk in Wisconsin about ending domestic partner benefits now that marriage is legal, a move that has happened elsewhere. Ending domestic partnerships could be devastating for disabled people who cannot marry because they would lose their government benefits, but who may currently enjoy rights like hospital visitation as registered domestic partners.

would lose their government benefits, but who may currently enjoy rights like hospital visitation as registered domestic partners. Moreover, state and federal governments have often passed policies that punish women of color on welfare and promote heterosexual marriage as an antidote to declining

state support. Strengthening the institution of marriage may further marginalize those also disadvantaged based on gender and sexuality, rendering their families less legitimate and more open to scrutiny.

These are the kinds of insight that taking an intersectional approach to gender and sexual liberation provide. Local groups like YGB, FI, and Alianza Latina are doing it on the ground. One key takeaway is this: We cannot simply reduce struggles to one aspect of identity and imagine that we are in the service of values like justice or equality. ■



KARMA CHAVEZ is a Madison-based writer and activist. She is a member of the radical queer collective Against Equality, an organizer for LGBTQ Books to Prisoners, and a host of the radio program, “A Public Affair” on WORT.




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The Work Ahead

Attorney **Tamara Packard** highlights the legal clean-up process that remains post-marriage equality, and the other important work that remains to be done for wider equality.

YES. YES! Y-e-s. Yes, your marriage to your same-sex spouse must now be recognized by all 50 states, the Federal government, and, yes, everyone else. Yes, if you are not yet married, you can get married to your same-sex partner anywhere in this country (yes, even in Alabama). Yes, that means you and your spouse and the children of your marriage will be afforded all 1,100+ federal law and hundreds of state law rights, responsibilities and protections. Yes, this is final and for real. There is no going back. It will not be taken away.

The United States Supreme Court ruled on June 26, 2015 in the case titled *Obergefell v. Hodges* that the United States Constitution guarantees same-sex couples equal access to civil marriage. I hope you have been celebrating heartily.

Here in Wisconsin, as of the writing of this column, the State is still not issuing birth certificates to the children of married same-sex couples with both spouses listed as the parent—not without an expensive lawsuit, anyway.

What next? Regarding marriage itself, we have some backlash to deal with. There are a handful of local governmental officials in places like Alabama, Kentucky and Tennessee who are refusing to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, or declining to officiate our marriages. Those officials cannot stop us from marrying, but an encounter with one of these folks might cause a slight detour.

Regarding full access to the rights, responsibilities and protections of marriage, we have some clean-up to do, too. For instance, here in Wisconsin, as of the writing of this column, the State is still not issuing birth certificates to the children of married same-sex couples with both spouses listed as the parent—not without an expensive lawsuit, anyway. So now there are several



lawsuits pending in state and federal court aimed at fixing that: both for kids yet to be born, and for kids already born to married same-sex parents, regardless of when the marriage occurred. Birth certificates document a child's legal relationship to his or her parents, and leaving one parent off that document places that child at risk of significant harm. All families are entitled to this important legal protection, and they shouldn't each have to hire a lawyer and sue [Gov. Scott] Walker appointees to get it. Stay tuned, especially for developments in the *Torres v. Rhoades* case pending before Judge Crabb in Federal court in Madison.

Then there are the fights that will be caused by people who object to our marriages and therefore might refuse to honor them. Small businesses that refuse to deliver pizzas to our wedding receptions are not going to be the big problem. Instead, in these days of government delegation of key social support functions to private—especially religious—entities, the real problem will come when a religious charity operating a homeless shelter, soup kitchen or other safety net function refuses to equally serve a family headed by a same-sex married couple. Or when a religious charity paid by the government to provide adoption services refuses to approve a gay married couple for an adoption, simply because they are gay. In many states, it is still perfectly legal to refuse service to people in a restaurant or other business offering goods or services to the general public due to their sexual

orientation. Even in Wisconsin, where this is generally illegal, there are some exemptions for religious organizations. The next big battle surrounding sexual orientation will pit the constitutional rights of LGBT people to equal treatment under the law against a claimed constitutional right to discriminate against us based on religious belief.

We cannot just put our skills and contacts and knowledge on the shelf and ignore our allies. We need to lend our energy in the wider social justice struggles: racial justice, income inequality, access to quality education and an end to human trafficking and abuse wherever it exists.

And of course, while marriage has been, quite literally, the “golden ring” that we have been reaching for in recent years, it is not the be-all, end-all. There is more work to do for the LGBT community: most of Wisconsin still allows employment, housing and public accommodation discrimination against trans* people. Suicide, alcohol and drug abuse, and other harmful behaviors including HIV transmission are alarmingly high among LGBT youth. This must change. Moreover, we fought long and hard for marriage, and many non-LGBT allies supported and helped us. Now that we are more secure in our families and are beginning to feel the effect of full citizenship, we cannot just put our skills and contacts and knowledge on the shelf and ignore our allies. We need to lend our energy in the wider social justice struggles: racial justice, income inequality, access to quality education and an end to human trafficking and abuse wherever it exists.

Finally, marriage equality means the equal right to marry—or not. Marriage is about love and commitment. It is also a complex and wide-ranging set of legal rights and responsibilities. Before saying “I do,” be sure that you and your intended are not only emotionally ready for marriage, but also that you both understand what you are getting into, legally. The major LGBT rights organizations have put together a set of fact sheets to help you: go to marriageequalityfacts.org to read them.

Thank you for your contributions that have brought us to this day! ■



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

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The Case for LGBT Law Practitioners

LGBT people still face unique legal challenges in Wisconsin and elsewhere, causing **Abigail Churchill** to argue for the importance of LGBT-specific attorneys and law firms.

AS WE HEAD into an era where “same-sex marriage” is more appropriately characterized as just “marriage,” there are some lingering questions about whether attorneys should distinguish themselves as practitioners of “LGBT Estate Planning,” “LGBT Family Law,” and any other iteration. As an attorney with a prominent estate planning firm in Madison, I wholeheartedly believe the answer is “yes.”

For anyone who believes LGBT individuals have achieved full equality with this most recent Supreme Court ruling, I challenge you to reconsider. As an author for *The Washington Post* most aptly described it, “Legally married today, legally fired tomorrow.” Indeed, it is an unsettling juxtaposition we now face in Wisconsin, and the transgender community is bearing the brunt of it.

Let’s take the case of a transgender man living in Fond du Lac, WI. We’ll call him

In the estate planning realm, for example, it is not as easy as merely substituting “husband/wife” for “wife/ wife.”

Sam. Sam was female assigned at birth, raised as a girl, and started transitioning to male in his late 20s. Let’s say Sam has a girlfriend and they would like to get married. Although there are many legal documents Sam will want to amend to reflect his new name and true gender, he now has the opportunity to maintain the sex designation of “female” on his birth certificate if he wants to get hitched. Why? Wisconsin, unlike Illinois, requires certified copies of our couple’s birth certificates in order to apply for a marriage license. Prior to Judge Crabb’s monumental decision and the Seventh Circuit overturning Wisconsin’s constitutional ban on same-sex marriage last year, Sam would have had very little choice in the matter. He would have had to endure the onerous and expensive process of changing the sex designation on his birth certificate to “male” if he wanted to make his matrimonial union legal. If Sam was born in Wisconsin,



he would need a court order granting him both a name and gender change.

However, now that same-sex marriage is legal, Sam and his beloved can enjoy the benefits of marriage without the burdens of Sam’s outdated sex designation. Happy day! Sam and his beau get engaged and start planning for their perfect wedding. Sam, bursting with pride, shows up to the office. He decides to share his good news with his supervisor, Joe. Joe holds himself out to be a man who opposes same-sex marriage, and spent the past few weekends angrily grumbling about this new affront to his masculinity and occasionally throwing his power tools against the wall. Despite Joe’s personal beliefs, he is a law-abiding man and knows well enough he cannot fire any of his employees for being lesbian or gay. However, on that particular day, while recanting the nearly-missed birth certificate snafu, Sam let it slip that he had been born female. Joe fires him on the spot, shouting transphobic obscenities as Sam rushes out the door.

While this tale is technically fiction, it is an unfortunate reality for many transgender individuals in Wisconsin. Worse yet, although it is abhorrent behavior, it is perfectly legal in our state. Wisconsin is one of the 25 states that does not provide statewide legal protection against gender identity discrimination in the workplace. There are a handful of cities and just one county (Dane) that provide protection on a local level, but for Sam and other transgender individuals who live elsewhere, the law is not on their side.

There are many unique legal issues the LGBT community faces. In the estate planning realm, for example, it is not as easy

as merely substituting “husband/wife” for “wife/ wife.” The term “estate planning” includes wills, trusts, guardianships, health care and financial directives, and probate, to name a few. Let’s say that Sam gets into a terrible car accident and experiences a traumatic brain injury. He is declared temporarily incompetent to make his own health care decisions. Without specifically including instructions in Sam’s health care power of attorney regarding his continued use of testosterone, there is a legitimate concern that a Fond du Lac court would disallow this desired care. An LGBT estate planner intrinsically knows what to ask and how to write it in order to legally effectuate and maintain his hard-fought transition.

What does this mean for attorneys? As an estate planning attorney, I need to protect you and your family where the law does not. When a transgender client comes in, it is imperative we get a firm understanding of where the client is regarding his or her emotional, physical and legal transition. When an LGBT person sets up a will, there is a chance of the will being contested by preju-

Without specifically including instructions in Sam’s health care power of attorney regarding his continued use of testosterone, there is a legitimate concern that a Fond du Lac court would disallow this desired care.”

liced family members after death. Getting a good grasp on the situation before it occurs might cool off some of the hotheads and avoid disputes which are costly and stressful for the decedent’s beloved surviving partner. A private, “revocable trust” rather than a “simple will” better serves this purpose. An “LGBT” lawyer understands this. We are experienced in these legal processes and can navigate these waters, thus minimizing client stress and maximizing desired results.

The fight for LGBT equality is far from over in Wisconsin. I dream of the day when it becomes unnecessary for us to advocate for the LGBT community. Until that day comes, we need to continue to create safe spaces for LGBT clientele. Until that day arrives, I urge attorneys to bravely designate themselves as practitioners of “LGBT Law.” ■



ABIGAIL CHURCHILL is an attorney with Horn & Johnsen SC. A 2015 graduate of the University of Wisconsin Law School, she focuses her legal practice in the areas of probate, trust administration, and estate planning.

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Not Done Yet

Rep. **Mark Pocan** is helping to push a comprehensive LGBT equality bill in Congress and calls on us all to continue the fight for truly full equality nationwide.



JUNE 26 WAS A HISTORIC DAY for our country. In a 5-4 decision the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the fundamental right to marry extends to same-sex couples. This was a momentous step toward fulfilling our country's guarantee of full equality for everybody, but many assume the fight for equality is finished now that same-sex marriages nationwide will be recognized. The truth is we still have a long way to go before every citizen of this country can truly be equal under the law.

While same-sex couples can now marry in all 50 states, only 21 states protect an LGB individual from being fired because of whom they love. Of these, only 19 of states also protect against discrimination based on gender identity. Many local communities across the country—including Appleton, Madison and Milwaukee—have tried to step in, implementing workforce protections for all individuals.

As the opponents of equality regroup and seek new ways to halt progress, we must maintain our efforts and continue to fight discrimination.

But this patchwork system of laws leaves far too many people vulnerable to discrimination in the workplace.

A country in which you can get married and then fired when you return from your honeymoon simply because of whom you love is not a country that treats its citizens equally. We need to use the momentum from our Supreme Court victory to advocate for protections and rights still not afforded to the LGBT community. We need to continue to rally together in order to achieve true equality for all individuals, and eliminate the remaining disparities in law that face the LGBT community today.

Today, our nation lacks laws ensuring constitutionally protected rights for LGBT individuals in many areas. Because of the patchwork, state-by-state nature of nondiscrimination laws, I continue to support efforts to federally protect any individual from unwarranted discrimination. Recently my colleagues

in the Congressional Equality Caucus and I introduced a comprehensive LGBT equality bill, which would protect individuals from discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity in all areas of society, including the workplace, schools, housing, access to credit and public accommodations.

Unfortunately, our country fails to offer these inherent rights as law, an issue that affects individuals nationwide. Our bill will ensure these protections are offered to every American in every public setting. A comprehensive LGBT equality bill is vital for achieving full equality for every citizen throughout our nation. As the opponents of equality regroup and seek new ways to halt progress, we must maintain our efforts and continue to fight discrimination against the LGBT community. With this bill, all Americans will be able to go through their daily lives without facing the threat of institutionalized discrimination, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity.

One of my top priorities is ensuring every individual has a voice and a seat at the table. No matter whom you love or how you identify, you deserve the same protections offered to every other member of our society. While 2015 has been a historic year so far, we still have a lot to accomplish. We cannot allow the momentum we have created to falter. In order to achieve full and lasting equality, we must continue to advocate for comprehensive rights for LGBT individuals. I am proud to continue the fight for equality, and I look forward to your support as we move forward, together. ■



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



Serving with Authenticity

Ret. Col. **Sheri Swokowski** reflects on recent gains for transgender rights within the US military and looks forward to note that the "light at the end of the tunnel is not an oncoming train."

IT'S BEEN A MEMORABLE couple of months since I attended the Pentagon Pride event. In the July issue of *Our Lives* I shared my thoughts about how cryptic communication can sometimes be at high levels in our nation's capital.

Just a month after Pentagon Pride, Secretary of Defense (Dr.) Ashton Carter put words about Transgender military service into action. In his July 13 DoD News Release the SecDef directed several historic actions. First, he announced the formation of a Working Group to study, over the next six months, the policy and readiness implications of welcoming transgender persons to serve openly. He also provided standardization across the Service, and a measure of protection for those involved, when he elevated decision authority for all Service members diagnosed with gender dysphoria, or who identify themselves as Transgender, to DoD (Under Secretary) level. Perhaps most significant was his statement that the Working Group will start from the assumption that transgender individuals can serve openly without adverse impact on military effectiveness and readiness.

Secretary Carter indicated DoD has proven itself to be a learning organization and that "over the last 14 years of conflict, Transgender men and women in uniform have been there with us, even as they often had to serve in silence alongside their fellow comrades in arms."

I suspect it's not a coincidence the DoD announcement came less than three weeks after the President invited current and former Transgender military service members to attend the June 24 White House reception in celebration of LGBT Pride Month. I was honored to represent the Army and was one of four Transgender members of SPART*A (Service members, Partners, and Allies for Respect and Tolerance for All) to attend, wearing the uniform appropriate for our gender identity. Seven of 13 individuals at dinner later that evening had met the POTUS, the VPOTUS or the Democratic



COL SHERI SWOKOWSKI (RET) is a civil rights advocate with a focus on transgender military service. She has worked as a Pentagon analyst and as a Regional Human Resources Director for the US Forest Service since retiring from the military.

Perhaps most significant was his statement that the Working Group will start from the assumption that transgender individuals can serve openly without adverse impact on military effectiveness and readiness.

Leader of the House of Representatives. It was truly an honor to be in the company of such distinguished civil rights advocates.

I had the opportunity to speak June 30 at the inaugural US Navy Base, Coronado Island Pride event. Although it took years for a Navy Pride event to be approved on the West Coast there are signs of progress. The following day, all the Pentagon stars aligned as the Secretary of the Navy joined the Army and Air Force and raised the adjudication authority for transgender Sailors and Marines to Pentagon level.



LEFT: Sheri on CNN talking about attending Pentagon Pride in the uniform appropriate for her gender. **BELOW:** A group shot from the White House Pride reception.



The Pentagon study shouldn't be complicated. Eighteen of our allies figured this out years ago, and DoD has their experiences to draw from. In those countries, Transgender troops have served openly for some time and have proven questions about abilities or physical capabilities are rooted not in practicalities, but in ignorance and bias. There is no doubt that the SecDef's action will ensure everyone who's able and willing to serve has the full and equal opportunity to do so. It is time all service members are treated with the dignity and respect they deserve. ■

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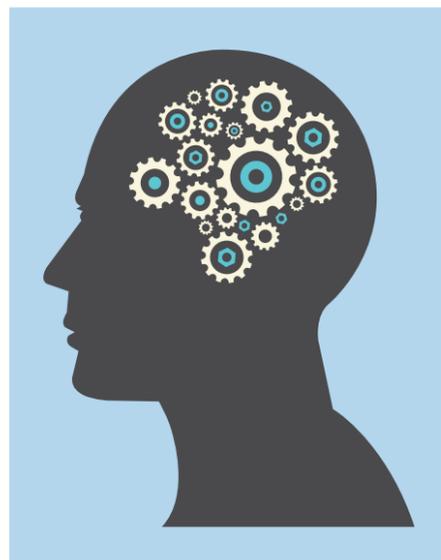
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Stepping Up

Therapist and social justice consultant **Owen Karcher** is working to turn agony into action to support trans and gender non-conforming people through a more mindful practice.



discouraged feelings into the creation of something meaningful and productive. As a mental healthcare provider, social justice consultant with 10 years experience, and a queer, trans person, I have crafted a document of standards for providers in hopes that it will help others take stock of their current knowledge, skills, practices and environments and make the changes necessary to be more welcoming and affirming of trans and gender non-conforming people. I believe the stories of violence and suicide we so frequently hear in the news will become fewer as allies take concrete steps to strengthen their skills and organizations.

STANDARDS OF PRACTICE FOR WORKING WITH TRANSGENDER CLIENTS

- I will listen to and honor my client's experiences.
- I will not assume their narrative is the same as the few I have heard about transgender people and the process of transitioning.
- I will not assume all transgender people coming into my office are mentally ill, need help with their gender identity, or that I know more about their experiences of gender than they do.
- I will do my best to respect my clients' pronouns and names, even if/when they change.
- I will be conscious of my assumptions and biases about gender roles, expectations, and presentations, and how these are often racialized, ableist, culturally determined and class-based.
- I will respect and use the words my clients ask me to use for their identities, pronouns, and their body parts.
- I will not ask my transgender clients to educate me on what transgender means, and I will do my own work to understand the processes involved in accessing transition-related and transgender-inclusive care in our areas.
- I will work to understand the context in which transgender people navigate systems of care, paying attention to environmental barriers, policies, forms, and interpersonal interactions that may cause

increased distress for my clients.

- I will do my best to interrupt where these systems harm my clients.
- I will listen when transgender people offer suggestions and insight on how to better meet their needs and serve their communities.
- I will build reciprocal relationships with transgender community members by inviting them into event and program planning processes from the beginning and showing up to transgender-led programs and events in my community.
- I will do my best to amplify the voices of transgender people by making positions of leadership accessible to them and will invest in their professional development and success through the sharing of resources and gainful employment.
- I acknowledge that all violence and oppression is interconnected and that my own liberation and wellness is bound to the liberation and wellness of trans* people, people of color, women, youth, and all others in my community.

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If you are interested in learning more about how this document came to be or are interested in joining me in my work, I recently launched a business called Owen Karcher, LLC (arttherapymadison.com) in order to provide art therapy and social justice consulting and training. You can download the Standards of Practice on my website. As a mental health practitioner and social justice consultant, I help others reflect on their experiences of gender, sexuality and race and gain skills to make changes in their lives. I serve as a counselor for individuals and families and am dedicated to offering my services as a consultant to do assessments of organizational culture, policies and procedures, and to provide trainings to ensure staff and providers know how to be more welcoming to LGBTQ clients, customers and community members.

I believe education and commitment is key to building a more sustainable and effective movement toward equity for all. I also believe Wisconsin can be a place in which LGBTQ people can not only survive, but thrive. I sincerely hope you will join me in taking stock of your current practices and making changes in support of transgender communities in our state. ■



OWEN KARCHER is an art therapist and social justice consultant who has worked as a care provider and educator in the fields of mental health, violence prevention and intervention, child sexual abuse, HIV/AIDS, and building healthy relationships.



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Now that marriage equality is the law of the land, what's next for the LGBT movement?

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Power in Data

The **Wisconsin Transgender Health Coalition** seeks to build community support and power through better data collection and concrete action. Facilitator **shor salkas** lays out the groups' progress so far.

THERE IS ALWAYS SOMEONE to add to the list of names of transgender people: the list of trans people who have committed suicide, the list of trans people who have been turned away from the doctor due to their gender identity, the list of trans people who go into debt to pay for their transition related care, the list of trans women of color who are killed more frequently than anyone else.

It seems that almost every day we add another person to one of these tragic lists, and it often makes me feel powerless to create change in our communities.

Then I remember, as a person with educational privilege and white privilege and many other privileges, that I do have power to create change in transgender and gender non-conforming communities and LGBT communities. One of my skill sets is in public health and data collection. I believe that one of the best ways

More than 1 in 4 people stated that they did not have a doctor that they felt comfortable discussing their health needs with.

for transgender communities to create change is to know what is going on in our communities and to collect that information in systemic ways that we can use to our advantage—data collection.

In a culture where data is power, the best way to get money to do social change and community engagement is to have the numbers to back it up. I know it seems disheartening to have to collect data on problems that we have known to exist for decades, and it is also an incredibly powerful practice to say, "We know what is going on and we are using our community voice and stories to create change!"

FIRST THINGS FIRST

In the fall of 2013, when some transgender folks and allies sat down to talk about how to create change in transgender and gender non-conforming communities in Wisconsin, we realized we needed to know more about our communities and how to best serve them. Our trans-led team designed a communi-

ty-based needs assessment survey centering on community voices and needs so we could start a conversation about what trans folks want and need to lead happier and healthier lives. Before going into what the community said in the survey, it is important to acknowledge that this survey is just a snapshot of our communities and doesn't reflect everyone's experiences or all transgender people. Specifically, this survey was likely not accessible to people who do not use English as their primary language, people who don't have easy access to computers, people who are experiencing housing insecurity, and people who have experienced systemic oppression related to data collection and have distrust in this process.

WHO WAS IN THE SURVEY (DEMOGRAPHICS)

More than 120 people responded to the Wisconsin Transgender Community Health Survey over the course of six months. Most of the people who responded to the survey were Dane, Rock and Milwaukee County residents due to limited capacity to do outreach in rural communities. About half of the folks identified with trans feminine identities, about 30% identified with trans masculine identities, nearly 15% identified as genderqueer, and 6% identified with other gender identities like pangender and agender. There were a wide range of ethnicities represented, as well as age groups. Over 75% of the people have engaged in some sort of higher education, and nearly half of the people were earning less than \$20,000 annually, illuminating income disparities even though many people were highly educated.

PRIORITIES AND NEEDS IN TRANSGENDER COMMUNITIES

More than 1 in 4 people stated that they did not have a doctor that they felt comfortable discussing their health needs with. Transgender and gender non-conforming people who took the survey identified quality and competent health care providers as a priority for the community, and the lack of such as a barrier to seeking health care when they need it. Other barriers that people shared around seeking health care were lack of support to navigate the system, past experiences of discrimination,

lack of insurance coverage for procedures they need, and concerns about confidentiality.

Other needs and priorities that were amplified in the survey were the need for more support in finding and securing housing and employment, public education so that people feel safe accessing services in public spheres (housing, education, legal), and more information about transition options and services.

People also said that they want more community engagement, community events and places to support one another.

NEXT STEPS

In May, we presented this data and more than 90 community members, providers and agency members came together to talk, digest and plan to move this work forward. Out of this summit we started the Wisconsin Transgender Health Coalition. The coalition has four guiding priorities:

- **Centering racial justice through intentional collaboration and community building with leaders in transgender communities of color**
- **Access to transgender-competent health care, providers and resources**
- **Working to eliminate violence towards transgender and gender non-conforming people**



SHOR SALKAS advocates for social and racial justice through the lenses of public health, community health, and health equity. Shor works on multiple LGBTQ community health issues to create community change.

- **Non-discrimination in public spheres that impacts transgender people's access (employment, housing, legal services)**

The work that we do will center those priorities. From the summit three main teams emerged to structure our work: resource creation team, education and training team, and policy and advocacy team. To find out more please visit us at witranshealth.wordpress.com.

We are working to add names to more lists: The list of trans people who had support getting their name changed, the list of trans people who went to the doctor and had a great experience, the list of trans people who easily found a provider that they liked and who respected their identity, the list of trans people who went to an LGBT community event and felt included and supported, the list of trans people who have the resources and social support they need and want, the list of trans people who feel good about where they live, and the list of trans people who can envision a thriving transgender community in Wisconsin. ■

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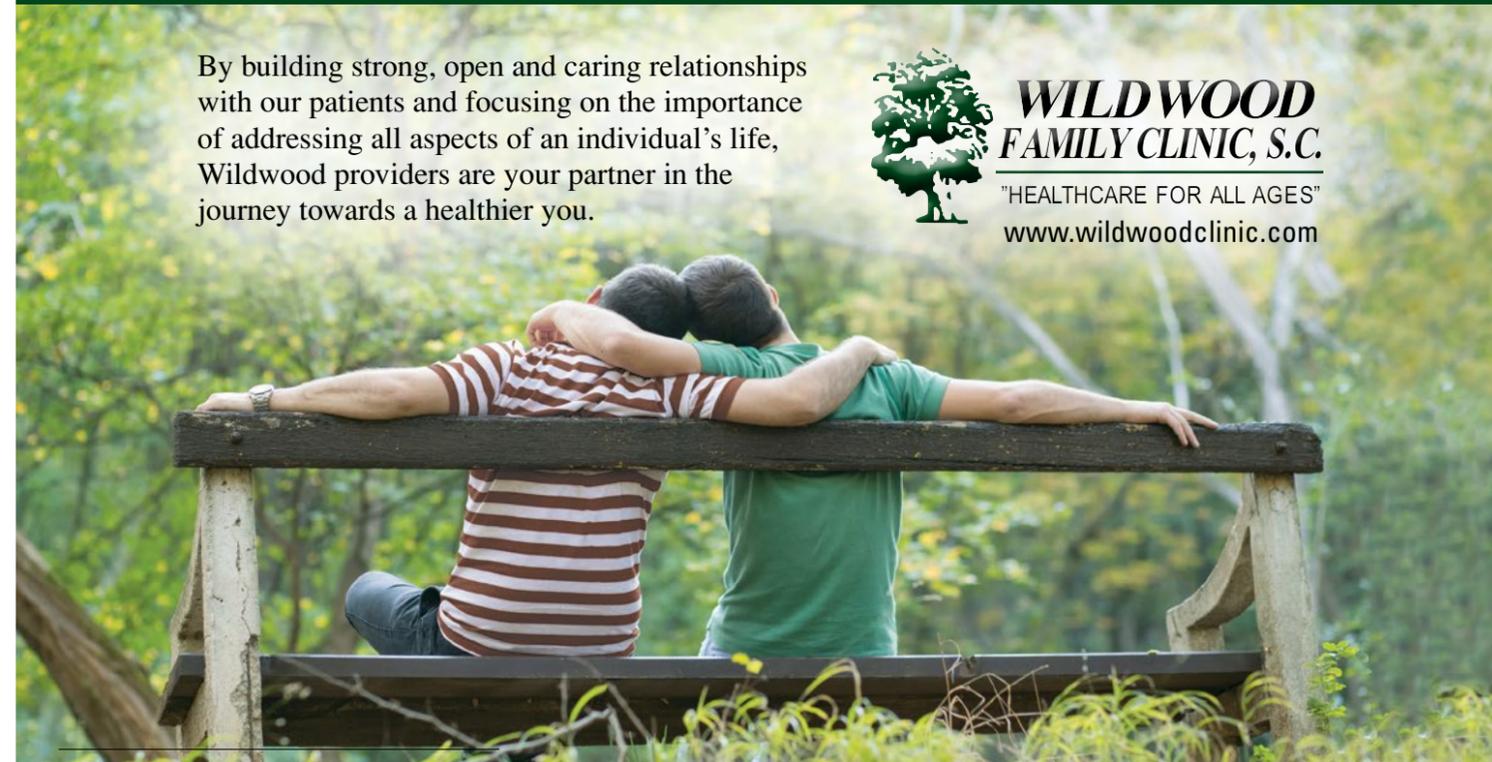
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Going Gray with Grace

Caroline Werner reflects cheerfully on misperceptions about the aging process and stereotypes about people of a certain age.

IF WE HAVE TO TALK ABOUT AGING at all, say “growing old gracefully.” Our LGBTQAI community is not that different from larger society. None of us wants to face the fact that we begin aging on the day we’re born. I was fortunate to have good genes. Beginning as a teenager, I was always told I looked about ten years younger than my real age. I suspect that’s been a plus as I job hunted when I got older—except for one incident. When I was about 40 I was not offered a job where I thought I had the appropriate qualifications. When I asked why I wasn’t hired I was directly told, “We hired someone younger.”

Flab happens. My upper arms look like I’ve got wings now—preparing for my flight to heaven, apparently.

“Oh, faux pas,” I thought. Then I had to consider whether or not it was a job worth fighting for. I decided that, with that attitude, I wouldn’t be happy working there anyway.

I think we all contemplate aging and how to prevent it or at least hide it—until the time it starts happening to us and we want to remain in denial—but we know we can’t stop it any longer. The telltale sign is when you go to your high school reunion and you see all those grey or balding heads in the room!

We can dye our greying hair, but nowadays the “in” thing is to have grey hair, so why not flaunt it?

I’ve met some younger women who tell

me “age doesn’t matter.” When I say I’m interested in dating them, though, I learn that my age IS held against me. So age DOES matter, let’s be honest. The assumption seems to be that an older age means compromised health, but that isn’t always the case and health problems can happen to anyone at any time.

I think most of us aspire to be healthy. We want to look tanned, or at least keep the color in our cheeks—some of us do that artificially, which old folks can do, too! We want to stay in shape, knowing firm bodies are more attractive than flabby ones. Flab happens, though, especially as we age. My upper arms look like I’ve got wings now—preparing for my flight to heaven, apparently.

Exercise is important to keep our blood moving and heart working, as well as to keep us trim. Lots of young people run and tear their Achilles tendon or sprain an ankle, so they’re hobbling around (maybe on crutches) until the thing heals. I told you health problems can happen to anyone at any time! Hopefully they won’t re-injure it with their impatience to run more.

As we age, we keep exercising to the extent that we can—some of us can do



CAROLINE WERNER has a Master’s Degree in Social Work. She did case management with Dane County seniors before retiring. Now she is an LGBT Senior Advocate for the OutReach LGBT Community Center.

more than others. Exercise bikes or bikes, in general, are a favorite unless you’ve got bad knees. Being overweight is not good at any age, but the pounds creep up on you once your body metabolism starts to slow down at menopause or about age 50. Then you may want to change your eating habits to keep the extra pounds off.

Wrinkles go with aging—so there are wrinkle creams on the market you can start using at age 30. Now you can not only use creams on your face and body, but there’s some stuff you can buy that fills in the cracks, I understand. At a fundraising event recently, I was sitting at a table with all men. I was asked what I do to look younger. My secret is from a naturopath I saw several years ago—I use sesame oil from the Community Pharmacy.

Growing old isn’t necessarily scary. It just happens and we all slowly adjust accordingly—even though we don’t want to admit it’s happening to us. When you’re young, it may be difficult to disassociate other older people from your grandparents.

We’re all different. A lot of us enjoy being active and like being around other people, even young children who are not our own. We’re not all grouchy; but we can be if we have to be to get our needs met. When people ask how I am, I generally say, “As feisty

as ever.” I like feisty seniors because I know they’re going to take care of themselves just fine. Some of us appreciate all the help we can get but others don’t like to ask for help. If you notice I might need help with something, please don’t hesitate to step in and ask how you can help. I’ll do the same for you, if I can.

I also am a wealth of information. I don’t know everything; I’m still learning, of course. I’ll share what I know with you and you can share what you know that I don’t—like how to use a cell phone, a computer, or Facebook. ■

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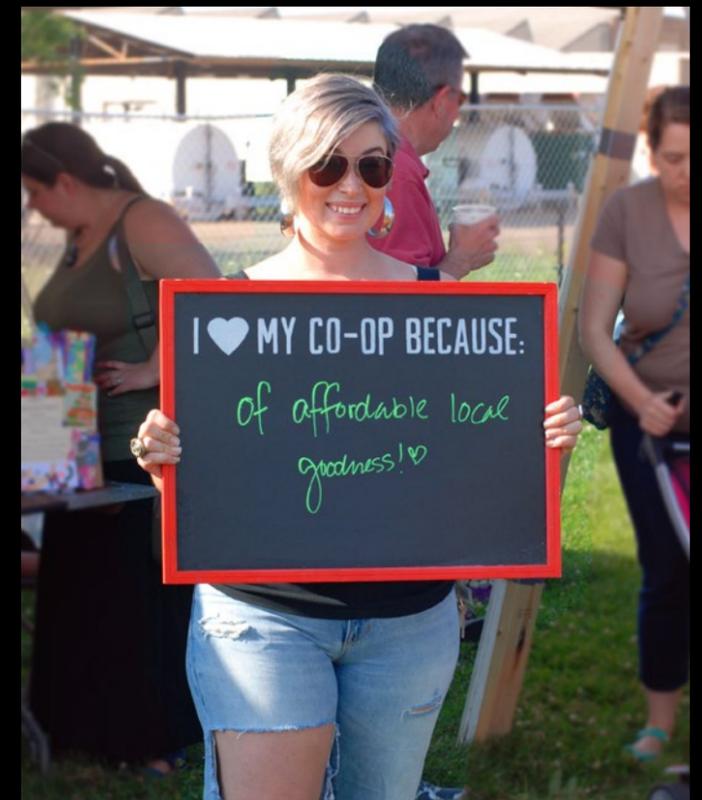
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Ricardo Gonzalez

Cardinal Points

Tulin Waters takes another look at the life's work of her tio—and owner of the Cardinal Bar—Ricardo Gonzalez.

FOR ALL OF YOU who know the Cardinal Bar you may have heard it recently celebrated its 40th anniversary. This is a milestone of epic proportions—the typical lifespan of a nightclub nowadays is 2 to 5 years. It is no secret that this is one of the most difficult businesses around, yet the Cardinal Bar has a designation very few people know about: it's America's longest running nightclub in history.

Credit goes to founder and owner Ricardo Gonzalez, who opened the club as a gay bar back in the winter of 1974. Since then, the club has transformed itself many times but has always been the go-to place in Madison for music and progressive politics. To know what makes this a success story is to know the story of the man who has been able to accomplish this for four decades.

Ricardo was born in Camaguey, Cuba in 1946. Political upheaval forced his family to leave Cuba for Miami in November of 1960 when he was just shy of 14 years old. At just 16, with only a winter coat donated to him by the Cuban refugee center where he lived, \$20 given to him by his father, and a one way airplane ticket, Ricardo left

Since the '90s, the club has been not only been an epicenter locally for the growing music scene, but has also made a name for itself internationally for being a venue that proves that politics can have a place on the dancefloor.

with his older brother for Oklahoma City. After college, Ricardo took a job at Green Giant Company in Ripon, Wisconsin. Shortly thereafter, in 1972, he ran as the first Latino for State Assembly under the name "Rick Gonzalez," fighting for farmers' tax rights and stating that, "Today's farmers are paying for tomorrow's developers."

Ricardo moved to Madison in 1973 and began working for the State as an Affirmative Action Officer. He was also a volunteer and outspoken advocate for the Madison Gay Center. During a vacation to Key West he witnessed firsthand how open and free a lifestyle the gay community led. This not only inspired him, it radicalized him to try to instill that sense of citizenry for the LGBT community in

PHOTOS BY IAN DEGRAFF

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Madison. He was motivated to open a venue that combined his belief system as an openly gay man, while preserving his Latin heritage.

Serendipity intervened upon his return when seeing an ad for a lease for a tavern at 418 E. Wilson. Back then, the neighborhood had the title of "Skid Row," and the building itself was getting long in the tooth, having been constructed in 1912. Ricardo was reluctant that the condition of the building and the location would not be the right fit for his idea. However, when he walked in he immediately noticed the pristine tilework, detailed woodwork, and the overall aura of the building—and Ricardo knew that was where it was all to begin. In December of 1974, the Cardinal Bar opened its doors as Madison's first Latin gay bar. The rest, as the Cubans say, is historia.

The mid-to-late '70s brought a lot of changes to the scene, especially as the Disco Era entered its peak. Ricardo felt the need to shift the bar from a Latin gay club to what was popular to keep up with the times. However, the bar always maintained the reputation of being "the gay bar that straight people went to." In the '80s the Cardinal was cutting edge, by bringing "Radical Drag" into the scene with lavish and theatrical drag shows such as "The Lavender Reviews."

Ricardo sold the Cardinal in 2004, but after ups and downs the new owners put it back on the market. Ricardo bought it back in 2009 and re-opened and re-energized it.

Since the '90s, the club has been not only been an epicenter locally for the growing music scene, but has also made a name for itself internationally for being a venue that proves that politics can have a place on the dancefloor.

"The Cardinal has always been an affirmative action at work," says Ricardo. "My formula is simple—we define diversity through music. That's what defines a nightclub. It's worked for me this long."

Ricardo has experimented with renting out the small coat room area as a food space, first to restaurateur Chris Burge and then to the La Taguara folks (who still run a full-scale operation on East Washington). Plans are in motion for future uses of the space as well. In the meantime, the club's various Latin, jazz, hardcore and house music nights continue to thrive. ■



TULIN WATERS is a local promoter of all-female comedy and themed shows primarily focusing on feminism and ageism. She is director of Les Cougars, an age empowerment variety troupe for women over 35. When not on stage, she juggles an office job and property management, and is a single mom to a son and a rescue Chihuahua.

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Choosing Pride

Donnie Williams experienced a jarring and traumatic forced outing at his family's church, but went on to find acceptance and strength—and a way to give back—through work with Proud Theater.

IT WAS A SUNDAY MORNING.

My mom, two of my brothers and I always went to church, so to me this Sunday wasn't too different. I actually felt great. I had just gotten new earrings, a new bracelet and a new necklace. It was my first day wearing them. Even the car ride there was ordinary; my mom blasting the gospel station, my older brother sitting in the front seat that he always declared was his because he was the tallest, and my younger brother and me in the backseat. We walked into the same church atmosphere I had always remembered from previous Sundays. We sat.

The preacher preached as usual about topics that sat on his spirit. He then began a sermon on homosexuality. Although I had been used to him going on tangents about the subject, it still made me a little uncomfortable. But then he paused. The church

was silent for a second. He said he had a message from God that he needed to address. He made eye contact with me. He grabbed the mic and walked in my direction. I started to sink in my seat. I had no idea what was about to happen. "Young man," he said, "Come to the front of the church with me."

I did just that. He turned me around to face the congregation. "This young man has a demon inside of him. And we are going to fix that today," the pastor exclaimed to the whole church. "Why do you wear those bracelets?" he asked me. I couldn't really fathom in my mind what was going on. I stayed silent. "Why do you wear necklaces and earrings? Do you know those were made for a woman? Do you see me wearing any jewelry?"

By that point I was on the verge of tears. I just wanted someone to stand up for me: my mother, my brothers—somebody. Instead, as he continued to speak, I could hear the congregation cheering him on to keep dehumanizing me. "Take them off," he said to me. Then he addressed the church. "And as he does, let's clap for him. We are going to make a man from this today." I tried to drown out the cheers. It was almost like he was stripping me down naked in front of that altar until I was completely vulnerable and exposed.

He turned to my mother. "We're fixing your son today!" Until that point I had never felt like I was broken. He placed his blessed



"This young man has a demon inside of him. And we are going to fix that today," the pastor exclaimed to the whole church.

oil-soaked hand on my forehead and began to pray. The prayer seemed to last forever. He ended his sermon after that. Just as I was leaving to go back to the car he grabbed me. "Just know if no one loves you, we at the church love you, just the way you are."

After this experience, I went through a stage of self-destruction. I couldn't be happy with anything. I wouldn't let myself. I felt just like what he made me feel up there at the altar; like an abomination who didn't have a faith to believe in because my own had disowned me.

With the help of poetry and Proud Theater, an LGBTQ theater group I am part of, I was eventually able to overcome much of that, and am stronger and more proud than I have ever been before. In Proud Theater, I was able to share my coming out experience with a group of people I trusted and who, quite

frankly, felt like my family. Because of them, I can now look at my coming out experience as nothing more than just an experience. I am actually grateful for it. I would not be who I am today without it. Yes, it hurt at the moment, but from it I got the momentum to live my life the way I want. So what if my family didn't accept it, or so what if my church didn't accept it. As long as I could accept me, it was alright. I found a happiness I could never imagine.

Flash forward two years, and I feel like I've matured a lot. My family is coming around. I still haven't been back to church, but I feel as if my relationship with my God is stronger than ever.

It sounds cliché, but I hope younger people do realize that self-happiness is the most important thing. Life isn't always easy, but as long as you look deep within yourself to find and embrace who you truly are, you can make it through anything. It does truly get better. Love yourself.

I have many goals. In September, I plan to become a mentor for Proud Theater. I want to inspire younger people and teach them that their experiences can become something beautiful and powerful, no matter how hard they sometimes are. I know I'm still young. I still have a long way to go, but I know my future is bright. Not only because I believe in myself, but because I have others who stand behind me. My goal is to be that for someone else now, too. ■

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