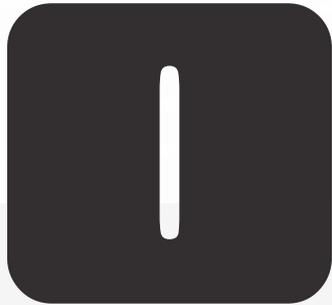


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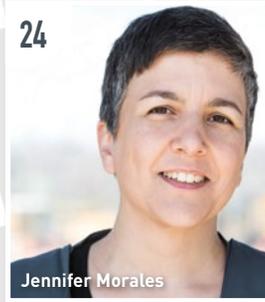


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Ray McMahan

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Jennifer Morales

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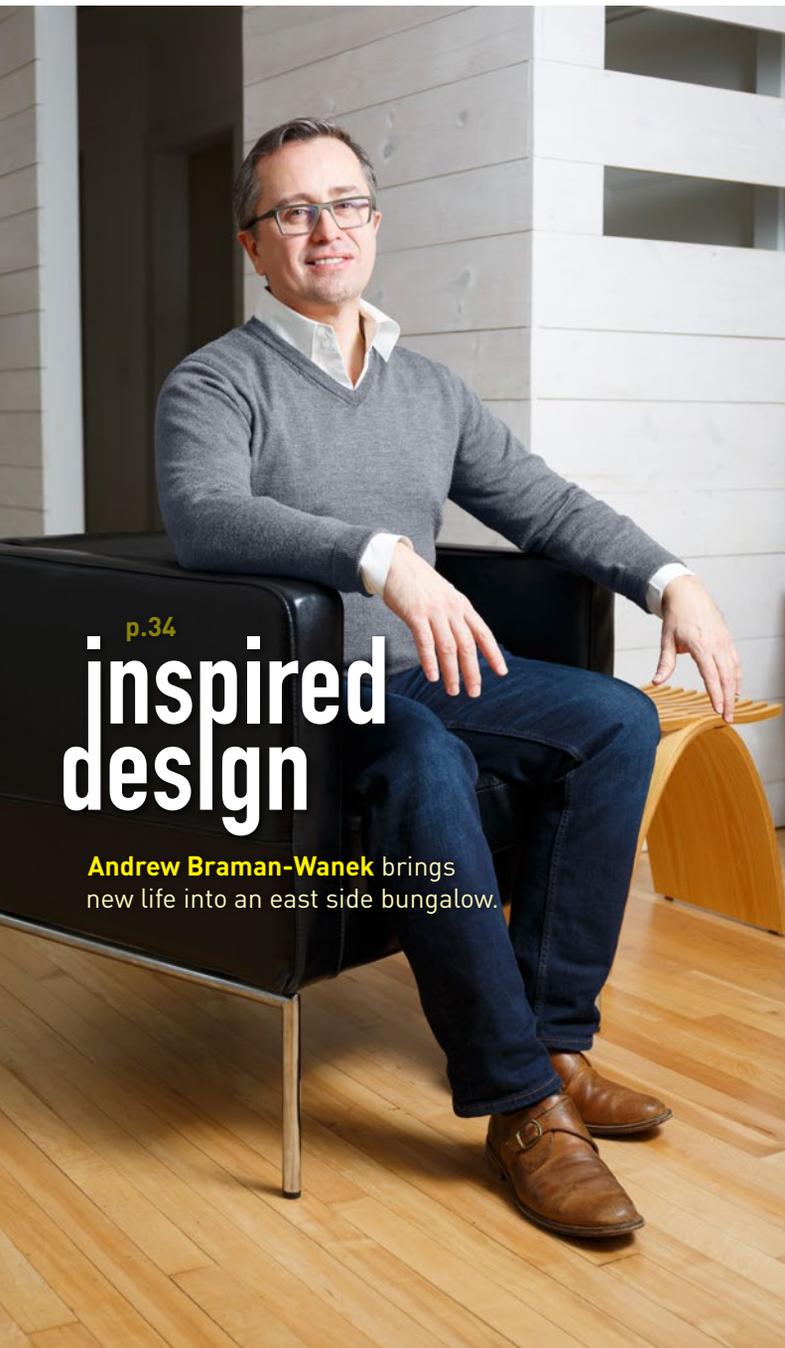


# HOME & GARDEN

Tips, Trends and Creative Solutions from Area Experts

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

March+April 2016



p.34  
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**Andrew Braman-Wanek** brings new life into an east side bungalow.



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“Creativity comes from trust. Trust your instincts. And never hope more than you work.”

—Rita Mae Brown

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Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

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Cover photo by Spencer Micka

# Accepting New Patients On The Square!

Dr. Nick Christianson was working full time in a pediatric asthma research lab at the UW School of Medicine and Public Health for three years before realizing he wanted more interaction with people and less with pipettes. After dental school, Dr. Christianson assumed a large patient base in Central Wisconsin from a retired dentist. Attracted to the collaborative benefits of a group practice, Dr. Christianson joined Dental Health Associates.

When not at work, Dr. Christianson enjoys traveling to national parks and primitive camping, including a 12 day camping trip to Alaska. He loves to brew his own beer at home and going to beer tastings along with watching Badger basketball games. Dr. Christianson's first child was born to his wife, Jessica, in November 2014.

**Education**  
DMD, Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry, Philadelphia, PA  
B.S., Bacteriology, University of Wisconsin, Madison

**Memberships and Associations**  
Wisconsin Dental Association  
Region 1 Delegate at the 2013 House of Delegates Reference Committee 2013  
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**PUBLISHER'S NOTE** PATRICK FARABAUGH

## GROWING VICARIOUSLY THROUGH YOU

**A GUIDING PRINCIPLE** for this magazine has always been to center our humanity. The founding vision was a belief that there was a place for local LGBTQ+ storytelling that would help to make our experiences relatable. I wanted to provide a vehicle that our community could use to find and connect to each other. In the beginning, my goal was to land on something that would resemble the intersection of *People* magazine's human interest stories, and the kind of emotional health piece that you would find in *O, Oprah's* magazine.

The results were often better. Leaders began rising. The stories we've published have demonstrated what leadership looks like across a spectrum of lived experiences.

I'm always grateful when the people we feature are willing to share their vulnerability, and how they've grown by moving through some deeply personal challenges. Every issue we publish is full of stories like this, and the one you are holding is certainly no exception. You'll get to see what it is like to progress through transition in Ray McMahan's narrative, and how our local roller derby community has supported his journey. You'll get to experience the roller coaster of building a business and starting a family in the feature Lee Melahn and Rick Shaver wrote. I was especially moved while reading about the moment their daughter was born.

What I continue to love about being able to do this work is the people this magazine brings into my life. I don't know if I would have ever found most if it weren't for *Our Lives*, and I owe something to everyone who has contributed for helping shape me into who I am today. That's a gift I am especially grateful to be able to share with each of you through these pages.



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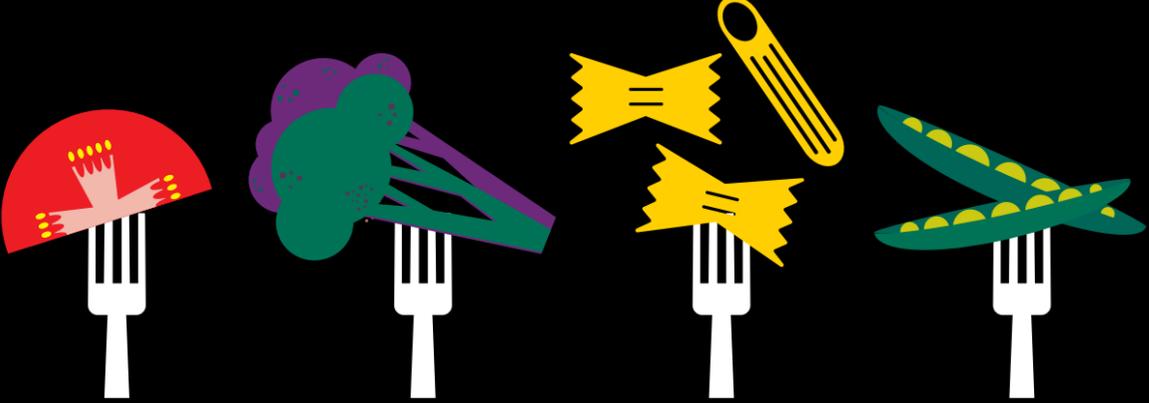
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#### Why is buying local important to you and your business?

Being and buying local has been important since the day Blair Landscape set down roots on the east side of Madison 30 years ago. It was important for me to service clients that wanted to support small businesses and other businesses in our immediate area. It's a win-win for both parties. Buying local is creating a sustainable Madison and providing jobs that people can bike or walk to, which is good for the environment.

#### What is your connection to the LGBT community?

As a LGBT-owned business we strive to have a diverse workforce and support GSAFE and Fair Wisconsin. And we are in the process of joining the LGBT Chamber of Commerce with hopes of gaining more opportunities to work with other LGBT businesses to create awareness in the community.

#### Do you or your business do anything charitable in the local community?

One reason Blair Landscape chose the east side for its home base is because of the great opportunities to get involved in the community. Blair participated in many of the initial Goodman Center Thanksgiving basket drives and is still a proud supporter of that program as well as providing for the Food Pantry and senior meal dessert donations. I live in the Eastmorland neighborhood, and am involved in the annual fall leaf raking for those that are not able and in the Madison Parks Adopt an Ice program. I head up a group of volunteers that create and maintain the hockey rink at Olbrich Park. It's so rewarding to see people outside playing and enjoying winter knowing you played a part in it.

### CONTRIBUTORS



**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 mom to a son and a rescue Chihuahua.

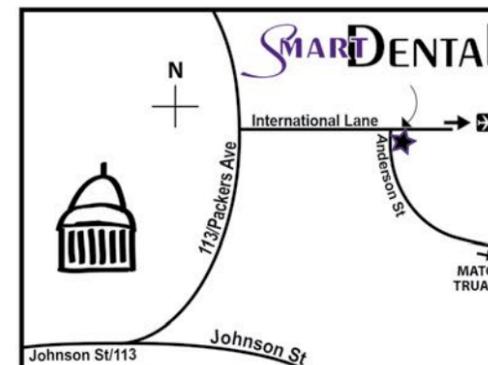
**MEGAN MILKS** is the author of *Kill Marguerite and Other Stories*, winner of the 2015 Devil's Kitchen Reading Award in Fiction and a Lambda Literary Award finalist; as well as three chapbooks, including *The Feels*, forthcoming from *Black Warrior Review*. Milks has lived in Madison for two years and teaches creative writing and literature at Beloit College. Their cat, Claude, is clawed.

**SAMANTHA DUTCHER** has been capturing souls as a co-owner of Dutcher Photography for over 14 years. She loves photographing those perfectly imperfect little moments that make up a life well lived. Samantha and co-owner Rob currently photograph weddings, portraits of all kinds, events and the fine sport of roller derby. To see more of their work, visit [robandsamphoto.com](http://robandsamphoto.com).

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## Preserving Our Past

Out of the closets and into the archives—an update from LGBTQ Archives co-organizer **Scott Seyforth** on how you can get involved in preserving and sharing Madison's queer history.

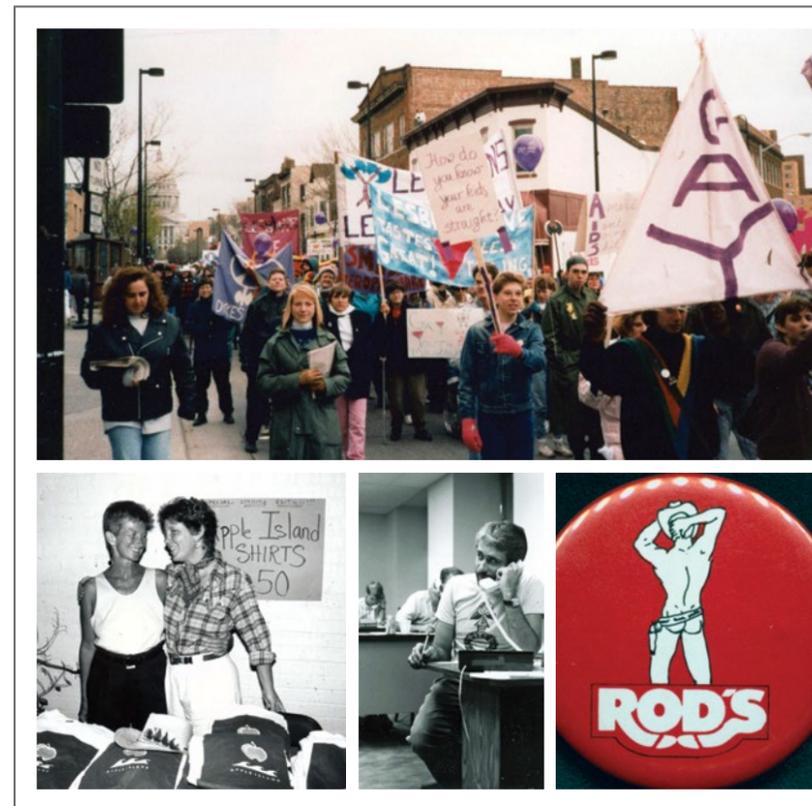
**WHEN YOU LOOK IN YOUR** closet, what do you see? Behind the winter coats and summer shorts, shoved in boxes and crawlspaces and attics lie the ephemera of your life. These hidden spaces may contain photos of some of the best nights of your life, or letters written after the worst. They may include t-shirts from marches where you fought to make the world a better place, or newspapers that both celebrated the successes and mourned the losses.

These objects are not simply personal mementos. They are history—our history. The University of Wisconsin wants to help preserve the ephemera that represents our history and make it accessible so future generations can understand the vast queer past that shapes the world they will inherit.

Every photo album forgotten in a closet, every journal lost in a move, and every piece of memorabilia tossed in the trash is a loss for our entire community. Our history is captured in these images, coming to life on the pages of personal diaries and in the columns of community newspapers.

Over the past few months, the University of Wisconsin Archives has amassed an impressive collection of local LGBTQ history, from pictures of the early days at Apple Island to personal memories from pillars in the community. We've gathered lesbian poetry from the 1970s, gay political signs and posters from the 1980s, and newspapers going as far back as the 1950s. The collection has preserved photographs and video recordings that show some of what queer life in Madison has looked like for the last few decades.

We have had a tremendous beginning, but we are not done yet. We want to continue growing the collection to ensure that the future will remember all of us. We invite you to come browse our collections and consider donating your own materials



to be permanently preserved.

Join us on Friday, April 29 for a viewing party at the University Archives. We're incredibly proud of the collections we've gathered so far, and can't wait to share them with you. While you're there, add your own voice by jotting down some memories in the guest book, or by preserving your recollections in our oral history booth.

This archive is for all of us—to create a permanent statement that we exist, that our lives matter, and that our stories belong in the pages of history. Join us as we preserve our history, moving out of the closet and into the archives.

Funding for this project has been generously provided by the New Harvest Foundation, Inc. and the George L. Mosse Program in History. ■

### Madison LGBTQ Archives Viewing Party

Friday, April 29, 5:00–8:00 p.m.  
Steenbock Memorial Library

Steenbock Library is on the Lakeshore side of the U.W. campus at the corner of Observatory Drive and Babcock Drive (at 550 Babcock Drive). There is free, on-street parking available on the side streets nearby and parking is available in the ramp next to Steenbock.

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**LGBTQ Organizations Update**

Events | Accolades | News | Staff & Board Changes  
Recognition | Calls to Action

Reported by **Johanna Lepro-Green**

**NEWS**

*Important notes about area LGBTQ groups*

**THE MILTOWN KINGS** Milwaukee's drag troupe just celebrated their 12th year! The current roster includes Anna Stetic, Faye Tehl/Dev Estate, Lala/Randy Feller, Leo Long, Miles Long, Panic at the Drag Show, Scorpi Erotic, Sugar St. Clair and Zeke Paddington.

**NEW HARVEST FOUNDATION** They will again be participating in Community Shares of Wisconsin's Big Share on Tuesday, March 1. Last year, NHF raised \$1,300 for the event.

**OPEN** On February 4, OPEN hosted their annual dinner to celebrate the organization's accomplishments and thank their members. This year's keynote was Phillipe Cunningham, Senior Policy Advisor for Minneapolis Mayor Betsey Hodges. OPEN also reviewed their accomplishments from 2015, and got an update from Dane Co. Public Health on the LGBTQ Health Profile project (funded in part by OPEN's Community Grant). OPEN also recently changed its name to mean Out Professional Engagement Network.

**PRIDE IN HEALTHCARE** This U.W.-Madison organization (Promoting Recognition of Identity, Dignity, and Equality in Healthcare)

made up of medical students had a packed previous semester. In Fall 2015, they had multiple inter-professional socials, hosted an "Introduction to LGBT Health" talk, an afternoon workshop with PATCH (Providers and Teens Communicating for Health) on reproductive and sexual healthcare, and an ethics lecture/discussion on caring for transgender patients. If you're interested in the work they're doing, visit their Facebook page at [facebook.com/prideinhealthcare](http://facebook.com/prideinhealthcare).

**CHIPPEWA VALLEY LGBTQ+** They are currently trying to find a physical location for a resource/outreach center after the previous location closed in 2011. At the time, most of their money went toward putting on the PRIDE picnic. Over the past few years, fundraising efforts have grown and now they need a way to direct the funds that are coming in. Chairperson Jason Bennett notes that there is a gap in communication with local media when there is an urgent issue in the LGBTQ community, which would be reduced or eliminated if a central location existed.

**WISCONSIN LGBT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE** Jason Rae, Executive Director, was appointed to the Wisconsin State Advisory Committee for the United States Commission on Civil Rights, as a representative and advocate for the LGBTQ and allied community.

**LOCAL ACTIVIST WINS PRESTIGIOUS CITY AWARD**



Z! Lula Haukeness, a member of GSAFE's board, recently won the 2016 MLK Humanitarian Award, awarded by the City of Madison and Dane County. The award seeks to recognize individuals or groups that "have made outstanding and significant contributions in the spirit of sisterhood, brotherhood and harmony toward making our community an ideal place in which to live," according to their website.

Z! has been closely involved in support of Young Gifted and Black and inspired by the work of the Black Lives Matter movement nationally. They also work with and in close support of: Groundwork, Operation Welcome Home, Sankofa Behavioral & Community Health, GSAFE, Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice, support for Freedom Inc, Showing Up for Racial Justice, and Dane County Trans Health Group. They are a well-known gender non-conformist and trans activist. Their work is very spiritually based and "rooted in love for new possibilities of getting free."

**FAIR WISCONSIN EDUCATION FUND** On February 20, they hosted their Milwaukee Leadership Awards Gala Dinner. Each year Fair Wisconsin gathers members of the LGBTQ community, allies, activists and policymakers to recognize those who have made significant contributions to the advancement of LGBTQ equality in Wisconsin.

**AWARDS / RECOGNITION / GRANTS**

*Special thanks for those who do good.*

**NEW HARVEST FOUNDATION** The Foundation has announced their grant recipients of its January 2016 cycle: Forward Learning Youth and Young Adults, Mercury Players Theatre, OutReach LGBT Community Center, and O'Keeffe Middle School.

**FAIR WISCONSIN EDUCATION FUND** The organization has announced their 2016 award winners, who received recognition at their annual Gala Dinner. GSAFE has received the Tammy Baldwin Statewide Impact Award, and the Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce has received the Organization of the Year. Joanne Lee, mother of Skylar Lee, has received the Community Activist of the Year award, and Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett has received the Advocate of the Year award.

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### CONNECT → OUR ORGANIZATIONS

**DIVERSE & RESILIENT** The Milwaukee-based organization announced the recipients of their 2016 Leadership Awards on January 25. As noted in the press release, “These individuals and organizations have demonstrated leadership in improving the health and wellbeing of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people in the state of Wisconsin.” This year’s leadership award recipients include Brenda Coley (Bayard Rustin Award), Shannon Romero (Be Y.O.U. Youth Leadership Award), Broderick Pearson (Gary Hollander Adult Leadership Award), Irmine Reitl (LGBT Ally Award), and the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center (Community Partner Award).

**CHIPPEWA VALLEY LGBTQ+** This August, Chippewa Valley LGBTQ+ recognized Ann Hoepfner’s role in their organization with a “Continuity Award.” Ann has been managing the organization’s finances for several years, and is the only board member incumbent in a position since 2012. Ann has served the organization in some capacity since 2006, and is a recognized speaker and advocate on transgender issues. She gives several talks each

year at local organizations and schools, and is currently preparing a talk about trans\* issues for a group of healthcare professionals in Madison. Jason Bennett, the Chairperson for Chippewa Valley LGBTQ+, tells *Our Lives*, “It is not an understatement to say that without Ann’s guidance through some lean years, the organization would not be around today.”

#### STAFF / BOARD CHANGES

*Who’s moving on or moving into org leadership*

**NEW HARVEST FOUNDATION** The New Harvest Foundation welcomes Sarah Best, their newest board member. Best has extensive experience with social and electronic media marketing and is excited to help in this area.

**GSAFE** On January 20 Kristen Brock-Petroshius, the Executive Director of GSAFE, announced that she would be leaving GSAFE in early February. In a press release, Brock-Petroshius thanked GSAFE’s youth, staff and board of directors for the “tremendous opportunity” she received to work with them in order to create “just schools for LGBTQ+ youth in Wisconsin.” She also notes the accomplishments she is most proud of, including the launch of their Racial Justice Program, which focuses on building the leadership of LGBTQ+ youth of color, and their Trans Justice Program, which focuses on building the leadership of transgender and non-conforming youth. GSAFE is still looking for a new Executive Director. To learn more, visit [gsafe.org/a-new-opportunity-in-gsafes-leadership](http://gsafe.org/a-new-opportunity-in-gsafes-leadership).



Scott Brown, Ellen Lindgren (Co-Chair) and Steven Morrison (Co-Chair) will be departing as members of GSAFE’s board.

**CHIPPEWA VALLEY LGBTQ+** Chippewa Valley LGBTQ+ welcomes Chelsea Otte, their newest board member. She will be working as their Web Liaison and has helped their website become viewable on multiple platforms.

**MILWAUKEE PRIDE** On January 20, Milwaukee Pride, Inc. Board of Directors appointed Eric Heinritz as their new executive director. In a press release, Milwaukee Pride, Inc. writes that, “in this newly created role, Heinritz will foster continued growth by



### LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT FOR LOCAL GAY VETERAN

We were proud to feature retired Special Forces Intelligence Officer and current Edgewood College history department chair Jay Hatheway in the March 2015 issue of *Our Lives*, for his successful appeal of his 1975 court martial and dishonorable discharge for violation of the “Sodomy Statute.” Recently, Hatheway was more than pleasantly surprised to receive the following letter of support from none other than President Barack Obama, who also expresses his support for LGBTQ rights in general.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON  
January 15, 2016

Dr. Jay Hatheway  
Stoughton, Wisconsin

Dear Dr. Hatheway:

Thank you for writing, and for your service to our country. I was touched by your message.

Your experience speaks to the real and lasting changes that have been made on the journey toward LGBT equality. The progress of the past few decades is thanks in no small part to brave Americans who came out, spoke up, and challenged prejudice in their own communities. History shows that once that courageous spirit takes hold, little can stand in its way—which is why I know our Nation’s transformation will continue.

Again, I appreciate your inspiring letter. Messages like yours encourage me to keep fighting to open doors of opportunity for all Americans, regardless of who they are or who they love.

Sincerely,

leading fundraising, programming, finance, governance and community engagement initiatives.” The organization has operated under different legal entities for 28 years, but always on a volunteer basis, marking an historic change from a “weekend experience to a year-round community resource,” notes Michail Takach, Milwaukee Pride, Inc. communications director.

**OPEN** The LGBTQ professional organization is pleased to announce new board president Greg Frahm-Gilles, who takes over for outgoing president Cedric Johnson.

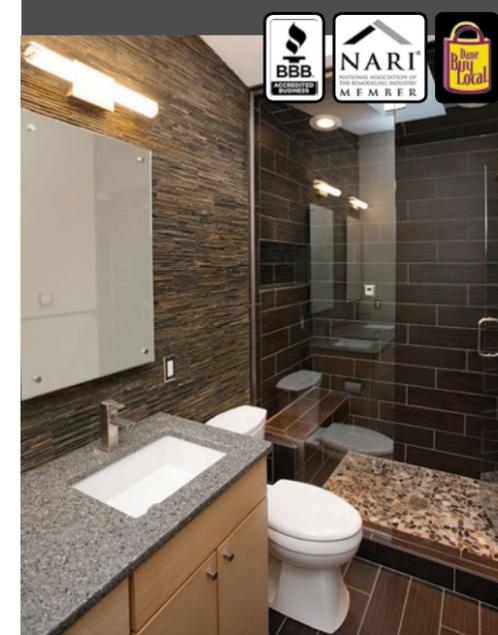
Greg currently works in business development and commercial leasing for Alexander/RE Real Estate Services, and has a background in urban planning and economic development.



#### CALLS TO ACTION

*Where and how you can help*

**CHIPPEWA VALLEY LGBTQ+** The group is looking for volunteers, even for just an hour a



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**LGBTQ ARCHIVE AT U.W.-MADISON** The Archive is building a collection to reflect the history of the LGBTQ community in Dane County. Be part of the record! Contribute your:

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- Records of community organizations, businesses and local political campaigns;
- Physical and digital images;
- Ephemera like posters, flyers, buttons, etc.;
- Film, audio and video recordings of local LGBTQ events, people and issues.

To get involved, contact [uwarchiv@library.wisc.edu](mailto:uwarchiv@library.wisc.edu), call 608-262-5629, or see the Archives site at [library.wisc.edu/archives](http://library.wisc.edu/archives).

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plan ahead to join in

**MARCH 11-13 LGBT CAMPUS CENTER** U.W.-Madison's Leadership Institute is a week-end-long retreat for LGBTQ+ students to build relationships, find community and learn to create a more inclusive environment for queer students on campus. The weekend will create the groundwork for developing leadership skills as well as building on existing skills, specifically in relation to intersecting identities, privilege and oppression. For more info, visit [lgbt.wisc.edu/leadership.htm](http://lgbt.wisc.edu/leadership.htm).

**MARCH 12 PROUD THEATER** Proud Theater, in collaboration with Art and Soul Innovations, Outreach LGBT Community Center, Trinity United Methodist Church, PFLAG-Madison, and the First United Methodist Church of Madison will be holding its first annual LGBTQ+ intergenerational conference at First United Methodist Church, 203 Wisconsin Avenue, in Madison, from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Members of the LGBTQ+ and allied communities of all ages are encouraged to attend. "Connections: Building LGBTQ+ Relationships" is a conference designed to bring together multiple generations of the LGBTQ+ and allied communities with the purpose of building positive bonds between community members of all ages. Registration is open and forms can be requested by emailing [reservations@proudtheater.org](mailto:reservations@proudtheater.org).

Space is limited, and the event is asking for a suggested donation between \$5 and \$20.

**MARCH 19 CHIPPEWA VALLEY LGBTQ+** Chippewa Valley LGBTQ+ will be hosting a BINGO event on March 19 at the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Eau Claire. The game begins at 2:30. Cards are \$4 each or three for \$10. Prizes include gift cards to local and national businesses, and a \$50 pre-paid Visa card to be used anywhere the winner chooses!

The group will also have a picnic and booth event for PRIDE on June 11 in Riverview Park's North Pavilion in Eau Claire. Other PRIDE events will take place June 10, 11 and 12. For updates and more info, visit [cvlgbt.info](http://cvlgbt.info).

**MARCH 20 ARCW** Camp Bingo returns to the Sheraton Hotel in Madison. Now in its tenth year, Camp Bingo is a FUNdraising event to help people living with HIV/AIDS. This event will be packed full of seven games of bingo, all with cash prizes, a costume contest, trivia game, 50-50 raffle, and food and beverages for purchase. There will also be guest ball callers and tons of prizes. The theme for this edition of the event will be "Classy and Trashy Bingo." Tickets purchase online in advance include Express Check-In. Tickets are \$20 at [madcampbingo.org](http://madcampbingo.org). Seating is limited and based on first-come, first-served!

**MARCH 20 PFLAG** Each month, the Madison chapter hosts meetings 2:00-4:00 p.m. at 1704 Roberts Ct. Their next meeting is on March 20. For updates, follow PFLAG at [facebook.com/PFLAG-Madison](http://facebook.com/PFLAG-Madison).

**MARCH 26 THE MILTOWN KINGS** Milwaukee's premier drag king troupe has recently relocated to the Next Act Theater. Their next performance, on March 26, will be musically themed. Expect performance interpretations ranging from *Rent* to *Avenue Q* and beyond to grace their stage. They will also feature community guest performers who would like a chance to work with us, and two local established performers. Show time is 9:00 p.m., and tickets are \$10. They will also be performing at UWM's Drag Ball in February, Alverno College's Annual Drag Show in April, and the Wisconsin Burlesque Festival in April. For more information and updates, visit [miltownkings.com](http://miltownkings.com).

**MARCH 28 PRIDE IN HEALTHCARE** On March

STEVENS POINT ADDS ITS NAME TO WISCONSIN CITIES ADDING GENDER IDENTITY/EXPRESSION TO ITS NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The City Council of Stevens Point, Wisconsin, voted unanimously in January to add gender identity and expression to its non-discrimination policy for city employees, making it just one of a handful of municipalities in the state to do so.

"I am very pleased to have had a unanimous approval of the policy change," Stevens Point Mayor Mike Wiza said after the vote. "It shows that the city believes what I have been an advocate of for many years, treating everyone with respect and fairness."

The city of Milwaukee and Milwaukee County, Cudahy, Appleton, Madison and Dane County are so far the only other places in Wisconsin that have protections for gender identity and expression in their employee agreements.

Portage County resident Bobbie Joy Amann noted that she felt the move was especially significant because "these protections do not currently exist at the Federal level, and only 17 states provide such protection at the state level. Wisconsin is not one of them." Amann was one of the many who gave testimony in favor of the amendment.

The vote marks the end of the official process for the change in policy, which will go into effect almost immediately.

"Stevens Point has always been a friendly and welcoming community," Mayor Wiza added. "That's one of the things that tends to stick in the minds of people who visit and the thing that I love most about our city."

28 the Pharmacy Student division of PRIDE in Healthcare is organizing a talk on Transgender Pharmacotherapy. The talk will be 5:00-6:00 p.m. at Rennebohm Hall, Room 206, in the U.W.-Madison School of Pharmacy. This event is open to the public.

**APRIL 1 THE ARTWRITE COLLECTIVE** "Toast," an exhibition by Alaura Seidl and you, is an installation of involuntary performances that will be screened during the exhibition and will be concerned with accountability, the role of memory in healing and queer dilem-



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A talented lawyer, mediator, arbitrator, Adjunct Professor of Law at Marquette University Law School, an author of a law book and numerous legal articles, a Co-Parent Coordinator, Guardian *ad Litem*, and an engaging speaker who has given over 60 presentations, Christopher has knowledge in every aspect of family law. Christopher effectively and successfully represents clients in matters including divorce,

paternity, child support, child custody, adoptions, guardianships, estate planning and Marital Property Agreements. Christopher is well versed in the unique issues involving clients in divorce who are business owners, own complex financial assets, or are facing challenging child custody disputes.

His family law practice includes traditional litigation, cooperative divorce, and collaborative law. A strong advocate for serving the community, Christopher has been recognized for his *pro bono* work with numerous awards and honors. In addition, he is known throughout the state as a leading authority on same-sex marriage, same-sex divorce, and LGBT rights. Christopher accepts clients statewide and works out of both the firm's Madison and Brookfield offices. If you are interested in contacting Christopher please email him at [csk@dewittross.com](mailto:csk@dewittross.com).



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mas. This negotiation and celebration of gender and sexuality incompletely reconciles the tension between private confrontations and public spectacles for queer liberation. Opening Reception: Friday, April 1, 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. at the Arts + Literature Lab (2021 Winnebago St.) and open to all. LGBTQ/GSRM circles will be hosted in conjunction with this show. Details to be announced.

APRIL 3 WI LGBT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

The LGBT Chamber presents the 2nd Annual Madison Area LGBT Wedding Expo. This

event will be on April 3 from 11:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Sheraton Madison. The Expo is free and open to the public. To register or learn more, visit wislgbtchamber.com.

The organization will also be hosting a Madison Area Women's Leadership Luncheon, and a Milwaukee Area Women's Leadership Luncheon, for women who are current or emerging leaders of LGBT Chamber of Commerce member organizations and corporate partners. This event is an opportunity to network with, learn from and enjoy the company of other LGBT and allied professional women. The speaker for both events is Tanya Atkinson, the Vice President of External Affairs at Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin. The Madison luncheon will take place on March 22 from 11:30 to 1:00 p.m. Best Western Plus InnTowner at 2424 University Avenue. The Milwaukee luncheon will take place on March 23 from 11:30 to 1:00 p.m. at the Tripoli Shrine Center at 3000 W. Wisconsin Ave. Tickets are \$25 for Chamber members and \$35 for non-members. Scholarships are available. To purchase your ticket, visit wislgbtchamber.com.

APRIL 7 DIVERSE & RESILIENT Diverse and Resilient will be holding the 4th Annual

Reviving the Dream Celebration, which includes the presentation of Diverse & Resilient's 2016 LGBT leadership awards, honoring individuals and organizations for their leadership in, and on behalf of, Wisconsin's LGBT community. The event will take place in the evening of April 7, 2016 at the Milwaukee Marriott Downtown. For more information, visit diverseandresilient.org/reviving.

APRIL 9 MADISON MINOTAURS The LGBT rugby club has announced their Spring season! They will be playing three away games and three home games. The home games will take place on April 9, April 30 and May 7. All home games are played at the Wisconsin Rugby Sports Complex at 4064 Vilas Road in Cottage Grove. For more information, visit madisonminotaurs.com.

APRIL 15 DIVERSE & RESILIENT, U.W.-MADISON LGBT CAMPUS CENTER, GSAFE This coalition of organizations is pleased to present "Safe Schools, Safe Communities: State Conference on LGBTQ Youth" on Friday, April 15. This year's theme is "Justice for LGBTQ Youth" and will explore what health, educational and racial justice looks like for LGBTQ youth in both schools and communities. This

OUT CANDIDATE ANNOUNCES RUN FOR DANE COUNTY BOARD



Longtime Madison activist and volunteer Richard Kilmer is running for the Dane County Board of Supervisors in District Four, hoping to replace Kyle Richmond as he steps down from the position.

Kilmer is a Registered Pharmacist, starting at WSA Pharmacy (now Community Pharmacy), and has spent many years as President of the board and is currently Vice-President of the board and chief pharmacist. He was an early volunteer for the Madison AIDS support network (now ARCW) during the early years of the AIDS crisis. He was one of the founders of GALVANize (Now Madison Pride), and

president of the board of The United and helped with its merger with the LGBT Resource Center to become OutReach. He has been on the board of New Harvest Foundation and the City of Madison Business Improvement District Board (BID). Kilmer is also a member of the Wisconsin Mental Health Drug Advisory Committee and, having seen the effects of mental illness, wants to see improved services for the mentally ill and homeless people of Dane County. He has been involved with the needle exchange program, suboxone availability programs and worked to provide overdose treatment programs in the county.

Kilmer's platform includes pledges to work for improved availability for drug and alcohol treatment, clean needle programs and naloxone availability for drug overdoses and improving access to housing for the homeless population. His other concerns include improving the environment and helping control unchecked growth in Dane County.

year's conference will be held at U.W.-Madison. Our target audience members are school and community-based adults who work with LGBTQ youth, as well as middle and high school youth leaders. To register, or receive updates for this conference, visit gsafewi.org/events/statewide-conference-on-lgbt-youth.

APRIL 29 FAMILY EQUALITY COUNCIL The Family Equality Council will be hosting their Family Weekend in the Midwest from April 29 through May 1. The event will take place at Sheraton Madison Hotel, 706 John Nolen Drive, Madison. This event is for LGBTQ parents, their children, extended families, prospective families and friends in the Midwest. Family Weekend will include family activities, fun and programming for all ages. This year, the keynote will be Carly Lehwald from the ABC Family docuseries "Becoming Us." For more information, or to register, visit familyequality.org.

SAVE THE DATE

MAY 14 GSAFE GSAFE will host their 20th Annual Celebration of Youth Leadership Scholarship and Awards from 5:00-9:00 p.m. at Monona Terrace. The banquet will celebrate the recipients of their Youth Leadership Scholarships awarded to four high school seniors who identify as LGBTQ+ students or allies. Each receives \$1000 for their commitment to social justice work in Wisconsin, particularly with LGBTQ+ issues.

JUNE 20-26 U.W.-MILWAUKEE LGBT CENTER Planning is underway for UWM's Pride Discovery Camp, taking place at 2200 E. Kenwood Blvd., in Milwaukee. UWM Pride Discovery Camp is designed to inspire LGBT+ high school students to embrace their multiple identities and gain a better understanding of marginalized identities through community building, activism, self-expression and connections in the LGBT+ community. The camp empowers and enriches students with confidence and leadership skills and encourages campers to realize their full potential. Scholarships are available. To register, visit uwm.edu/lgbtrc/programs/pride-camp.

AUGUST 20-21 MADISON GAY VOLLEYBALL The 2016 Madison Pride Volleyball Tournament will be at Callahan's Sports Pub, 1902 Bartillon Drive. madisongayvolleyball.com.

AUGUST 21 PRIDE PARADE OutReach will be hosting its annual Pride Parade in Madison at 11 a.m. on State Street and the Capitol Square.

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## Literary Community

Author and poet **Rita Mae Reese** reflects on her tentative first steps into the lesbian community via the conduit of the written word, and the importance of those connections even now.

**WHEN I WAS COMING OUT** in Charleston, West Virginia, the only real way for me to find other lesbians seemed to be through books. There was one lesbian bar in town filled with much older women and, outside, men who'd hit on me as I walked to my car. When I checked a Rita Mae Brown novel out of the public library and the librarian told me it was a good book, I was terrified. I'd only convinced myself to check it out because I figured no one would know what it was about.

Luckily, I went to a women's studies conference in Ohio—a big trip for me then—and got to attend a lesbian caucus. The leader of it said the word "lesbian" what seemed like a thousand times, and each time the recoil in myself and the women around me seemed to lessen, just a little bit. I think we all walked out of there still terrified of the word, of each other, and of ourselves, but also with the seeds of community and confidence, even pride, planted. It took years for the seeds to sprout and eventually thrive.

I went from being a terrified, isolated, hillbilly lesbian to living for years where the only contact with the heterosexual world was brief conversations with the UPS man who always eyed the book *World Without Men* warily.

It was at that caucus that I got on the mailing list for Naiad Press. I ordered some books and devoured them in complete secrecy. Then I applied for a job at the Press. I still remember the day Barbara Grier called to ask me to come for an interview (or rather to tell me that I would be coming for an interview—the conversation was a torrent that swept me along). I ended up moving to Tallahassee and being part of a lesbian community for the first time. I had access to the largest library of lesbian books in the United States and got to hear stories from women who had been in the lesbian community and in the publishing movement for as long as I had been alive.

Around that time I became very interested in the writer Flannery O'Connor, a Southern Catholic writer who wrote darkly funny stories and died in 1964, when she was only 39. She had lupus and had lived with her mother on a dairy farm in Milledgeville, Georgia for most of her adult life. I read her collected letters and was struck by her talent, generosity and wicked sense of humor. I was also struck by the fact that she had a large circle of lesbian friends, which seemed remarkable for someone living in the middle of Georgia in the '50s. I couldn't help but think that had she had more freedom, she would have had a very different life. So I took one of her characters, one that shared many of the particulars of O'Connor's own life, and wrote an alternative life for O'Connor. The book that resulted is called *The Book of Hulga*. It contains illustrations by local artist Julie Franki and will be released by the University of Wisconsin Press on March 25, which would have been O'Connor's 91st birthday.

I went from being a terrified, isolated, hillbilly lesbian to living for years where the only contact with the heterosexual world was brief conversations with the UPS man who always eyed the book *World Without Men* warily. I have also been immersed in the world of small press publishing and still forge connections inside that world. My first book was published by Arktoi Books, a lesbian imprint of Red Hen Press. Right now I'm designing lesbian poet trading cards for Headmistress Press, which has been a really fun way of discovering, re-discovering and sharing remarkable but neglected work. Right now, I am serving as co-director of writing programming at Arts + Literature Laboratory (ALL) in Madison. ALL is a community art space for visual, literary and performing artists to develop and share their work and create new connections. We are hosting a reading series, a small press lending library, craft lectures, exhibits, concerts, workshops and more.

I believe poetry can act as a vaccine, that you need to read a lot of it in advance of bad times so that those words are there to keep you company when you feel hurt and alone. I know that when people don't have recourse to words already planted in their consciousness, they can feel as if there is no thread left to find their way back to the rest of humanity. Poetry, particularly lesbian poetry, has also led me to a life more rich than I could have ever dreamed of. It opened up not only a space for who I already was, but it carved out a space for who I could become. ■

### CELEBRATE NATIONAL POETRY MONTH WITH LESBIAN POET TRADING CARDS

In an effort to have fun and reclaim lesbian history at the same time, Headmistress Press is issuing Lesbian Poet Trading Cards. There will be 12 new cards issued each year in a limited edition. The first set, issued in 2015, included Eloise Klein Healy, Charlotte Mew, Naomi Replansky and Audre Lorde. Don't recognize all of the names on that list? That's just what the project aims to remedy! Poet and activist Minnie Bruce Pratt (also featured in 2015) said, "I took [a set] over to give to a poetry-loving gay male friend, and the interaction was very interesting. We sat at the table and 'dealt out' the cards, and he and I both found out how little he knew about lesbian poets!"

Shelly L. Hall, a Wisconsin poet, is also featured on a card. Hall was a poet who was deeply interested in mysticism, particularly Julian of Norwich. She received her MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop and PhD in religious studies at the University of Iowa. Two of her books were published during her lifetime and the third was published posthumously. She died of cancer at the age of 52.

Featured poets in 2016 will include Eileen Myles, Marilyn Hacker and Wu Tsao. For more information on the Lesbian Poets Trading Card project, go to: [headmistresspress.blogspot.com/p/lesbian-poet-trading-cards.html](http://headmistresspress.blogspot.com/p/lesbian-poet-trading-cards.html). ■



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## Rolling with Transition

Ray McMahan found his inner athlete and a welcoming home in the sport of roller derby. Now he's looking to build a space specifically for cis- and trans-identified men to play in Madison, too.

**WITH A SNAP I AWAKE** to the abrupt sound of two guys with Jersey accents talking about cars. Silently cursing, I slowly peel myself out from the warm cocoon of the covers and turn off the radio alarm clock. It's six a.m. on Saturday morning and time to go to practice. I chug some coffee and drive to the roller rink.

For the umpteenth time today, I'm sprawled out on the floor after taking a hit. My wrist guards smell like cheese—and not the good kind. There's a bruise on my ass that looks a bit like the Mona Lisa if you squint your eyes and tilt your head just right. I start to wonder if maybe my teammates have been slipping a little something extra into the electrolyte water they keep raving about because only crazy people would prefer getting knocked around on a Saturday morning over sleeping in. Despite not being religious or even spiritual, this is my Church. When I'm on skates, I touch the divine.

Some describe their practice space as the Church of Derby because it's the only thing that gets many of us up out of bed early on a weekend. It's meant in jest, but there is some truth in comedy. Much like the Church, roller derby provides a mission, common sense of purpose, and community. It feels more like an extended, chosen family than a league.

OURLIVESMADISON.COM

Roller derby is a revolutionary sport in that women lead the way as players and leaders. Not only that, it's far and above more progressive than any mainstream sport when it comes to its LGBT-identified players. Since the beginning, roller derby has been a sport rooted in the counter-culture; a space where non-traditional athletes could flourish.

In November 2015, the governing body of roller derby, the Women's Flat Track Derby Association (WFTDA), released a statement on its gender policy clarifying that no member league would discriminate based on gender or hormone levels. The WFTDA added clarification that anyone who identifies as a woman or gender expansive individual, sometimes referred to as non-binary or genderqueer, is welcome to participate without requiring intrusive documentation or hormone level checks. In a time and age where trans\* individuals still face major discrimination, this forward thinking policy is nearly unheard of. In contrast, although they recently updated their recommendations to get rid of surgical requirements, the International Olympic Committee still requires transwomen athletes "prove" that their testosterone level has been below a certain cutoff point for at least one year before their first competition, and has a spotty track record when it comes to the treatment of transgender athletes in general.

Growing up, I was un-athletic and queerer than a flaming rainbow. Not surprisingly, I didn't find myself involved in sports. Even to this day I'm not entirely certain whether a tight end in football is a player position or a reference to a nice bum. Roller derby, as a relatively recently revived sport, is perfect for people who don't have extensive athletic backgrounds because everyone who plays has just picked up the sport sometime within the last decade or so. The exciting thing about roller derby is that it's a constantly evolving sport.

As a kid I didn't have the vocabulary to express my queer identity and simply accepted the label of tomboy. I loved playing rough and tumble with the boys and was happy to just be one of the guys, if more on the effeminate side. Then puberty happened and the sex segregation that was already apparent as a young child become even more stark as an adolescent. I found it difficult to navigate the world as a masculine-identified person with a feminine physical appearance. While nobody perfectly embodies society's gender roles, most cisgender people (those who identify with their birth sex) are like puzzle pieces being put in the wrong spot, but are close enough to fit into place with enough manipulation. I was that puzzle piece with three round tab pieces trying to be forced into a spot with two tabs.

Luckily, I didn't experience the intense dysphoria many trans\* people face where parts of their body feel foreign and incongruent with their mental image of themselves causing extreme mental discomfort. For many years I resigned myself to living in a female body because I didn't think I was "trans enough" to transition. At the end of 2015 at the age of 25, I finally decided to start transitioning from female to male. I owe my personal journey of self-acceptance in no small part to the culture of acceptance I found in the Madison derby league. Even now as I've taken on the appearance of a young man, complete with weak moustache and all, there has never been any doubt that they would continue to welcome me.

Though I wholeheartedly love the local roller derby league, I feel conflicted skating with a primarily women's league. I'm working to build a men's derby league here in Madison with Sir Racha, a member of the Milwaukee Blitzkrieg men's derby league who now resides in Madison. My hope is that roller derby in Madison will continue to grow and that a men's league will help pave the way for a junior's league. The culture that roller derby brings is a great way for people that don't fit into traditional molds of gender or sexuality to get to experience sports and I want to share the joy of roller derby with others. ■

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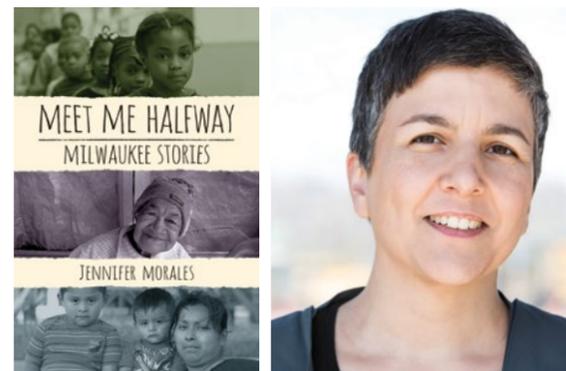
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CONNECT → OUR AUTHORS



## Stories of Division, Stories of Connection

**Megan Milks** interviews Wisconsin-based author **Jennifer Morales** about her new collection of stories, and crafting/understanding a variety of voices as they face, head-on, the issues of race, queer identity and human relations.

**IN HER DEBUT COLLECTION** *Meet Me Halfway: Milwaukee Stories*, Jennifer Morales draws on a large cast of diverse characters to dramatize intercultural relationships in hypersegregated Milwaukee. At the heart of these nine linked stories is Johnquell, an African-American teen who suffers an accident while moving a bookcase for an elderly white neighbor.

Informed by her experience as a former school board member, community organizer and parent, Morales's book presents a deft exploration of Milwaukee's social divisions while also offering moments of cross-cultural affinity—and love: one of my favorites is "Menudo," the story of Johnquell's aunt Bee-Bee's budding lesbian romance with her Spanish tutor and landlord Netania. Now a Viroqua resident, Morales is hard at work finishing her second book, an exciting-sounding project involving lesbian pulp. She took a break from novel revisions to chat by phone with me.

**WHAT'S YOUR RELATIONSHIP TO MILWAUKEE? WHAT WAS IT YOU WERE INTERESTED IN CAPTURING?**

When I moved to Milwaukee, I was shocked at having moved from a pretty racially diverse neighborhood in the suburbs of Chicago to see how divided the neighborhoods were in Milwaukee. All these years it's really stuck with me that that hypersegregation really influences every other aspect of city life, whether it's schools, or transportation, or availability of jobs or quality of representation in the government—all those things are affected by your address. It haunted me how badly disadvantaged someone could be just by what neighborhood they lived in. So, as a policymaker, mom and activist, I felt like my writing needed to help me process that.

What I tried to do with the book was present a range of voices that I heard as Milwaukee voices and show how many ways people play out that segregation in their daily life: things like upholding some kind of intercultural antagonism in a simple conversation on the bus.

I was struck by your skill in dramatizing those kinds of antagonisms. What strategies do you use to achieve that?

I always go back to listening. I'm a chronic eavesdropper. I'm deeply interested in language and the ways people understand or misunderstand each other.

I'm very sensitive, too, to when I'm hearing people across cultures or across groups talking to each other, the way they try to police each other's language. I hear power in people's language all the time. I guess I would say I'm a deep listener and I'm a critical listener. That's where I find the tension in the scene.

**FOR YOUR READING TOUR, YOU VISITED EIGHT OUT OF AMERICA'S 10 MOST SEGREGATED CITIES—HAS THAT CHANGED? HAVE YOU VISITED ALL 10?**

No, the outliers are Miami and Los Angeles. It would be great if I could go to those in the winter, but it's not happening. I spent all my tour money.

**WHAT WAS YOUR IMPULSE IN FOCUSING ON THESE CITIES?**

At an activist level, it was about which cities most need to talk about their segregation, and which cities could most benefit from easing into difficult conversation through fiction.

I also did these park bench sits in different cities along the way, with a big sign that said "Please talk with me about race." I just let people approach me and talk to me about however they access that topic. Some people read it as "please talk with me about racism." Some people wanted to talk about the biology of race. Some people wanted to tell me about how they're treated by the cops. Some people wanted to tell me about the media's portrayal of race and racism. I blogged about it [moraleswrites.com/blog].

**IS THERE A NOTABLE MOMENT OR EXCHANGE THAT YOU'D BE WILLING TO SHARE HERE?**

My experience in Ann Arbor seemed similar to conversations that Madisonians are having. I was on the campus of the University of Michigan. Like Madison, Ann Arbor is the flagship of the University of Michigan system. It's very white and very privileged in a lot of ways. While I was sitting there, I had a really amazing interaction with this maybe early-30s white woman. She basically said, "I just noticed that racism is a thing. What do I do?" (laughs)

It was a beautiful moment, where this person from the dominant culture was able to say, "Wow. I have no idea," which is where people have to start when they want to make change, when they want to heal relationships with people: this absolute basic open-mindedness.

**THE LAST TIME WE SPOKE, YOU WERE TELLING ME ABOUT YOUR NEW PROJECT WHICH INVOLVES LESBIAN PULP NOVELS—IS THAT STILL IN THE WORKS?**

I'm in the process of revising my manuscript, which I finished over the summer. It's a novel in a novel, a contemporary novel with a 1950s pulp inside.

**ARE THERE ANY FAVORITE PULP NOVELS THAT INFORMED THE PROJECT?**

I've read the Beebo Brinker series and loved those. One of my favorites was *Women's Barracks*, which was written by Tereska Torrès, and it's set in France in World War II. It's about women soldiers of the Free French Forces, and it's just so naughty and beautiful. I'm blushing as I say this, because in some ways they're all bad. They break every single rule you learn in your MFA Creative Writing program.



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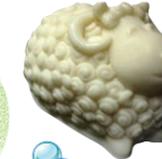
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Photo by Jason Albus



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## Doing the Groundwork

One local, grassroots organization focuses on how white Madisonians can become actively anti-racist and support groups led by people of color in the fight for racial justice.

**Groundwork** is an all-volunteer effort.

**WHAT IS GROUNDWORK ALL ABOUT? WHAT IS THE GROUP'S MISSION AND HOW HAS IT WORKED TO FULFILL THAT?**

Groundwork is an organization of white people working to achieve racial justice and equity in Dane County. Our three main goals are to engage white people to work for racial justice, work in collaboration with organizations led by people of color, and deepen our members' own education and leadership development. Groundwork does this through workshops, taking racial justice work into our spheres of influence, and showing up for actions, projects and campaigns that are led by people of color. Our workshops help white people understand their privilege, learn about their role in social justice work and how to take action to end racism. We have an annual six-week white privilege workshop and conduct trainings throughout the year with organizations that make requests for our trainings. We will be having open monthly meetings for people to get plugged in.



**HOW AND WHY WAS THE GROUP STARTED? WHAT ROLE DOES IT PLAY IN THE COMMUNITY (WHAT GAPS DOES IT HELP FILL)?**

Groundwork started out of a need for white people to be addressing racism. A multi-racial group of people who had experience with racial justice training did a reading group and a nine-week workshop. The need for a space for white people to do work with one another was clear and the white people in the group began meeting regularly.

Partnerships and relationships with other racial justice organizations slowly developed over the next few years. Groundwork held events and workshops, showed up at actions, supported organizations of color with fundraising and other resources and deepened the struggle for racial justice in predominately white Madison.

We feel it is essential that white people work to dismantle the dominant culture that creates oppression and takes opportunities and freedoms away from people of color. Our efforts promote an understanding of the role white people have to play in pursuing racial equity.

**WHAT ARE SOME OF THE CHALLENGES THE GROUP FACES AND HOW DOES IT WORK TO OVERCOME THEM? WHY IS AN ORGANIZATION LIKE THIS IMPORTANT IN MADISON?**

One challenge we face is how to address the balance between supporting the deep transformation that white people need to undergo in our process of unlearning racism, while also trying to engage a large amount of white people in this work. We are a volunteer collective and have limited capacity to do this important leadership development, recruitment and engaging people into action.

White supremacy is a major system that we are up against, and the Movement for Black Lives, the #Not1More migrant rights movement and Idle No More are creating space and opportunity for winning major victories in dismantling this system. Many white people want to be doing more, learning more and contributing to creating a society that is based on love and justice rather than fear and hate which people like Donald Trump promote.

We need people to find ways they can make a difference in their workplaces, hosting conversations at their house with friends, donating time and money to grassroots racial justice organizations, making phone calls or showing up at actions.

**HOW CAN PEOPLE GET INVOLVED / FIND OUT MORE?**

You can get involved by contacting us at [groundworkmadison@gmail.com](mailto:groundworkmadison@gmail.com). You can request to be on our email list and will be informed about when we announce our next workshop, learn about our third Sunday of the month educational programs and other action opportunities. You can also request that we offer trainings or speak at your organization's events. Like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/GroundworkMadison](https://www.facebook.com/GroundworkMadison).

Racial justice is a queer issue, and it is crucial that white queer, trans and allied people are bringing our full selves in this important time of great possibility for change. ■

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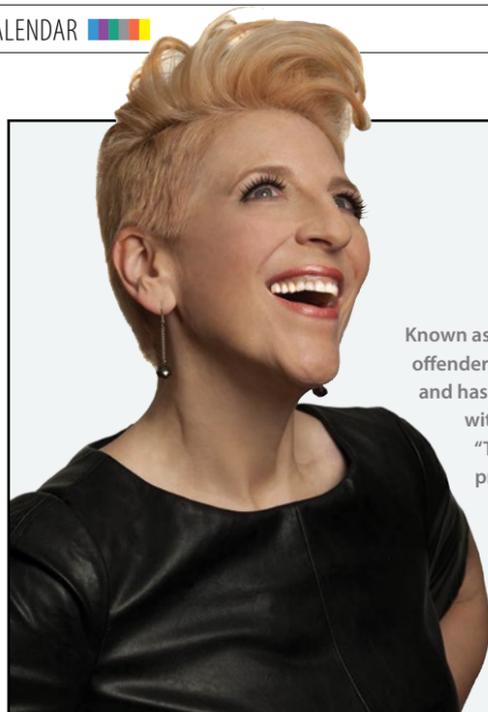


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# March & April

Stay up-to-date with what's happening in your community! There's always plenty to do and see—from LGBTQ-specific gatherings and activities, to sporting events, concerts, social groups and so much more.

We've selected a few to highlight for you from a wide variety of great local organizations. Get out there!



APRIL

2

**LISA LAMPANELLI**  
*Capitol Theater*

Known as Comedy's Lovable Queen of Mean, this equal opportunity offender is a regular on Howard Stern's Sirius satellite radio shows, and has appeared on "The Tonight Show with Jay Leno," "Late Show with David Letterman," "Chelsea Lately," "Jimmy Kimmel Live," "The Dr. Oz Show" and "Good Morning America." In 2009, she premiered her first-ever one-hour HBO comedy special, "Long Live the Queen," to tremendous ratings. That same year, her autobiography, *Chocolate, Please: My Adventures in Food, Fat and Freaks* hit bookstores to critical acclaim. Currently, she's making a departure from her signature "insult" comedy with her first theater production, *Fat Girl Interrupted*, to show a side of her that few would guess exists.

[frankproductions.com](http://frankproductions.com)

MARCH

4

**FLAPPER'S FEAST:  
A ROARING '20S PARTY**  
*Blackhawk Country Club*

Madison Opera is throwing a swinging party to celebrate and support Opera in the Park, 6:00 to 10:00 p.m. at the Blackhawk Country Club. Enjoy a live jazz band, dancing, cocktails, food and both a silent and live auction.

[madisonopera.org](http://madisonopera.org)

11-13

**CANOECOPIA**  
*Alliant Energy Center*

Join over 20,000 paddling enthusiasts for the largest paddlesports consumer event in the world, with more than 250,000 square feet of kayaks, canoes, stand up paddleboards, outdoor equipment and clothing. The event also includes seminars and clinics where you can learn about the perfect gear, develop skills to get you where you want to go, and discover some of the many places to paddle, both near and far.

[canoecopia.com](http://canoecopia.com)

13

**FEED YOUR SOUL**  
*Full Compass*

Join the Wisconsin Chamber Orchestra and top Madison area chefs for an evening of music and fine food in support of our education and community engagement programs. Featured are Chefs Shinji Muramoto (43 North, Restaurant Muramoto, Sushi Muramoto), Michael Pruett (Cento) and Sean Crowley (Big Sky).

[wcoconcerts.org](http://wcoconcerts.org)

APRIL

2

**HUMP! FILM FEST**  
*Barrymore Theater*

The homemade, x-rated short film fest created and hosted by opinion columnist Dan Savage returns to Madison on its newest tour, with movies that run the gamut of sexual styles: straight, gay, lesbian, transgender, and every color in the sexual rainbow.

Created and performed by sex-positive people HUMP! films aim to be "sexy, funny, thought-provoking, artistic, outrageous, and oh so real." For mature audiences only.

[barrymorelive.com](http://barrymorelive.com)

7-24

**FORWARD THEATER'S  
"MR. BURNS"**

*Overture Center*

In a not-so-distant future where the grid has failed, society has crumbled, and memories can no longer be stored on hard drives, a group of survivors bands together to recreate their vanished world through theater, music and remnants of popular culture. Anne Washburn's imaginative dark comedy takes us on a post-apocalyptic thrill ride to a time when memory is the new currency, and theater is the new social media.

Whether you've never seen "The Simpsons" or you know every episode by heart, you'll enjoy this animated exploration of how the pop culture of one era evolves into the mythology of another.

[forwardtheater.com](http://forwardtheater.com)

10

**FAIR WISCONSIN LEADERSHIP AWARDS MADISON BRUNCH**

*Location TBA*

Save the date for the Madison brunch edition of Fair Wisconsin's annual Leadership Awards celebration.  
[fairwisconsineducationfund.com](http://fairwisconsineducationfund.com)



14

**SEXY ESTER  
AT MAD CITY SESSIONS**

*Overture Center for the Arts*

The 2015 MAMAs Artist of the Year takes front and center for this edition of Mad City Sessions. Come by between 6:00 and 8:00 p.m., grab a beer and some eats while you enjoy some of the best music Madison has to offer. Lead singer Lyndsay Evans controls the stage like the divas of old, backed by infectious dance-rock songs that will have you hard pressed not to dance.

[overturecenter.org](http://overturecenter.org)

9

**ANI DIFRANCO**  
*Barrymore Theater*

The hard-touring and outspoken singer/songwriter returns to Madison for an evening of songs sure to span the artist's decades-long career of thoughtful, complex folk-rock music that is at turns playful and deeply serious.

Chastity Brown opens.  
[barrymorelive.com](http://barrymorelive.com)

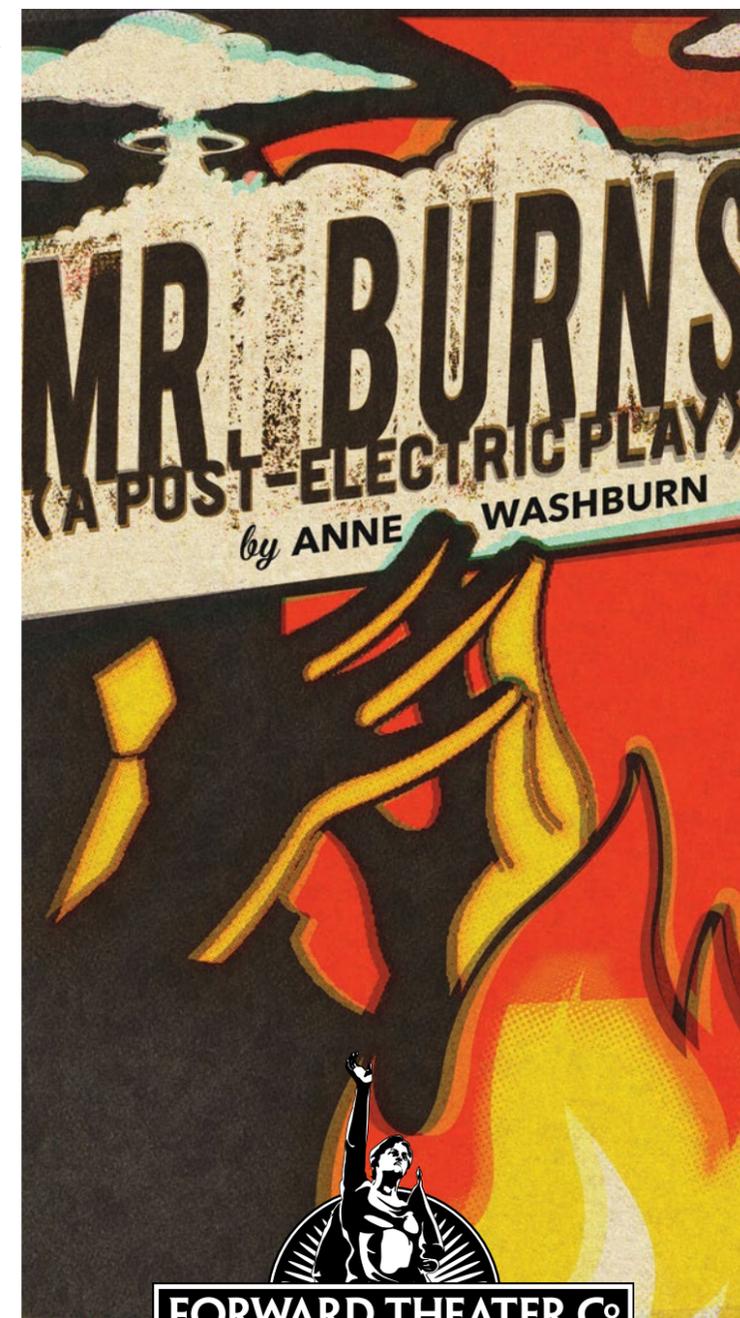
15 & 17

**MADISON OPERA'S  
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[madisonopera.org](http://madisonopera.org)



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**MAD ROLLIN' DOLLS  
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*Alliant Energy Center*

Madison's hard-hitting, roller skating home teams face off in the semi-final matches of the season at the Exhibition Halls, with doors at 5:00 and action at 6:00. These games will determine which teams compete for the championship trophy in May.

[madrollindolls.com](http://madrollindolls.com)

24

**DAVID SEDARIS  
(OUT AT OVERTURE)**

*Overture Center for the Arts*

Back for the first time since the 2013 publication of *Let's Explore Diabetes With Owls*, America's preeminent humorist uses his signature deadpan wit to make Overture Hall



feel like his living room. This is an "Out at Overture" event, part of Overture's new Get Social program. For \$15 in addition to the price of the ticket, you'll explore cocktails and appetizers with owls at a pre-show party designed especially for members of the LGTBQA community. Buy the performance and party ticket together and get a discount on the performance itself.

[overturecenter.org](http://overturecenter.org)

30

**OUT AT THE SYMPHONY**  
*Overture Center for the Arts*

"Out at the Symphony" is an opportunity to connect with the MSO and members and friends of Madison's LGBTQ community in a fantastic night of great classical music with an exclusive party at one of downtown Madison's hottest venues. Ottorino Respighi's achingly beautiful *Pines of Rome* and Carl Orff's colossal *Carmina Burana* provide a memorable ending to the 2015-2016 concert season. *Carmina Burana* will also feature vocal soloists Jeni

Houser, soprano, Thomas Leighton, tenor, Keith Phares, baritone, along with the Madison Symphony Chorus, directed by Beverly Taylor. After the final bow, take a short walk to the Overture Center's Promenade Lounge for an exclusive party. Enjoy conviviality, elegant hors d'oeuvres and conversation while sipping cocktails and mingling with members and friends of the LGBTQ community.

[madisonsymphony.org/out](http://madisonsymphony.org/out)



**Arts Calendar**

The Madison Museum of Contemporary Art presents "**Frank Stella Prints: A Retrospective**" until **May 15**, which represents the first major print retrospective of the renowned artist since 1982. Also featured for the exhibition is the publication of a revised and expanded second edition of **The Prints of Frank Stella: A Catalogue Raisonné, 1967-1982**. There will be a series of special events related to the exhibition that runs throughout.

MMoCA will also celebrate the 10-year anniversary of its **César Pelli-designed home** with a special edition of its MMoCA Nights event on **April 8** from 6:00 to 11:00 p.m. Guests can explore four exhibitions, enjoy music, food, behind-the-scenes tour, and a featured lecture by César Pelli himself, along with MMoCA director Stephen Fleischman. Find out more at [mmoca.org](http://mmoca.org).

**March 8** at MMoCA check out "**ART + Place.**" Public Art is a way to feature public spaces; increase beauty, value and overall livability in a community; attract visitors; and pave paths toward long-term sustainable enhancements of a city's public places. The ART + Place panel will feature Brenda Baker, Thomas Ferrella, and Niki Johnson exploring how public art can result in transformative placemaking.

The Arts + Literature Lab on Winnebago Street will be the scene of "**Toast.**" an exhibition by the **ArtWrite Collective's Alaura Seidl**, on **April 1** from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. This will be an installation of involuntary performances that will be screened during the exhibition and will be concerned with accountability, the role of memory in healing and queer dilemmas. This negotiation and celebration of gender and sexuality incompletely reconciles the tension between private confrontations and public spectacles for queer liberation. LGBTQ/GSRM circles will be hosted in conjunction with this show.

The **Chazen Museum of Art** is hosting the U.W. Art Department **Faculty Quadrennial Exhibition** through **April 17**.

The **Wisconsin Film Festival** returns for another weeklong binge of movies from across the world and right here in our backyards. This year's fest runs **April 14-21** in Madison and will feature several LGBTQ titles in the line-up. Tickets go on sale March 19, and the guide will be published online and in *Isthmus* on March 17.

**LGBTQ-related highlights at the Wisconsin Film Festival:**

**VIVA** | A young hairdresser enters Havana's drag scene in this inspirational drama, shortlisted for the Best Foreign Film Oscar.

**I Promise You Anarchy** | A trio of teenaged lovers become embroiled in Mexico City's drug trade in this bisexual crime movie, which won top prizes at the Rio, Morelia and Los Cabos Film Festivals.

**Heart of a Dog** | Acclaimed film by out director Laurie Anderson.

**Presenting Princess Shaw** | Documentary about a New Orleans nurse who becomes an unlikely singing sensation on YouTube. While not a focal point, the main character is in a lesbian relationship.

**Henry Gamble's Birthday Party** | On the day of his 17th birthday, Henry Gamble struggles with being gay in a tight-knit Evangelical community. While they prepare a backyard pool party, Henry's mother and father, a Church leader, have to face their own problems.

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### FEBRUARY 20 Fair Wisconsin Gala Dinner in Milwaukee



PHOTOS BY IAN DEGRAFF.

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# Life's Grand Design

Architect **Andrew Braman-Wanek** of Ginkgo House Architecture describes his life's work and passion for design inspired by and conscious of our natural environments.

**I CAN PINPOINT** the moment when I fell in love with architecture and design. I was nine years old and relatives had invited my parents and me to dinner at the Spring Green, a restaurant (now visitor center) designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. I grew up just “down the river” from Taliesin and was aware of the unique structures that Wright had designed, but this was my first opportunity to fully experience one of his buildings. To my young mind it was dramatic, exciting and completely unexpected. I had seen nothing like it, but I knew that I had to see more.

My path to becoming an architect was indirect. I studied Economics as an undergraduate at Ripon College and my intention was to pursue a career in business. But, as I started life in the corporate world, a subconscious voice in the back of my head kept telling me to be an architect. Ultimately, I listened to the voice and enrolled in a Masters of Architecture program at U.W.-Milwaukee designed for students with degrees in other disciplines. There, in a studio with diverse, hard-working and colorful classmates, I solidified my passion for building design.

This is my fourth home in Madison. With each I've learned. People ask me if it's “complete,” and to that I answer, an architect's home is never complete (at least until the next project comes along).

Formative years in Wisconsin's Driftless area influenced my values on environmental stewardship. My father, a farmer, philosopher and conservationist, helped me to appreciate my surroundings, especially the unique landscape of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway that ran through our farmland. Connecting our environment to architecture, and realizing the impact one has on the other, was only logical. A well-placed and well-designed building will use significantly fewer resources to construct, condition and maintain.

After graduation I worked for a design/build firm whose ecological beliefs matched mine. Their primary clients were residential, and I quickly developed an affinity towards working on homes. Whether remodeling or creating something new, I enjoy the intimacy of helping homeowners

## Looking to the Lighter Side



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LEE MELAHN, CO-OWNER/DESIGNER

With all the craziness going on in the world right now the design community seems to be crying out for calm. Almost all of the color trend prognosticators have chosen various shades of white as the color for 2016. Benjamin Moore has gone with Simply White, Sherwin-Williams chose Alabaster, and Glidden has gone with Cappuccino White. There's a soothing nature to white, a color that trends well with everything without the worry of contrast or conflict. There's also a sense of hope and that “light at the end of tunnel” aspect to white. White represents a fresh start and that's something I think a lot of us are looking forward to.

## There's No Place Like a Smart Home



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Facelifts for Existing Space



TIME 2 REMODEL  
JANEAN SPEARS-DIMMIG, DESIGNER/COORDINATOR

Finished basement spaces continue to be popular. It is a great way to add livable square footage to any home. Homeowners are including space for entertaining and working out. The addition of an egress window also allows for a safe guest bedroom/bathroom to be included. A trend in kitchen cabinetry is upper and lower cabinets in contrasting colors: the upper cabinets in a lighter color (often white) and the lowers in the darker (often greys/blues). For bathrooms, polished chrome faucets have become more popular with the contemporary trends. Watch for brass colored faucets to make a come back soon in the form a brushed finish.

Mixing Metals Makes Magic



BELLA DOMICILE  
DONDI SZOMBATFALVY, LEAD DESIGNER

White cabinetry in the kitchen is not a new trend, however, adding in natural wood texture in varying tones is something that is catching on. This feature adds warmth and contrast to the stark white appearance. Another trend that is gaining speed is brushed brass finishes. We see this in faucets, decorative hardware, lighting and backsplash tiles. It's also becoming common to mix both cool metals (stainless steel, nickel, chrome, etc.) and warm metals (along with copper and bronze). Don't be afraid to add brushed brass hardware to a kitchen with a stainless steel range.



1 I call it the "Bookend House" because I use a clean and modern aesthetic at the front and rear entrance while maintaining the original home's form and exposing its original siding and molding details in the middle. It gives it modern energy while respecting the heritage of this blue-collar bungalow. 2 One of the defining characteristics of a bungalow is the low roof line. To maximize the floor plan, I recessed the headboard and dressers behind the knee walls. I also extended a private balcony above the sunroom. 3 This room was previously used as an unconditioned mudroom and for storage. Its access to direct sunlight made it too compelling not to enjoy as a three-season sunspace. Large windows found in a nearby bargain bin work perfectly for light and breeze. And the pallet base for the futon sofa ties into the modern/rustic contrast I used throughout the project. 4 I removed four walls to create an open floor plan. This technique can make a small house feel much larger.



or drought resistant. And on this small urban lot, there is still plenty of room for a composter, a rain barrel, vegetable gardens and a rain garden.

This is my fourth home in Madison. Each has been a "project" which has allowed me to design in a different way than I do with my clients. I'm able to experiment, and try new ideas and materials. With each I've learned. People ask me if it's "complete," and to that I answer, an architect's home is never complete (at least until the next project comes along).

Architecture, like many creative fields, is a relatively open and welcoming profession. I've been lucky to develop a rich network of clients and colleagues, many of whom became friends that I relied on for support as I came out later in life. I share my home with my fiancé, and together we are updating a second home in Chicago where he works. ■

create homes that express themselves and function for their lifestyle. In 2008, I started Ginkgo House Architecture with that focus in mind.

DESIGN AT HOME

My own house is a recently completed gut/rehab of a 1920s bungalow that I worked on for the last couple of years. My goal is to demonstrate LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) principles in a remodel project. To start with, I sought a home in a walkable neighborhood—near amenities, public transportation and a bike path. Madison's east side fit the bill nicely, but my desire to employ solar power presented

somewhat of a challenge on the diagonal grid of the isthmus. Ultimately, I found just the right home that, with some framing adjustments to the garage roof, offered the perfect solar window for 21 panels.

After removing all of the existing plaster and aged insulation, I used wood furring strips to add depth to the walls before re-wiring and insulating with cellulose from recycled newspaper. I used ultra-efficient lighting and plumbing fixtures as well as recycled and repurposed finish materials such as vintage barn wood, ceramic tile, maple flooring, and bath vanities made from the framing removed during demolition.

Although the garage roof receives maximum sunlight, the house itself was not oriented in the same manner. Opening the dining room ceiling to the second floor and roof allows daylight from a new, south-facing skylight to penetrate deep into the home. I also removed several walls in the demolition process to favor an open and connected floor plan. It serves well for entertaining, especially for my teenage daughter and her gaggle of friends. Also, it renders a more modern aesthetic, which I enjoy contrasting with the traditional vernacular of the home.

LEED principals extend to the yard and garden as well. In the construction process I removed concrete driveway and even some of the width of the garage—converting 250 square feet of non-permeable surfaces into planting beds. In lieu of a hardscaped patio, I installed a permeable pea gravel bed (deep enough to avoid weeds). I am proud to say that I do not own a lawnmower. I used a "no-mow" seed mix that stays green without watering and is dense enough to inhibit weeds. All plants are native and/



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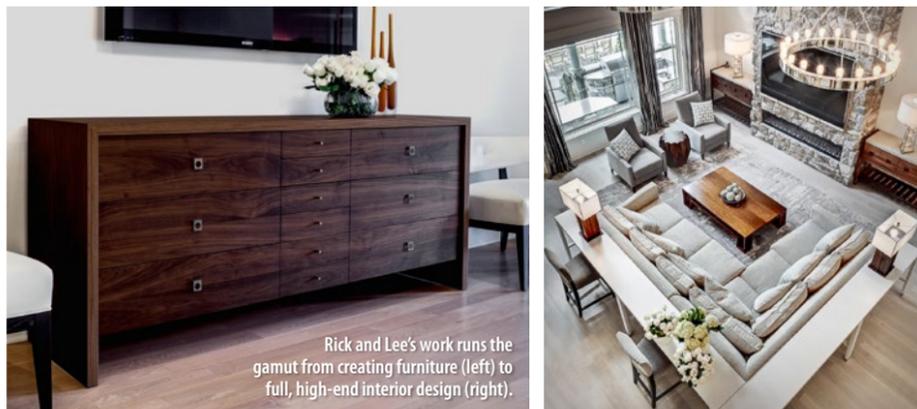
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# Life By Design

**Lee Melahn and Rick Shaver** (of Pleasant Living, LLC) look back on their life and work together as they navigated multiple career changes, adopting their daughter and adapting to an ever-changing world.



Rick and Lee's work runs the gamut from creating furniture (left) to full, high-end interior design (right).

**WE'VE COME TO THE CONCLUSION** that we are now officially semi-coastal, with a home here in Madison, an apartment in Manhattan, and an interior and furniture design business that swings both ways. After having been known solely as Shaver/Melahn Studios for so long we are also becoming comfortable with our new business's moniker: Pleasant Living.

My connection to Madison goes back all the way to a time when St. Mary's on Park Street was known as the "Mother and Baby Hospital." Having been born there it gives me the ability to call myself a native Madisonian. Rick, on the other hand, is relatively new to the area as his roots were planted in Georgia soil, and he has lived most of his life in New York City. Most relationships are a combination of opposites attracting, and ours has been no different. Growing up gay during the later half of the twentieth century, no matter where you were geographically, gave many of us wanderlust that frequently resulted in a need for a change of scenery in order to come out and come to terms with our sexuality.

The magnets that drew most of us were the big cities that were more tolerant and accepting of alternate lifestyles. Both Rick and I had our journeys end in New York where, on a snowy night in January, 1979, we found each other on a dance floor at the Ice Palace, a gay disco in the basement of a building around the corner from Carnegie Hall. At the time, I was an associate professor in the Pre-Design Department at Kansas State University, and Rick was a freelance job manager in the industrial show business arena. After that night on the dance floor it was another six months before I could come back to Manhattan.

## JOINING FORCES AT HOME AND AT WORK

We joined forces in a relationship that was both personal and professional, eventually moving in together and opening our own design firm specializing in multi-media productions for such clients as Avon, *Architectural Digest*, Ralph Lauren, The Italian Trade Commission, and Johnson & Johnson. These were corporate events along the lines of music videos, creating multi-disciplinary presentations requiring talent, celebrity coordination, and sets that rivaled Broadway productions.

With tears streaming down his cheeks Rick asked the attending nurse if he could hold her. The nurse looked at him with kindness and said, "Of course, she's your daughter."

After a decade of this for me, and for Rick more than 15 years, the toll of having to work more all-nighters than we could count forced us to recalculate our career decision. Rick took the lead. We were still young enough that the risks of a new direction weren't as daunting as they would be later in life. I had always taken the creative approach to life and career. Rick had a more business and organizational path. It wasn't a conscious decision, but I stayed more with keeping the design firm moving while Rick began exploring other avenues that were more stimulating and creative.

Rick has always been an amazing cook, and all our friends and I have been the beneficiaries of the meals he's prepared. It was after a trip to Europe, where we put together a food connoisseurs journey of visiting the major chefs of France, that he took up some serious cooking classes. He attended the Peter Kump New York Cooking School, which later became the Institute of Culinary Education, and quickly rose to become the sous chef for Peter Kump, a Julia Child and James Beard protégé. Realizing that the hours and demands of a career in the restaurant industry were no better and conceivably worse than the production hours he was looking to get away from, Rick turned the page on cooking and yet again started looking elsewhere.

## Adaptable Interior Style



PHILLIP LEVY FINE FURNITURE & INTERIOR DESIGN  
JILL BURNARD, INTERIOR ARCHITECTURE

We continue to see a trend toward transitional styles in upholstery and casegoods. Our clientele's interiors are often an eclectic mix of old and new, allowing transitional styles to complement any interior. Soft hues of off-white and pastels along with light textures in upholstery and wall colors create a new level of relaxation and style. These serene environments now incorporate gentle distressed wood and painted furniture that complement the ever-changing technology of today. A home interior is an external expression of one's self, creating a personal and unique environment.

## Healthier Habitats at Home



CRB INTERIORS  
BILL BEAUDREAU, INTERIOR DESIGNER

Wellness and well-being are evolving as part of sustainable building practices to focus on the health of people inside a building. Up to this point, sustainability's primary focus has been to improve conditions in the natural environment. The International Well Building Institute, by understanding the effects of indoor spaces on individuals, developed standards that look at air, water, nourishment, light, fitness, comfort and mind to create the Well Building Standard. Think fresh air, non-toxic cleaning solutions, quality daylight, space for physical activity, sound barriers to intrusive noise, thermal comfort, consistent health awareness and much more.

"Thanks for the great work on our bathroom. It looks fabulous and we're very pleased!" **MARK POCAN**



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CHANGING AND GROWING TOGETHER

It was on another winter evening while sitting in bed and discussing our future that we decided to play a game that would profoundly affect our future. We were each to write down what we thought the other's strengths were and what we could see as an alternate occupational path. I had written down interior design as a new career that would unleash Rick's creativity and feed his passion. He had already shown signs of his talent in the work we had done on our Brooklyn apartment and our weekend home in the Catskills. Within the year he had enrolled at the New York School of Interior Design. By the time he graduated as valedictorian of his class he had already amassed a clientele from the contacts we had made from our design business, including the CEOs of major advertising and financial firms throughout Manhattan.

Our offices in Chelsea were now a multi-dimensional firm where we continued to work with our industrial show business clients, providing them with branding, multi-media productions and graphic design, and so we added interior design to the mix. Even as we added more diversity to our portfolio we intentionally wanted to keep our status as a boutique design firm. Within a short time of adding the interior design division to our firm, Rick was named one of New York's top 100 designers by *Gotham Magazine* and his work started appearing in shelter magazines like *House Beautiful*, *Old House Journal*, *Metropolitan Home* and *New York Spaces*.

BUILDING A FAMILY

With the success of our business, we were able to focus a bit more on our personal relationship goals. It was now the mid-1990s. I had always dreamed of a family that included more than the two of us and a dog (the dog was Rick's concession to me while he got the house in the country). Whenever I brought up the idea of adoption he wasn't interested—it was

too laden with a very high possibility of rejection. At that time, adoption by a gay couple was more dream than reality.

It wasn't until his mother became ill and passed away that his whole idea of family changed. I started the research, going to meetings with other gay men who wanted to start a family. What I heard was mostly negative, the options involving either deceit and lying or fostering older children or children with disabilities. We were referred to a lawyer who dealt with gay issues and had helped with a few adoptions. It wasn't long before we found ourselves working with an adoption broker who guaranteed us anything we wanted for an escalating price with every anomaly we put into the request. In 1994 any request from two men automatically raised the entry fee. We knew, even though the broker's client list included some very powerful people, this wasn't a direction we wanted to pursue.

The line took its direction from the clean lines of the French Moderne movement and became a success, with pieces now a part of the Library at Stanford University, various major hotel lobbies, and in the personal residence at the Clinton Library.

Months later we were connected with a lawyer whose specialty was adoption. Susanne guided us through the process, reassuring us that the only people who didn't succeed were the ones who didn't get back on the horse after failing on their initial attempts. We were convinced and Susanne agreed that we needed to approach adoption with honesty. We ran our ads as two men looking to be parents. There were responses that were not only devastating but also viciously nasty.

Eventually we found a birth mother unintimidated by our situation. In July 1996 we got the call to come to Texas where, on the morning of July 3, in a hospital delivery room we helped push and comfort the birth mother as we watched Emmy swim out into the world. With tears streaming down his cheeks Rick asked the attending nurse if he could hold her. The nurse looked at him with kindness and said, "Of course, she's your daughter."

CHALLENGES OF A CHANGING WORLD

Emmy's first day of kindergarten was on a Monday. Her kindergarten class had been split in two with her half going on that Monday and the second half going on the following Tuesday. That Tuesday was a clear September day. It was my sister who called that morning asking if we had the TV on. It was there that I became aware that the North Tower had been hit by a plane. In horror, our nanny and I with Emmy in our arms ran to the top of our apartment building, a block and half from the Empire State Building, and watched as the towers came tumbling down. Rick had already set off for our Chelsea offices and from the street witnessed the second tower being struck. With no one knowing if there were still planes out there and if the Empire State Building might be another target we abandoned our apartment and went to the office. Within hours we left for our home in the Catskills not knowing how many of Emmy's classmate's parents might not be there to pick them up from their first day of school.

Our business and our lives changed dramatically after 9/11. My part of the business immediately dried up as corporations were no longer willing to put their employees on planes for around the world incentive trips, new product introductions or annual corporate meetings; the kinds of meetings that we had been designing and producing. Our predominant focus eventually switched to becoming an interior design business.

Rick had always had a passion for furniture and furniture design. With the success of the interior design portion of our business he was able



Lush room designs by Pleasant Living LLC.



to add furniture design as a new development to our firm. In 1998, we launched our first small furniture collection as a bench made line available to designers and architects through showrooms throughout the continental United States. The line took its direction from the clean lines of the French Moderne movement and became a success, with pieces now a part of the Library at Stanford University, various major hotel lobbies, and in the personal residence at the Clinton Library.

Our success continued until a perfect storm of illness and the economic crisis of 2008/2009 tore apart our industry and our personal situation. Failure sometimes is the best route to finding out what you've learned and whether you can survive the future. Starting over is what we've done.

ANOTHER FRESH START

We're now one of 30 designers selected by the New York Design Center to be represented through their Access to Design collective, we've paired up with Black Wolf Designs, a Wisconsin furniture manufacturer, on prototyping another three lines of furniture, and we were selected by Sony to design their offices for a new division in Noho, in lower Manhattan.

We continue to work with residential clients in New York, New Jersey, Florida and Wisconsin where our design philosophy continues to focus on the client. We want our designs to reflect our clients' lifestyles and not a preconceived solution. It's one thing to design a beautiful space, but the ultimate measure of good design is how well the design actually "works."

The design industry is a tricky business; it's looked on as a luxury by many and a necessity by some. We always encourage our clients to do their research, and with our help formulate an entire plan, breaking down their project into phases when necessary. After the project parameters have been established we then help them find their comfort zone, design a space unique to their vision and help them understand what is a realistic budget and time frame for completion.

We're hand-holders, design experts, confidants and frequently friends. Our biggest compliment is the repeat client. Our greatest joy is being able to follow our passion in a profession that fills our cup to overflowing. ■



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Stainless steel cable railing and deck lighting seem to be the two most sought after features for backyard decks. Cable railing with its sleek and minimal design works well in opening up the view to the surrounding areas, whether it be a small backyard, rolling hills, or a lake view. Homeowners also like cable railing because of its low maintenance and lasting beauty. With the large selection of colors available and the ability to custom fabricate railings, cable railing can be designed to work well with either traditional or modern homes. The addition of ambient lighting extends the use of the deck past the daytime hours, bringing a warm and welcoming feel to nighttime entertaining. The variety of low voltage LED lighting available offer attractive options for backyard living, creating an inviting setting for after-hours enjoyment.

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One Remodeled Home at a Time

feature



# Kitschy, Cool

The home that **Bob Stindt** and **Michael Austin** have built is a reflection of their love of the odd and the retro, a collection of bargain basement stories and their adventures together.

**WE HAVE BEEN TOGETHER** for 21 years, and our house has actually developed into a central part of our relationship. One may find this disturbing once one sees our home.

We are both from small Midwestern towns, and our parents are teachers, education administrators and accountants, meaning they encouraged our creativity but didn't always understand it. We grew up in the thick of the 1970s and were also greatly influenced by the throwback '50s undercurrents of the 1980s. We both watched a lot of '70s TV as kids and read lots of comics, and we were both involved in creative (i.e. New Wave/Punk/Goth) subcultures in college and our early adulthood. Michael is currently the head graphic designer for a national restaurant chain, and Bob is a psychotherapist and the clinical supervisor for Journey Mental Health Center's Clinical Internship Program.

We met in November 1994 through the *Isthmus*; Bob's friend was putting an ad in the personals and wanted someone else to do it with him, so Bob, having just ended a relationship and not wanting to date anyone for a while, agreed to it—but decided he would make the ad obtuse, strange, and also very specific. "Creative yet well-adjusted nihilist seeks stylish and like-minded companion." He got one response—Michael.

We spent hours talking that first night, met for dinner the next evening, and realized we actually had an enormous amount in common and a number of mutual friends. We both had a great interest in irony, cult movies, and mid-century design (specifically the 1950s through the '70s), and bonded over a mutual love of kitsch, John Waters, David Lynch and Pee-wee Herman. Our first date was actually seeing Robert Altman's "Shortcuts," and our second date was driving out to Trash to Treasures, a low-end resale/liquidator store on Highway 12. Love was in the air, and we became pretty much inseparable and moved in together a year later.

## BUILDING A COLLECTION TOGETHER

Our first apartment was a loft-style downtown space that we decorated with used '50s space-agey furniture and a two-story wall of religious kitsch. From this base of operations, we settled into the habit of traveling around the state on weekends and, eventually, on longer trips around much of the Midwest, going to second-hand outlets ranging from Goodwill to high-end Danish mid-century design stores, always with an eye toward adding to our very specific and open-ended collections.

We also developed the habit of going to estate and garage sales on weekends in order to increase our chances of finding unique stuff and, honestly, to also get a look inside other peoples' homes. You always remember your first, right? Well, our first major vintage find was a green, nubby '50s sectional that we found at a garage sale in 1997; this sectional lived through two apartments and made it to our current home, before being donated to Bob's work for his students to use. It was sadly put down last year after many years of mid-century-level comfort. Memory Eternal.

Our second apartment was the second story of an owner-occupied bungalow on Lake Monona that came with lots of storage; we started collecting more vintage furniture at that time in preparation for moving to a house, and when we were finally able to purchase a home, we had furniture for every room!

## TIPS & TRENDS

### A Softer Take on Color



EXQUISITE WINDOWS & DECOR  
ANDREA HEDQUIST, OWNER/DESIGNER

For the first time, the blending of two shades—Rose Quartz and Serenity—are chosen as the Pantone Color of the Year, which marries a warm pink with a cooler blue. We're seeing soft tones in general, sheer fabrics layered over other treatments and embossed fabrics adding a touch of metallics. Still, the long lean stationary panels are dominating the drapery world with striking hardware to anchor the look. Motorization is here to stay and it is connecting to new or existing home automation systems.

### Planning for Fair Weather Projects



DANE COUNTY CREDIT UNION  
JOSH ROUNDS, DIRECTOR OF LENDING

Early spring months are the most popular times for homeowners to prepare for home improvement. Larger projects will need plenty of time to execute, so earlier start times (when the ground allows) put people in a better situation. The larger (and more popular) projects we've seen include deck and patio additions, installing swimming pools, and pole-shed storage facilities. Added time is also beneficial for indoor projects, to allow for more time in case of unforeseen obstacles, arrival of materials and overall enjoyment of completed projects during the same year. Getting a home equity loan earlier in the year is a trend that becomes more and more popular each year.



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## TIPS & TRENDS

### New Life for Old Things



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Vintage office supplies are in style. Customers are drawn to vintage typewriters, desk lamps, rubber stamps and tape dispensers. Buyers with more disposable income have been drawn to midcentury modern signed pieces such as a Herman Miller, Eero Saarinen, or Adrian Pearsall. Repurposing vintage pieces is limited only by the creativity of the decorator. Bread pans make great organizers, old dressers can be converted into bathroom vanities.

### Design to the Forefront



TZ OF MADISON, INC.  
LARRY TAFF, PRESIDENT

Three years ago homeowners were focusing on basic and functional improvements. While homeowners are still practical, now they are opting for more unique and high-end finishes. On exteriors, entry doors with energy efficiency are a must, but homeowners are choosing high-end designs. That continues inside where re-imagining the master suite includes customized walk-in closets, glamorous baths with walk-in glass showers and vanities with a European flair. Entertainment spaces are being designed with upscale bars, exercise areas and full baths. In the meantime, home values are rising and that tempers the also rising material costs for remodeling. This is all good news for homeowners looking for a little design punch to go along with the added value of their home.



### DREAM HOUSE

We were very particular when looking for a house to buy and we set our sights on finding something unique and, of course, from the '50s, '60s or '70s. When we walked in the front door of our current home, we realized this was it—built in 1961, split-level, and basically weird.

As an interesting side-note, a man and his wife came to the house a couple of years ago and asked to look around inside—he had grown up there, and his parents had built it from plans found in the *Wisconsin State Journal*. His mother had won a national advertising contest for a grocery store chain and was able to use her prize money to buy the plans and materials for the house. How mid-century is that?

Big influences on our style have included the book *Pad* (we were shocked to learn there were other people doing this to their homes, too), the movie *Barbarella*, *Sid & Marty Krofft*, the *Dickeyville Grotto*, and Michael's endless collection of vintage interior design manuals and photography books. *Circus kitsch*, *Andy Warhol*, bad '60s/'70s movies, *Giallo* films, *Tim Burton*, and *Pee-wee's Playhouse* have also informed the look of our home. The *House on the Rock* was another big influence on our style; where else do clean modern lines stand so effortlessly arm-in-arm with endless piles of carefully-arranged clutter? We have probably visited it about 10 times since we've been together after first reading about it in one of our bibles, the book *Roadside America*.

We also started collecting some taxidermy about a decade ago after visiting San Francisco and seeing a store called *Paxton's Gate*; they had a bipedal fox in a powdered wig and an 18th century general's uniform for sale that really impressed us, and set us off on another collection tangent. This being Wisconsin, taxidermy isn't that hard to find, and Michael has been able to redesign some of our finds, including repurposing a number of stuffed fish when he created *Shelly*, the life-sized mannequin-mermaid in our Tiki Room.

*Shelly* was constructed using an old museum display case, an enormous supply of shells, the top half of a broken mannequin, the aforementioned taxidermied fish, and hot glue. It was Michael's first time using a hot glue gun, and he still has the scars on his legs to prove it.

### ORGANIC TASTE

Our decorating style and preferences have slowly and organically evolved over the years, but some things are consistent—we like to decorate with things that look cool or are odd or funny in some way, and we like things to have a story, or be so ridiculous that you can't believe someone made it. We don't worry if things are "authentic" or "designer" or not; we're not into labels, and it's how things look that matter to us. We also don't worry about matching things very much or having a lot of symmetry—we both like things to look layered and complex, and have

a lot of visual interest and be busy. We have also always made it a point to never pay much for anything; most of the things in our home are vintage finds that we've unearthed at estate sales, garage sales, thrift stores, antique stores or picked up off the curb. Until a couple of years ago, in fact, our bed was the only piece of new furniture we had ever purchased.

We have so many strange items in our house that it's hard to pick out anything as particularly special, though Bob does take pride in his collection of vintage Halloween costumes from the '60s and '70s; the weirdest costume we have is a child's costume from 1976, meant as a promotional item for the *Village People* movie, *Can't Stop the Music*—as if that isn't bad enough (what kid was excited about *Can't Stop the Music*?), it's a costumed version of the *Village People's* Leatherman. Yes, the Leatherman, it even says that on the box. Whose idea was this, and, even worse, what who actually bought it?

### WHERE THE HEART IS

It's funny how people react to the house sometimes—we are often asked if it's okay to bring kids over, and we always assure parents that we don't take our house too seriously, it's okay if something gets knocked over, and kids basically LOVE the place. That being said, kids also tend to get over-stimulated by everything, and so if you're bringing your kids over, be prepared. In case you hadn't guessed, our house is also the go-to house for Halloween in the neighborhood; we make it really scary to approach, but if trick-or-treaters brave the yard decorations and motion-sensitive skulls, they get full-sized candy bars!

We hope there will be an estate sale at our house when we die, and that young people, like we once were, will come to shop for bargains, add to their collections, and basically nose around, and we hope they leave in wonder and/or amusement with the question "Who on Earth lived in that house, and what on Earth were they doing?" ■

## TIPS & TRENDS

### Rise of the Super Kitchen



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## And Then They Came for Me

Historian **Dick Wagner** reflects on the evolution of true inclusion in the struggle for LGBTQ rights.

**FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II** people struggled to understand and confront the rise of Hitlerism. Many Americans latched onto the words of a German pastor named Martin Niemoller. Most of us know his story—or think we do. This Lutheran minister was at first an anti-communist sympathetic with Hitler’s rise to power. As a theologian he came to see the danger in the arch supremacy of the Nazi state. Niemoller changed and became a leader of the Confessing Church that opposed religion’s complicity in the regime. In 1938 the Nazis sent him to concentration camps including the one at Dachau.

Seeking an answer to the seeming wrong-headedness and apathy that accepted the rise of the Third Reich, many became enamored of this Neimoller quote:

First they came for the Socialists,  
and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the Trade Unionists,  
and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a Trade Unionists.

Then they came for the Jews,  
and I did not speak out—  
Because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me—  
and there was no one left to speak for me.

This same worldview informed part of the early gay rights movement here. The Madison United was formed in 1978 by gay and lesbian activists in response to the moral majority attacks of the Anita Bryant types. The organization’s bylaws stated, “United we stand: Divided, they pick us off—one by one.”

Early United materials carried an image of joined hands with an updated-for-American-context version of the Niemoller sentiment: “If they take you in the morning, they will be coming for us that night.”

The quote used by the United was from an open letter to Angela Davis by James Baldwin published in the Jan. 7, 1971 issue of *The New York Review of Books*. Baldwin, a gay African American, had explicit homoerotic content in his second novel, *Giovanni’s Room*, published in 1956.

Angela Davis, an African American, had been arrested over an armed disturbance and killing in a California courtroom. She was charged with aggravated kidnapping and first-degree murder and called a dangerous terrorist. She was a member of the Communist Party and supported the Black Panthers. Davis was not present at the courtroom event but had connections to those who were. She claimed innocence and was found not guilty. A Fresno dairy farmer paid part of her bail, and portions of her defense were paid for by the United Presbyterian Church.

Baldwin was moved to write to “My Sister, Angela Y. Davis.” His powerful opening was, “One might have hoped that by this hour, the very sight of chains on Black flesh, or the very sight of chains, would be so intolerable a sight for the American people, so unbearable a memory, that they would themselves spontaneously rise up and strike off the manacles.”

Echoing the Niemoller thought, Baldwin continued about Davis, “You look exceeding alone—as alone as, say the Jewish housewife in the boxcar headed for Dachau, or as any one of our ancestors, chained together in the name of Jesus, headed for a Christian land.

“If we know, then we must fight for your life as though it were our own—which it is—and render impassable with our bodies the corridor to the gas chamber. For, if they take you in the morning, they will be coming for us that night.”

It was daring in the late 1970s for the gays and lesbians of the Madison United to use a quote about a Communist. But that was the very point of the Niemoller expression against oppression. And lesbians and gays still knew a good deal about oppression in the first decade after Stonewall. As Wisconsinites they knew a good deal about the witch-hunting of the McCarthy era and the strength needed to stand against it.

Yet today, the historical context needs a re-appraisal. The early movement was self-proclaimed explicitly for gays and lesbians and did not yet have a fuller LGBTQA context. *OUT!*, the community’s publication of the mid-1980s, proclaimed on its masthead,



Chaz Bono speaking at the 2012 Fair Wisconsin Gala Dinner in Milwaukee.

The paper, however, did have good instincts. *OUT!* was one of the first Wisconsin gay publications to cover what were then referred to as “transsexuals.”

“Wisconsin’s Lesbian/Gay Newspaper.”

The paper, however, did have good instincts. *OUT!* was one of the first Wisconsin gay publications to cover what were then referred to as “transsexuals.” In the fourth issue, editor Brooks Edgerton authored a piece, “What Do Gays and Transsexuals Have in Common?” He argued that, because some gays may have felt they’d achieved “normal” status, they wanted distance from others still viewed as outsiders. The issue arose around “Theresa,” a trans\* woman who was denied public welfare funds for gender confirming

surgery. Edgerton observed that those who cited fiscal constraints against funding the surgery were the same people who cited fiscal constraints to deny domestic partner benefits for gays and lesbians. Edgerton panned deprogramming as false for both gays and transsexuals. He ended with, “I’d like to think that Theresa, too, will be believed someday when she says she’s a woman.”

The same issue had a piece by Dragonfly on “What Does a Sex-Change Operation Change?” Dragonfly was an acknowledged member of a Madison circle of dykes, fairies and friends. He argued oppressive gender roles and inhuman standards of gender did not serve society, and we should not blame the person seeking their true gender identity. “Our blame should be aimed instead at the mindless system we’ve all been crushed into, in which our differences become threats and

don’t receive the affirmation they deserve.”

This early effort at inclusion would need much reinforcement before the gay community was to become truly more accepting of transgender rights. In the present century, one such organization that has worked hard to be inclusive is Fair Wisconsin. The board has included many trans\* individuals. Sensitivity training has been provided to its board by trans\* members. Chaz Bono was a featured speaker at its statewide conference. The 2016 state conference includes a special Trans Leadership Institute.

At a time when some erroneously presume the Supreme Court’s ruling on marriage equality has capped the gay liberation movement, transgender people in Wisconsin are under attack in the state legislature. Again, Fair Wisconsin has been there fighting for all LGBTQA people.

In the long arc of history, it’s important to remember the insights of people like Martin Niemoller and James Baldwin. The march for full equality must include all of us. ■



**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.

PHOTO BY ERIC BAILLIES.

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## Give Me Shelter

**Caroline Werner** looks at the ways we do and don't serve an aging population looking for stable housing options and the barriers to housing for LGBTQ seniors and those with special needs in particular.

**I HAD A DREAM.** Or was it a nightmare? I woke up on New Year's Eve Day, 2015, reviewing my last few days' activities and thinking about my calendar for January 2016. I recalled the Dane County budget report and the goals for all the agencies with which I'm involved.

I saw the BIG picture: The senior service system is unable and unprepared to handle the increasing numbers of Baby Boomers coming into it. In addition, it is unsure how to assist the increasing numbers of low-income seniors who are in need of affordable housing.



There is a shortage of housing for low-income people in Dane County and their disability benefits are not adequate to cover costs. This is a huge issue for LGBTQ people in particular, when we can either be discriminated against because we are LGBTQ or may be seen as a burden on landlords because of our disability or age.

The lack of true low-income housing and federal programs to support appropriate case management is leaving increasing numbers of people without stable living situations.

The City of Madison adopted the Housing First approach (developed by the National Alliance to End Homelessness) to provide "people experiencing homelessness with housing as quickly as possible—and then providing service as needed" (*Street Pulse*, Aug., 2014). But I am seeing a gap in services for seniors who

are 50–60 years of age once they are housed. When a senior consults with the "one-stop-shop" Dane County Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) staff, they are referred to their nearest senior center. Anyone 18 years of age and older can consult with ADRC staff for services and be referred out—unless one is seeking assistance qualifying for financial benefits. The ADRC staff do an excellent job of helping a person understand their benefit situation and get through the paperwork process.

The ADRC staff does not help anyone find housing, though, instead referring people to other agencies. There is a shortage of housing for low-income people in Dane County and their disability benefits are not adequate to cover costs. People are homeless through not necessarily any fault of their own. This is a huge issue for LGBTQ people in particular, when we can either be discriminated against because we are LGBTQ or may be seen as a burden on landlords because of our disability or age.

Although, at age 60, housed seniors can be served by case managers at the various Dane County and Madison senior coalitions, the case managers' workloads are increasing with larger numbers of Baby Boomers coming into the system. A new senior may have to wait several weeks to consult with a case manager. This may leave a senior homeless—hopefully for only a short period of time.

The homeless system can be especially slow-moving when it comes to finding appropriate housing for people who may have serious physical and/or mental health or drug and alcohol issues. The slowness has to do with the client's willingness and ability to connect themselves to services. People who are less able to help themselves are less likely to benefit from the help of a case manager, and that's if one is available for them. A lot depends on the capabilities of the individual and/or the other resources and support systems they can rely on. Those supports may eventually fall away when the stress becomes too much, though.

According a recent article by Leslie Fred and Anne Montgomery at the Altarum Institute, which studies health systems, "In November, 2015, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid

Services (CMS) issued a proposed regulation for hospitals...and home health agencies...to interface with Older Americans Act providers and disability programs under the jurisdiction of the Administration for Community Living," to think about discharge planning in a larger context. "This means that studies will be made of hospital discharge policies and procedures with a goal toward improving discharge coordination with key health and social services delivery systems and the caregivers."

When care giving overwhelms caregivers, the next solution has always been the nursing home. Although no one wants to go to a nursing home, some circumstances can make it unavoidable. Yet there's a nationwide shortage of mental health and nursing home beds.

According to the Treatment Advocacy Center, "a minimum of 50 beds per 100,000 people is considered necessary to provide minimally adequate treatment of individuals with severe mental illness. Like every state, Wisconsin fails to meet the minimum standard." Wisconsin has only 9.8 beds per 100,000 people. I guess this



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

explains why a lot of people with mental health issues are incarcerated in Wisconsin—or are wandering the streets, homeless.

"There aren't enough nursing-home beds to meet demand," reports Dan McGrath, co-founder of Jester Financial Technology. "From 2000 to 2009 the total number of nursing homes in the U.S. decreased by nine percent. Additionally, from 2007 to 2011 new construction of nursing-home units decreased by 33 percent."

At the same time, "...according to the (federal) Department of Health and Human Services, of the 76 million baby boomers who are heading toward retirement, roughly 70 percent (about 54 million people) will need some form of long-term care, with close to 13 million of those needing a stay of longer than three years in a skilled nursing facility. The bottom line is, there simply will not be enough beds to serve an aging population."

Additionally, recent research informs us that our nation is already experiencing a shortage of physicians. Care giving agency workers are expensive and there are not enough professional caregivers to meet the increasing demand. The potential for an increase in frail homeless seniors needing services they can't get looms in my mind.

Long-term care planning and insurance by itself doesn't increase access to services. This

is a complex issue with a number of players.

Ray of Hope: The Dane County Area Agency on Aging is actively discussing changes to discharge planning with local hospitals, based on the proposed regulation issued by the CMS. Briarpatch recently increased beds for homeless youth. OutReach continues to serve LGBTQ homeless people of any age, to the limited extent we can, coordinating with other service agencies.

Much work remains; however, to ensure that our seniors are properly taken care of as they age, with special consideration for LGBTQ seniors and those with special needs. ■

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## The Fight for Prevention

**Diverse & Resilient** takes a hard look at the barriers to effective HIV preventative care for at-risk populations in Wisconsin and ways to achieve better and more impactful outreach to them.

**OVER THE PAST YEAR** there has been an outpouring of information around pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), and the effect that widespread use could have on new HIV diagnoses. PrEP is a low dose of the HIV treatment medication Truvada that is used by HIV positive individuals to maintain viral suppression.

PrEP has been featured in recent news stories, discussed among celebrities, cameos on popular television shows and widely researched in the medical community. New research has shown that if taken once daily as prescribed by a physician, PrEP reduces the risk of getting HIV from sex by more than 90%. With less than optimal use, the efficacy percentage drops to the mid-70s.

Experts in the field of HIV/AIDS prevention have emphasized that PrEP is a crucial new weapon in the fight against HIV/AIDS both in the United States and on a global level. Many people speculate that this new tool could aid in the end of new HIV diagnoses, and, ultimately, the end of HIV/AIDS. Unfortunately, despite its researched and proven effectiveness, there are significant barriers experienced by some of the most at-risk communities to successfully accessing and utilizing PrEP as a prevention tool.

During 2014, 226 new cases of HIV were diagnosed in Wisconsin; 78% were men who have sex with men (MSM) and one in four were Black MSM. Young Black MSM accounted for almost 22% of all new diagnoses in Wisconsin. This community is at the highest risk for HIV transmission and, unfortunately, they are often the hardest to reach. With countless social, structural, and individual factors, this community struggles with barriers to healthcare access that are far more complex than simply going to a doctor for a medication.

As part of a larger study through the University of Wisconsin-Madison on identifying the important barriers to the adoption of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) by Black MSM in Milwaukee, Diverse & Resilient conducted a Community Readiness Assessment. Diverse & Resilient is a public health agency that focuses on the health of LGBT people in Wisconsin. The purpose of this research was to collect and evaluate data on the social and structural bar-



riers that prevent the most at-risk communities from successfully accessing and utilizing PrEP.

Community members, and individuals in their social networks, were interviewed. The data was compiled, analyzed and broken down into key themes. The results were compelling.

According to the findings of this study, there are six key barriers that members of the African-American MSM community in Milwaukee experience when attempting to understand, access and utilize PrEP.

### INTERNALIZED MISTRUST & HISTORICAL TRAUMA

Within the African American community, there is an internalized mistrust of doctors and the medical community stemming from the historical trauma, abuse and mistreatment of African Americans by medical professionals. For some, suspicion around efforts that appear to target African Americans and a lack of trust of the medical community is a barrier to getting on PrEP.

### COMMUNITY ATTITUDES

Community attitudes surrounding HIV/AIDS and homosexuality prevent people from supporting PrEP. Numerous beliefs held by community members were identified as barriers to support for PrEP; these beliefs range from general apathy towards the issue to more targeted moral oppositions towards PrEP and homosexuality. Some people don't care about the issue because it doesn't affect them personally. Additionally, some people feel that HIV is a result of bad choices and people deserve it. Finally, some think PrEP perpetuates risky sexual behaviors or condones behaviors that they are morally opposed to.

### STIGMA

Stigma and fear of stigmatization prevent sexual orientation, sexual behavior, HIV and the use of PrEP from being discussed in the community. People within the community may be afraid to publicly show their support for PrEP because, by doing so, their sexual orientation would be called into question. Additionally, there is a fear that by taking PrEP people would assume that they are HIV positive. Attitudes and stigma persist that people who are taking PrEP participate in more risky behavior and are often labeled as promiscuous.

### KNOWLEDGE/ AWARENESS OF PrEP & HIV

People don't know about PrEP, especially if they are not concerned about HIV. Knowledge and awareness about PrEP is limited to people working in HIV prevention. Misconceptions about HIV and PrEP are widespread and the community needs more education about both to better understand what it is and how it works.

### LOGISTICAL BARRIERS

Successfully getting and keeping individuals on PrEP is difficult due to many logistical barriers. Getting on PrEP and staying on PrEP requires regular doctor visits for blood tests (every three months). For people who are not already utilizing the healthcare system,

transportation to multiple appointments can be difficult. PrEP can be very expensive and while there are insurance programs available to help make PrEP affordable, they are not well advertised. If people are not aware of these programs, the high cost of PrEP could be a deterrent. Support systems are crucial to getting people on PrEP and help them stay compliant.

### LEADERSHIP & OUTREACH

Outside of agencies working in HIV prevention, Milwaukee leaders are not talking about PrEP. So far, not nearly enough outreach is being done to increase knowledge and awareness about PrEP or raise its visibility. When addressing the high-risk community it is so important that the messaging is relevant, avoids jargon and includes leaders who are relatable. Overall, people are not advocating for sexual health in Milwaukee and the little information about PrEP that is available is not enough.

These factors, and countless others, are continuously contributing to the battle against HIV/AIDS in the African-American MSM community. PrEP is an exciting new tool that will, without a doubt, continue to change the way we practice and promote HIV prevention; however, it is crucial to also recognize the new and existing challenges the most at risk individuals will face in gaining access to PrEP. ■

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## Immigration Justice

**Karma Chávez** looks at the ways in which LGBTQ rights and immigration justice are closely tied, and how LGBTQ groups are—or aren't—doing enough to build safe community for some of our most vulnerable members.

IN LATE DECEMBER the *Washington Post* reported that the Obama Administration would start the new year by raiding the homes of Central American families who came to the U.S. in the past couple of years but have been ordered to leave by a judge. Raids started in the Atlanta area on January 2. At least 11 families were detained, according to the *Los Angeles Times*. So far, just over 120 people, mostly mothers and children, have been detained.

While at the time of this writing several Democratic leaders in Congress have split with Obama and demanded an end to the raids, for now Obama seems committed to the strategy. He has insisted that opening the doors to accept more people from Central America as refugees requires restoring security by deporting those with cases already deemed unworthy, a strategy immigration advocates, including LGBTQ immigrants, have called deeply troubling. No Wisconsin families have yet been raided according to the Milwaukee-based *Voces de la Frontera*, but immigrants across our communities feel the psychological impacts.

Despite the low numbers of people actually detained and deported, these raids have quite literally terrorized whole communities. Amidst the raids, it came to light that Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the very entity terrorizing communities would be presenting at the National LGBTQ Task Force Creating Change conference in Chicago. Creating Change is one of the (if not the) largest gatherings of LGBTQ activists, advocates, service providers and allies in North America, and it



February 18's rally against anti-immigration bills in Madison.

Even though numerous connections have been made between the LGBTQ and the immigration justice movement over the last decade, and LGBTQ immigrants, including many wearing the label "undocuqueer" are leaders of the immigration movement, too often LGBTQ citizens fail to fully comprehend immigration as an important LGBTQ issue.

brings together people from all stripes of the LGBTQ community.

This blending of all parts of the "community," frequently results in conflict, protest and boycott. And the Task Force, in its attempts to balance the competing values of doing the right thing and keeping the peace, often finds itself on the right side of power and the wrong side of social justice. This charge against the Task Force, often leveled by the most marginalized LGBTQ people, prompted the group Gay Shame to put out a newsletter called "Creating Change, or Creating Chains" more than a decade ago in order to critique the problems with mainstream gay and lesbian non-profit organizations, exemplified by the Task Force.

But this recent misstep is especially egregious given that the Task Force was one of the first LGBTQ organizations to publicly tout itself as an ally to immigrant communities. Once it came to light that ICE had been invited to present and numerous individuals and groups expressed their outrage, the Task Force issued an apology and uninvited ICE. Sue Hyde, the conference director said, "I apologize for the original error of accepting the session. I should

not have done that. The presence of ICE officials, whether uniformed or not, poses a threat to undocumented immigrant attendees at Creating Change. I have heard, loud and clear, that this was a breach of trust and one that I very much regret."

LGBTQ immigrant organizations were understandably less than impressed with the apology. Familia: Trans Queer Liberation Movement and three other organizations rejected the apology outright. They wrote, "The National LGBTQ Task Force and Creating Change have caused significant harm and have deeply hurt our community. We have a right to feel outraged at the negligence and poor planning in inviting ICE to be part of a space that supposedly centers all LGBTQ people."

Even though numerous connections have been made between the LGBTQ and the immigration justice movement over the last decade, and LGBTQ immigrants, including many wearing the label "undocuqueer" are leaders of the immigration movement, too often LGBTQ citizens fail to fully comprehend immigration as an important LGBTQ issue. In fact, historically LGBTQ citizens have pled for rights on the basis of their citizenship, appeals that necessarily exclude immigrants.

The Task Force should know better. Those who rejected the apology paired their rejection with three initial demands of the Task Force:

- Include a "Fighting Against Deportations" plenary with trans immigrant leaders;
  - Make space available on the agenda to include more LGBTQ immigrant rights workshops; and,
  - Ensure all LGBTQ undocumented immigrant attendees are supported financially throughout the conference (meals, lodging, registration, travel, etc).
- I didn't attend this year's conference, but I know for sure that the third demand, the one that would actually make the conference more welcoming to LGBTQ immigrants was not met. "I wouldn't expect the Task Force to help out any particular group of poor people," said T. Banks, a local Black, queer and trans organizer who attended the conference. "The entire Creating Change conference is really not designed for people with any financial or legal vulnerability." Once again, it seems appropriate to ask, is the Task Force creating change, or is it creating chains? In the meantime, those looking to support statewide efforts against immigration raids and other state-level anti-immigrant legislation being proposed, can visit *Voces de la Frontera* at [vdlf.org](http://vdlf.org). ■



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

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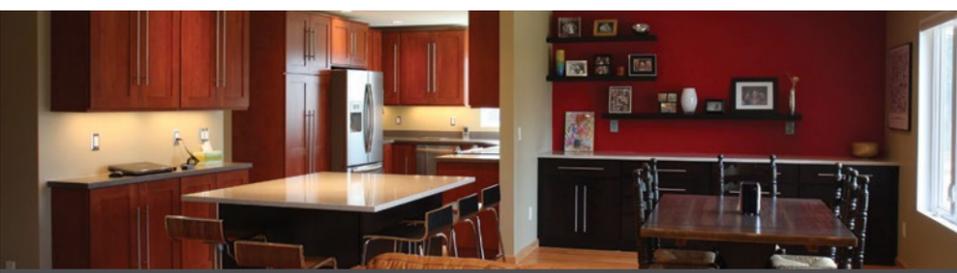
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## Local Workplace Inclusion

American Family Insurance and an internal employee group made the push for and achieved the highest score on the Human Rights Campaign's Corporate Equality Index. Find out how they did it and why it was an important part of building a better Madison workplace.

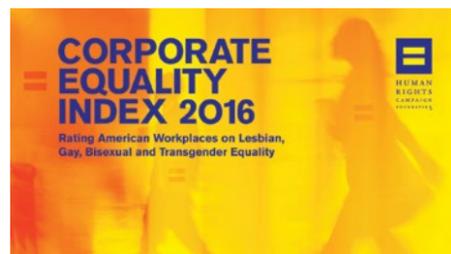
**IN A CITY FREQUENTLY** lauded for being LGBTQ friendly it may come as something of a surprise to learn that just one business here has applied for or gotten a perfect score on one of the biggest indexes in the country that tracks corporate equality and inclusion. American Family Insurance became that lone company this year, joining the ranks of 407 major U.S. businesses that also earned top marks this year. In 2015 American Family scored an 85 and credits an internal LGBTQ business resource group for helping make needed improvements since then.

That BRG, called ONE Family (Out Network of Employees), was formed in 2013 by Luke Nelson and Summer Laird as a way to provide a resource group specific to the needs of the LGBTQ community within the company. One of the founding members, Luke Nelson was instrumental in pushing for the attainment of the perfect index score.

"In order to achieve a score of 100, it was imperative to have diversity champions throughout our organization," Nelson says. "The business resource groups provide awareness of diversity and inclusion initiatives that affect our employees and our customers. The reason we were able to increase our score so rapidly is because we have a strong leadership team that emphasizes the importance of diversity and inclusion. Developing a culture where everyone can bring their authentic selves to work provides an environment for employees to thrive."

The Human Rights Campaign releases its Corporate Equality Index (CEI) each year after grading companies that submit themselves to the process on everything from non-discrimination workplace protections, domestic partner benefits, transgender-inclusive health care benefits, competency programs and public engagement with the LGBT community.

"We are honored to have earned this achievement which gives us the designation as a 'best place to work for LGBT equality,'" says Jim St. Vincent, vice president of human resources at the company. "This doesn't mean we're perfect or can take it for granted now



Our BRG has reviewed policy language, reviewed onboarding education for diversity and inclusion, continuing education on diversity and inclusion for tenured staff and the managers.

that we've achieved this score, but we will need to continually work at it."

Madison-based American Family Insurance is the nation's third-largest mutual property/casualty insurance company and ranks 358th on the Fortune 500 list.

"American Family is committed to nurturing an inclusive culture because it strengthens our business," says Mary Schmoeger, chief administration officer at American Family Insurance.

"By promoting workplace equality we attract and keep diverse, talented and engaged employees," says Schmoeger. "It also appeals to consumers who want to do business with companies that have thoughtful inclusion policies in place," says Schmoeger.

### HOW THEY DID IT (AND HOW YOU CAN, TOO)

Are you or your business interested in doing the work to build a more diverse and inclusive workplace? Here are some of the first steps taken by the American Family BRG in order to do just that, and how they applied for and received the HRC score.

First, you'll need at least one employee interested in spearheading the effort. A good

place to start is to pitch the formation of an LGBTQ business resource group.

According to Nelson, some of the criteria needed to become a BRG were:

- Show that there's an interest in this specific BRG by securing at least 10 people that would commit their name and volunteer their time to the new venture.
- Secure at least two executive sponsors.
- Create a charter that illustrates the goals of the BRG. Show how it will be a benefit to the business with employee recruitment and retention, and how it will affect the customer base.
- Create a Business Plan Proposal and present it to the BRG committee: Talk about the reported LGBTQ population, the median income, the education, the degrees and the support and loyalty given to companies that support the LGBTQ community.

Nelson: "One of our first goals was to create a team to review the survey and criteria for the CEI. With the sections there are scores assigned. Many of these have the possibility of getting partial scores for having some but not all of the criteria achieved."

The survey has the following sections:

- Non-Discrimination/ Equal Employment Opportunity Policy
- Spousal and Partner Benefits
- Transgender-Inclusive Benefits
- Organizational LGBT Competency
- Public Engagement
- International Operations
- Additional Information

"Where we had scores we wanted to make sure that we were still adhering to the criteria. Where we didn't have either the complete score or no score we worked with our business partners to see what type of company changes had to be made to make sure that we were in total compliance. As an example, just by creating ONE Family our score increased. Our BRG has reviewed policy language, reviewed onboarding education for diversity and inclusion, continuing education on diversity and inclusion for tenured staff and the managers. We have also created PRIDE (Promote Respect, Inclusion, Diversity & Equality) in the Workplace, which is available for employees and our agent field force."

Here is a link as to what businesses are invited or eligible to be rated: [www.hrc.org/resources/corporate-equality-index-what-businesses-are-rated-and-how-to-participate](http://www.hrc.org/resources/corporate-equality-index-what-businesses-are-rated-and-how-to-participate).

If you fit the criteria you have to submit the name, position, email, phone number and address of a person authorized to represent your business to [cei@hrc.org](mailto:cei@hrc.org). After you have participated in a rating, HRC sends an email each year with the new criteria. —Emily Mills



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MICKEY'S TAVERN Photos 7-9

WHEN ASKED TO NAME Madison's best queer brunches I was honored and excited—but then scratched my head. "Wait, does an omelet or pancake taste better in one place rather than another simply because I'm queer?" I wondered. The answer is, of course, "NO," but that omelet or pancake sure goes down a lot smoother if I'm comfortable with my surroundings.

Let's face it, queers don't go brunching with a sign that says, "We're here, we're hungry, get used to it." We do take our brunches seriously, though, just like every proud Scconnie. With the hustle and bustle of Madison life and the constraints of winter trapping us five months a year, brunches are a time when we get together to catch up with family and friends, mingle, recover from the weekend nightlife, or cuddle up with our significant others. Just like straight folks, sometimes us queers just want to put our arms around our partners, flirt, smile, and even feed each other some bacon or tofurkey. Sometimes, we just want to walk into a place after a hard work week and know that everyone in that place is on the same wavelength (or close to it).



DAISY CAFÉ & CUPCAKERY Photos 10-12

Let's all agree on one thing: In Wisconsin we sometimes drink our brunch, and it comes in the form of a Bloody Mary. A staple and food group for most Madisonians, Mickey's is hands-down the best place to go to get your fixin's on. They host the best patio service in town, and although the wait may be lengthy during brunch, there's always people-watching, playing pool, and talking socio-economics and family drama to the best bar staff on the east side to keep you busy during your wait. If you like tofu scrambles, their peanut butter-infused take on the dish is second-to-none. 1524 Williamson St. (Sat & Sun brunch starts at 9 a.m., cash only, vegetarian/vegan friendly)

There is only one place I have ever been where the spread looked like something that could only be conjured up by the brunch gods. The diversity at Daisy is beyond compare. Where else can you see chorizo meatloaf, a crimini mushroom and gruyere strata, and cupcakes galore (including gluten free and vegan

options)—all at one table? The portions and prices are fair, the room is spacious and inviting, and the staff has the capability to turn around tables to accommodate any lines that form. I did not write down the exact number displayed on the outside window of cupcakes served since opening, but my guess is, if they continue, it will hit a million in no time. No matter how busy, the staff greet you with a smile and are very knowledgeable. 2827 Atwood Ave. (M 8-5, Tues thru Sat 8-8, Sun 8-5, cards accepted, vegetarian/vegan friendly) ■

## Brunching While Queer

Tulin Waters reviews some of Madison's tastiest and most friendly spots for taking in the favorite meal of queers everywhere.



WILLALBY'S CAFÉ Photos 1-3

With chefs that make beans from scratch, extremely friendly waiters that serve you coffee in unicorn mugs, all while serving their signature Guillermaalby's Omelet, this café is quaint and will always leave you craving more. A sign of a good brunch is being able to order the simplest thing on the menu and have it be delicious, and they offer the best toast and eggs I've ever had. Willalby's hosts the best music selection during brunch hours, too, and with inexpensive prices, a cozy atmosphere, and an always LGBTQ-welcoming staff, I just can't get enough. 1351 Williamson St. (M-F 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., Sat-Sun 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., cash only, vegetarian/vegan friendly)

LAZY JANE'S CAFÉ Photos 4-6

Between the quirky décor, eccentric artwork and labyrinth-style seating, one almost feels immersed in a fairytale rather than at a brunch. Thankfully, the menu is just as diverse, with plenty of baked goods, sandwich and omelet options. Anyone who has gone to Lazy Jane's will tell you they serve the best scones this side of the Mississippi (including a vegan option). They offer a great atmosphere to catch up with friends, read the Sunday paper, or snuggle up to a loved one. 1358 Williamson St. (M-F 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., Sat-Sun 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., cash only, vegetarian/vegan friendly)



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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## Coming Out Every Day

Madison East student **Noah Anderson** talks about the importance of constant education in the fight for more and better allies to the LGBTQ+ community.

**I'M NOAH. I'M A GENDERFLUID, PANSEXUAL,** dog-adoring student at Madison East High School. I have a mother, a stepfather, a father, three younger brothers and a younger sister. I'm co-chair of my school's GSA, active in Teens Like Us through Briarpatch, and I've only recently come to terms with my identity.

When I was little, I wasn't a huge fan of "girly" things. Skirts and pink were never my thing. I had a crush on a girl in my class back when I was seven and identified as a cisgender female, but I ignored it. I figured that girls can't like girls, since I'd never heard of it before. Seven years later, I realized I just didn't care what a person's gender was; I had the potential to be attracted to them. And it was only last year that I started to come to terms with being genderfluid. Finding acceptance for my sexuality was easier than acceptance for my gender identity. It's still a struggle.

In the past few months, so many people have been using my preferred pronouns. This Christmas was the first time any of my relatives tried to use my pronouns correctly. It was my grandmother, and she did an amazing job. "I really like...THEY hat!" was music to my ears. Instead of playing boys vs. girls, we played X's team vs. Y's team. It was the best Christmas gift I could have received.

In the middle of January, my dad used my correct pronouns for an entire morning. I had a fantastic day. My English teacher asked for alternatives to "sir" and "ma'am." I have lunch planned with him where I'll teach him all about being inclusive of people who don't want to be assigned a binary gender. My date-



"I really like...THEY hat!" was music to my ears. Instead of playing boys vs. girls, we played X's team vs. Y's team. It was the best Christmas gift I could have received.

mate (the gender neutral form of girlfriend or boyfriend, also 10 times cuter since it uses alliteration) has been subtly correcting everyone in my house on my pronouns every time they visit. It's working wonders. I've been receiving so much support from so many people lately, and it's been wonderful.

But it took work on my part to get here. I have had to come out as genderfluid at least four separate times to different groups of people. I've had to explain that genderfluid

means I feel like a boy one day and a girl on other days and in between on others, to nearly every person I've come out to. I have to do similar things when I come out to people as pansexual, which means I feel attraction to people regardless of gender. After awhile, you start to ask why you have to do this. Why is coming out necessary?

I haven't found an answer besides this: In the society we live in, people are cisgender until proven trans, or straight until proven otherwise. This adds to the stigma of queer people. The only way to fight this stigma is with awareness. The best way to raise awareness is to educate people. And when you come out, you educate people. When I attend spoken word poetry events, I create a little column for pronouns on the sign-in sheet if it isn't already there, and write down they/them/theirs next to my name. When a teacher gets my friend's pronouns wrong, I correct them, and I don't care if it's the principal or not. Education is my number-one priority.

My GSA went into health classes a week ago where we educated so many students at our school, who then went off to talk about it with their friends. To tell the truth, at least a third of all those students didn't pay attention and left just as bigoted and uneducated as when they came in. That's discouraging, but don't let it stop you from telling everyone you can what's what with the LGBTQ+ community. Because if the other two thirds of the students in those classes left and learned something, that's more people out there educating and raising awareness.

Our numbers will grow exponentially. The population of people who support queer people will grow. The number of out queer people will grow. Our community will get stronger, and maybe then we won't have to come out and educate everyone any more. Eventually, maybe supporting queer and trans youth will be the norm. Maybe one day, every queer kid's grandmother, or father, or teacher, will treat them the way they deserve to be treated. That's my goal. I hope it's everyone else's, too. ■

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