

our lives



Marge Anderson 46



Simone Justice 22



Home: Tamara Packard & Renee Herber 42

HOME & GARDEN

Tips, Trends & Creative Solutions from Area Experts

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

March / April
2017

The WRITE STUFF

Judith Davidoff

EDITOR OF *ISTHMUS*,
MADISON'S ALTERNATIVE
NEWS WEEKLY

INSIDE

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Women's March**

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**Who Sees Your
Health Chart?**

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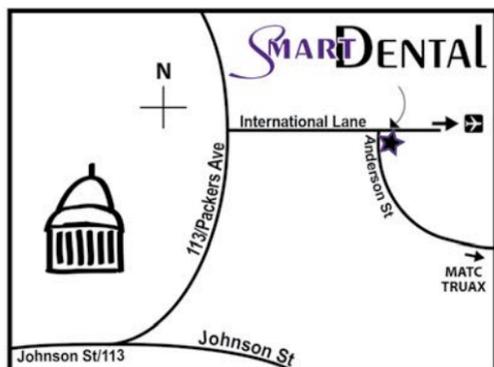
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Gender Care**

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SEPTEMBER 15, 16, 17

Orchestral Brilliance

Chris Dozoryst, *Viola*
BACH/STOKOWSKI
MENDELSSOHN | BERLIOZ

OCTOBER 20, 21, 22

From the New World

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RAVEL | BARBER | DVOŘÁK

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COPLAND | BRUBECK
RODRIGO | FALLA

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Emily Pogorelc, *Soprano*
Eric Barry, *Tenor*
Madison Symphony Chorus
Madison Youth Choirs
Mount Zion Gospel Choir

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Gil Shaham, *Violin*
PROKOFIEV | TCHAIKOVSKY
RACHMANINOFF

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APRIL 13, 14, 15

String Fever

Augustin Hadelich, *Violin*
BRITTEN | DVOŘÁK | SCHUMANN

MAY 4, 5, 6

Mass Appeal

Christopher O'Riely, *Piano*
Madison Symphony Chorus
MOZART | JANÁČEK

MARCH 18

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— Bayard Rustin

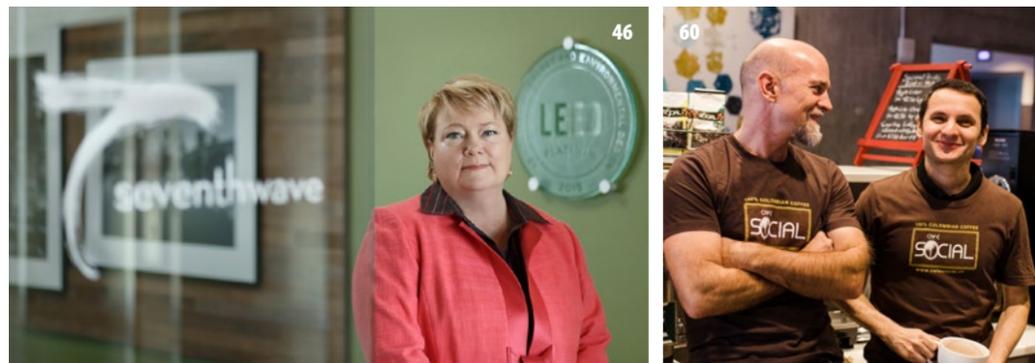


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our lives

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

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EDITOR'S NOTE



A GREAT AWAKENING

THE LAST FEW MONTHS have been an absolute roller coaster. I don't know a single person who hasn't felt emotionally impacted by the results of the presidential election and the first, dizzying weeks of the Trump Administration. Uncertainty, fear, anger, and even despair seem to be ingredients in everyone's cocktail.

There's good reason for it. No sane person can say there isn't a long and difficult fight in front of us, and that people won't suffer real harm in the meantime.

Still, we fight because there's no other option. To find fuel for it, I drove halfway across the country to take part in the Women's March on Washington. I had a hunch going in that the turnout would be far greater than anyone predicted, and the moment I stood on top of an abandoned sand truck just off the National Mall and gazed out over an absolute sea of people, I knew my hunch had been correct.

It was an incredible feeling to be there, cozied up with a million of my fellow Americans who simply could not remain silent or inactive in the face of such a terrible turn of events. I saw and met plenty of veteran activists and protesters, but also equally as many (if not more) first-timers, people who had finally been shaken out of their status quo by just how bad things had gotten. More than anything, it was inspiring to be in such an enormous and diverse crowd of people who all just wanted the world to be a better place for everyone. There were no fights; practically no tempers even in the midst of what could have easily become a dangerously large and tightly packed crowd. There was only singing, chanting, and making new friends.

I'm told it was much the same in Madison, and across the world at the hundreds of sister marches that happened even in the smallest of Alaskan hamlets and aboard an Antarctic research vessel.

I take so much strength from that, and from all of the real action I've since seen taken by people of all different backgrounds—whether it be subscribing to a reliable news outlet, donating to a crucial cause or non-profit, writing and calling their representatives, or volunteering their own time and efforts.

For the LGBTQ community, our very existence and persistence is an act of resistance. Simply living our lives honestly is still a revolutionary act. And so I am more humbled and grateful than ever to serve as editor of this magazine, where we have the privilege of sharing the stories of so many different people within the community—whether they be overtly political or simply personal. They're all part of the story of our diversity and resiliency. So I'll take this opportunity to reiterate that we are always open to your ideas, contributions, and recommendations. *Our Lives* is not meant to be a walled garden. The more voices, faces, and experiences we can give space to, the better we serve our community. Our doors are always open. ■

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Colossal Piano

APR. 7, 8, 9 | Overture Hall

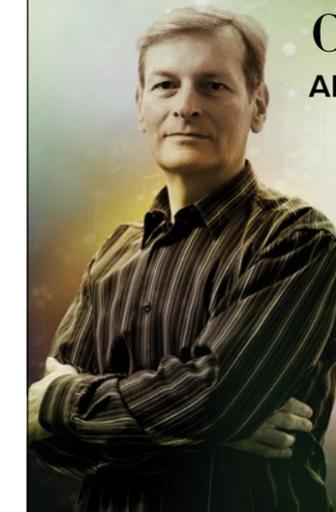
ROBERT SCHUMANN
Manfred Overture

WITOLD LUTOSŁAWSKI
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SERGEI RACHMANINOFF
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John DeMain, *Conductor*
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Brahms' Requiem

MAY 5, 6, 7 | Overture Hall

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Beverly Taylor, *Chorus Director*
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

THE GOOD NEWS

I WAS DELIGHTED TODAY to receive the latest issue of *Our Lives*... I'm probably not the only one who reads practically every word in each issue, even most of the ads. *Our Lives* and the *Gay and Lesbian Quarterly* are my fave community publications. I'm retired from university, but continue to work with our LGBTQ+ student club every week. Your magazine continues to be a helpful source of “good news” to share with our students.

DR. ARTHUR H. DARKEN

STANDING UP IN SUPPORT

SINCE THE RESULTS OF THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION I have been following *Our Lives'* posts on Facebook and other outlets. It saddens me to see such hatred directed towards the LGBTQ community, a community that I have grown to know over the years through advertising my business in your magazine. Before *Our Lives*, my knowledge of the LGBTQ community was limited, but I have become much more knowledgeable from reading the articles in the magazine. In addition, advertising in *Our Lives* has found me many customers in the LGBTQ community, some of whom have become personal friends. I also have had LGBTQ members work on my crews building decks, and I will continue to do so.



QUIGLEY Decks

To me, *Our Lives*, along with other LGBTQ publications, are important voices for the LGBTQ community in Dane and surrounding counties in Wisconsin. In the past I've always kept my business neutral in political activities but I feel here I have to make an exception. It saddens me to see this community in fear that their chances at the American Dream might be snatched out from under them. I feel it is unjust, and I feel it is my moral duty not to sit quiet. To let everyone know I'm standing in solidarity with the LGBTQ community, I have decided to reserve larger ad spaces in *Our Lives* from now on. The larger ad space is not so much to generate new business but to make a statement that Quigley Decks is both proud and honored to do business with the LGBTQ community. I believe that if the extra revenue generated from the larger ads brings the voice of one more person to the eyes and ears of the larger community, that is all that matters. I want people to know that when it comes to growing my business and securing employment for my staff, I will seek assistance from the LGBTQ community. I want people to know that whomever you choose to love, you will always have my utmost respect. I want people to know, just like other ethnic and minority groups, the LGBTQ community plays a vital role and is no less important in what makes America the great country that it is.

TIM QUIGLEY, owner, Quigley Decks

CORRECTION

In our **January 2017** issue we forgot to include Jonathan Popp's photography credit for the male burlesque festival. We also miscredited the Greenleaf wedding. Their photo was by Claire Copeland of Simple Treasures Photography.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

LOCAL QPOC LEADERS

OUR LIVES IS WORKING to compile a power list of influential queer people of color in the greater Madison area, and we need your help! If you know someone who should be on this list, please let us know: We're looking for queer-identified people of color who are doing everything from community organizing and activism, to business and entrepreneurial movers and shakers, to artists and chefs and everything in between. Our goal is to highlight and lift up the great work already being done by folks within the community in the hopes of better supporting and connecting both established and emerging leaders.

You can submit recommendations to us via online form at **ourlivesmadison.com/qpocleadership**. We will be leaving the form open indefinitely, but for the first installment of the list, please make submissions by April 15. Thank you!

CONTRIBUTORS



KATHY ORIEL, MD is a family physician in Madison, Wisconsin. She identifies as a middle-aged, frumpy, lesbian mom who attempts to remain relevant by snowboarding, playing tennis, and feeding an untold number of teens. Kathy has been caring for and advocating for LGBTQ+ people within medical settings for more than 25 years. She served as a past-president of the Gay and Lesbian (sic) Medical Association. She has practiced at the Northeast Family Medical Center on the north side of Madison since 1995. Despite her identity as an outsider among many in mainstream medicine, she's had the privilege of serving as the University of Wisconsin's Family Medicine Residency Program Director for the last nine years. Having recently resigned from the U.W., she'll be looking forward to unknown and exciting next professional opportunities.

MARCELLE RICHARDS is a freelance writer, editor, artist, adventurer, and shamanic practitioner. Their work has appeared in *Our Lives Magazine*, *Isthmus*, and *Love, Always: Partners of Trans People on Intimacy, Challenge and Resilience*, and they have been active in ArtWrite Collective. After spending most of their life telling other people's stories, Marcelle is currently focusing on writing their own lived stories. Their path of self-discovery has taken them around the world and back to places of origin...back to ravens and castles and a famous storyteller in Ireland, to an enchanted forest in Brittany, to the roads less traveled in Hawaii, and forward, looking ahead to learning the old spiritual traditions of Korea. They are grateful for being able to hear the call and to follow it. They believe in calculated risk, big dreams, and that “the world is always talking.” marcellerichards.com

DALE DECKER has been providing counseling to the LGBTQ community for more than 20 years in diverse settings ranging from community programs, hospitals, and private practice. He specializes in gender affirming therapy, coming out support, HIV/AIDS concerns, sexuality, depression, and anxiety. He is an avid gardener, bird watcher, theater geek, and a founding member of the Mad City Sisters. daledecker.net

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Time Marches On

Our Lives turns 10 years old this July, and we're celebrating with our own year-long retrospective.

We take a look back at some of the people, stories, and changes that have marked the past decade of the LGBTQ community here in Madison, the state, and beyond.

IN JANUARY WE BEGAN a year-long retrospective to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the magazine, and we continue with this issue and a look back at some of the people, stories, and changes that have marked the past decade of the LGBTQ community. Our March edition hasn't always been Home & Garden themed—that came in 2011—but it has always helped mark the beginning of the warming months in Wisconsin. As always, this is just a snapshot. You can find whole back issues on our website at ourlivesmadison.com.

March 2008



IT'S ALMOST STRANGE to think about now, when transgender issues are discussed nationally and terms like “genderqueer” are far more ubiquitous, but back in 2008 the “mainstream” conversation in the straight or queer communities had not yet really begun to touch on those concepts. That makes Finn Enke's piece from this issue, “Living With Gender,” all the more notable, as it tackled trans rights and identity head-on.

Along that theme, we were proud to include a poignant article by one-time *Our Lives* managing editor Eri Madder about

how finally accepting a trans identity also helped create a sense of connection to one's physical location and community.

Tamara Packard also wrote about the status of the Employment Non-Discrimination Act (or ENDA). That was the first time the bill had been introduced with added provisions to cover transgender people and bar discrimination on the basis of gender identity in addition to sexual orientation. Leadership stripped that language, however, and denied Tammy Baldwin's attempts to reintroduce it via amendment. The law still has yet to pass.



March 2009



THE MAGAZINE TOOK a dive into exploring queer life in more rural parts of the state, using the lens of some of people's favorite places. It was a beautiful and moving portrait of a part of LGBTQ life that often goes overlooked, and is an aspect we continue to try to bring to our pages as often as we can. The issue also featured a great profile of Madison theater stalwart J. Patrick, who talked about serving in Vietnam and living with HIV, among other things.

Therapist Sue Gill, who we're still grateful to count as a regular contributor, posted a lovely piece on transience within the LGBTQ community, a theme that continues to come up over and over and have great impact on many of us. The issue also featured our first look at Le Dame Footwear, which had just gotten off the ground.

 Read every previous issue online: ourlivesmadison.com/magazine

ROBERTO AMEZCUA, JESS HORN, SAMANTHA DUTCHER, JAN DEGRAFF

March 2010



THIS WAS THE YEAR we had our first introduction to M Adams, who had just taken a position at GSAFE as their Middle School Program Assistant. M has since gone on to be a serious force to be reckoned with in Madison, particularly in the fight for racial justice and around queer issues through work with Black Lives Matter, Young Gifted and Black, Freedom Inc. and more. It was also the issue in which we printed our first article entirely in Spanish, thanks to Diego Campoverde-Cisneros' poignant coming out story.

We were thrilled to include a great reflection/retrospective from David Clarenbach about his long time in state government, including his work to help pass the nation's first statewide gay rights bill. Fun fact: The photo we included of David with the article was taken while he was on vacation in Thailand. We had to hustle to find and hire a photographer in Bangkok to make it happen!

Historian Dick Wagner helped us create a “Pink Plaque” tour of important LGBT sites in Madison that's still relevant today. We'll be looking into updating it for the 10th anniversary issue this July, too.

March 2011



OUR FIRST OFFICIAL home and garden themed issue featured Rebecca Ryan's home and Edward Lyon from the Allen Centennial Gardens. We were also pleased to publish New Harvest Foundation's annual report in the magazine, which continue for the following few years. It was a great way to keep up with the foundation's important work in the community.



ROBERTO AMEZCUA



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10-YEAR RETROSPECTIVE PREVIOUS MARCH ISSUES

Tamara Packard wrote a prescient warning about the incoming Walker Administration, including a call for greater civic engagement and voting in non-presidential elections. We also included the first Our Future Leaders column after its introduction by former editorial facilitator Ryan Petty in January.

March 2012



A MAJOR MILESTONE: our first, full-color issue! Previously only the covers and occasional pages had been in color, so we were more than a little excited to move to a full-color, glossy

version—proof of the continued growth and the community’s crucial support. Rep. Mark Pocan graced the cover and penned a deeply personal feature that not only announced his run for U.S. Congress, but delved into his experience with being gay bashed.

Former contributor Tara Ayers gave us a great profile of longtime Madison institution Sue Goldwomon, and Katie Belanger re-capped the very first Fair Wisconsin LGBT Leadership Conference, which featured Chaz Bono as they keynote speaker that year. It was also the first issue in which we began to include the Trending/Tips features, bringing yet more community faces, voices, and expertise into the magazine.

March 2013



THIS WAS EMILY MILLS' first full issue as the new Editor of the magazine (“Time flies when you’re queering your fun/work!”). It was also the first issue after Obama’s 2012 election win and

speech that included the first-ever presidential reference to the Stonewall riots as part of the nation’s history of pivotal civil rights moments. Dick Wagner took the opportunity to write a great rundown of gay bar history.

We had James Lehman write the Future Leaders column about his time as a medical student at the U.W. and desire to see equal access to quality health care extended to LGBTQ people. James has since gone on

to found the Pride in Healthcare group that helps bring together and organize medical students and staff on that very issue.

The cover story highlighted the new owners (Bob Klebba and David Waugh) of the former Collins House, now the Mendota House Bed & Breakfast, including a pointed side bar by Satya Rhodes-Conway about potentially homophobic resistance they’d faced in approval to take over and run the business by the city.

March 2014



WE GOT A LOOK at the fabulous interior and exterior of Dino Maniaci and Jason Hoke’s designer home, as well as some insight into the duo’s life and work. Publisher Patrick Farabaugh

went deeply personal with an essay about his search for community after running away from home as a teenager, a journey that took him across the globe and back before settling in Madison.

Immigration reform was a major topic nationally at the time, and Mark Pocan and JoCasta Zamarripa teamed up to pen a piece on its impact on LGBTQ people. The topic remains especially relevant today as we face down the Trump Administration’s troubling moves to ban entire groups of people from entering the country, something that still absolutely has negative consequences especially for people fleeing LGBTQ persecution.

March 2015



WE UPDATED OUR COVER in order to include more people and better show the multiple identities represented by the issue. Ret. Col. Sheri Swokowski shared her incredible story with us, including her coming out journey and how that played into her military career. Sheri was instrumental in overturning the ban on openly transgender service members and has continued to be very active in her support and activism on behalf of LGBTQ people, especially those with military ties.

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Pat Blair, of Blair Lawn and Landscape, celebrated her 30th year in business and wrote about the challenges and successes of being an out woman in a traditionally male-dominated field. Former Plan B co-owner Rico Sabatini gave us a glimpse inside his coming out journey, as well as his change from club owner to real estate agent.

March 2016



ROLLER DERBY SHOWS up again, as the community grows and evolves in Madison. We featured Ray McMahan, who talked about his transition and how the sport has played a roll in helping

him feel more confident in his own skin. Ray has since gone on to help found a new men’s roller derby team, the Mad Men, who played their first game earlier this year—and are recruiting people of any/all gender identities!

Andrew Braman-Wanek talked us through the work he put into rennovating an east side bungalow, and Rick Shaver and Lee Melahn of Pleasant Living shared their story of love, life, and top notch/nationally noted interior design (did you know they did the Clinton Library?). We also celebrated American Family’s 100% score on the Corporate Equality Index, and looked at the steps it took to acheive the rating.

March 2017



YOU’RE HOLDING THIS issue right now! We’re thrilled to be featuring *Isthmus* editor Judith Davidoff on our cover, and it feels especially pertinent to tell the story of a truth-seeking journalist in this era of

media demonization by our own president.

Longtime contributor Tamara Packard and her wife Renee Herber share the home they rennovated together, and Marge Anderson of Seventhwave gives us a look at how she’s worked to create and support sustainability.

There are lots of other goodies and crucial info within this issue, too, so we’ll let you continue on your way—and look forward to another 10 years (and more) of *Our Lives!* ■

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Forward March

Notes and photos from the Madison Women's March and what a revitalized movement for equality looks like.

THEY CAME TOGETHER with startling and unprecedented speed: The day after Donald Trump won the Electoral College and therefore the presidency of the United States, a Facebook post calling for a Women's March on Washington, DC went up and went viral. Soon, hundreds of thousands of people across the country had expressed a desire to join such an event, and shortly after

that dozens of solidarity marches began to come together for locations all over America. By the time all was said and done, over a million people descended on the nation's capitol for the largest protest in American history, with millions more gathering in cities across the world. There's no exact count for the number of people from Madison and Wisconsin who made



the trek to DC, though *Our Lives* editor Emily Mills was one of them. She joined a group of dozens of roller derby affiliated people who came from across the country to protest and show support for a more equal and just world.

We're pleased to present photos from all of you who attended both the march in DC and the solidarity march here in Madison, which drew an estimated crowd of 75,000 to 100,000 people from all across the state.

More than anything, the events prove that a large and diverse cross section of Americans stand opposed to the divisive, xenophobic, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, and racist language and actions of Donald Trump and his administration—and want to stand up for an inclusive, intersectional community.

There were and are serious schisms and ignorances to be addressed within the movement, as was clear when the initial event organizers behind the march on DC were all white women. Given that women of color, immigrant women, and LGBTQ-identified people are at greater risk under the new regime, and that they already face far greater rates of discrimination, it's crucial to center their experiences, voices, and leadership in any resistance and fight for better.

The Women's March rightly handed over organization to a committee of diverse women, all leaders in their own right, and this

change and broadening of focus was evident in the programming at the march itself. One after another, women of color, transgender women, immigrant women, queer women, all took the stage to speak to the issues facing their communities.

In Madison, an array of local politicians and community organizers spoke to the large gathering, including Rep. Mark Pocan, who boycotted the inauguration in Washington.

"Welcome members of the resistance, Wisconsin division," Pocan greeted the crowd.

State Sen. Lena Taylor implored everyone to stay involved in the coming years: "Things happen if people stay on the sidelines."

"We want to make sure our voices are heard," said state Rep. JoCasta Zamarripa. "We reject the threats he (Trump) has made against some of the most vulnerable communities."

That's the ultimate lesson of the unprecedented protests: Get involved and stay engaged. Where the massive march on Washington in 1963, led by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was the culmination of years of grassroots organizing and direct action for civil rights, these most recent protests may act as more of a starting point. They can and are proving to be a way to gather momentum, build networks, and gain confidence for the work yet to be done—together. ■

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LGBTQ Organizations Update

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

Reported by **Emily Mills**

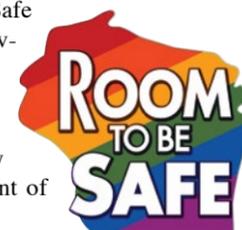
NEWS

Important notes about area LGBTQ groups

DIVERSE & RESILIENT

D&R is pleased to announce the new Room to Be Safe program and resource line serving LGBTQ survivors of intimate partner or community violence and their loved ones. This work has been made possible by a grant through the Department of Children and Family Services.

Survivors or their loved ones can call or text 414-856-LGBT (5428) to receive assistance, referrals, support, and safety planning. This is not a 24-hour crisis line, but help will be available Monday through Fri-



FREEDOM INC.

Over a hundred participants were invited to attend the first ever Global Hmong Women's Summit in Chang Mai, Thailand. This event, an effort led in part by Freedom Inc., brought Hmong women from all over the world to collaborate and discuss issues affecting the global Hmong community.

Khmer women from Freedom Inc.'s Khmer project celebrated the new year by going out to eat. This group meets weekly for group

day from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. and is monitored nights and weekends. You can email Kathy Flores at kflores@diverseandresilient.org for more information or visit www.room-tobesafe.org.



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Galleries & Fine Artists



Families & Education

Nov.-Dec.

FEATURING:
Education Planning
Family Service Providers
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support at the Cambodian Buddhist Temple in Oregon, Wisconsin. Led by staff member Jenny Sem, this group also helps to fundraise for the temple and Khmer community.

ORGULLO LATINX LGBT+ The group is pleased to unveil its new website at orgullolatinx.org.

PFLAG MADISON A parent from the Madison Metropolitan School District's (MMSD) Transparent group spoke at the January meeting. The group meets the second Monday from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. at Wright Middle School during the academic school year. Student volunteers from Edgewood High School provide childcare. The group is open to anyone and the email list is confidential.

The main focus of the group are the issues within the schools that affect LGBTQ+ students including bullying, discipline, lack of fairness, etc. They also discuss broader

topics such as the recent discussion concerning the possible elimination of transgender healthcare benefits for state employees. Currently they are looking for volunteers to host LGBTQ+ -themed book readings at branches of the Madison Public Library.

Longtime PFLAG member, chapter leader, and former national board member Dr. Kay Heggstad, passed away on January 13.

In her role on the board, she served as the chairperson of the Policy Committee, stewarding PFLAG National policy statements on LGBTQ anti-discrimination protections and Pre-exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP). Her story was also included in several PFLAG amicus briefs in support of marriage equality, including those submitted to the Seventh Circuit and Ninth Circuit Courts of Appeal.

PROUD THEATER Proud Theater Beyond in Madison is up and running! The group meets

Kay Heggstad, longtime LGBTQ ally and physician, dies at age 72



LONGTIME MADISON RESIDENT, doctor, and PFLAG member Kay Heggstad passed away earlier this year, leaving a hole in our community. As was in keeping with her personality, Kay wrote her own obituary, which went viral shortly after her death. We reproduce it, in small part, here:

Kay Ann Heggstad, age 72, bought the farm, is no more, has ceased to be, left this world, is bereft of life, gave up the ghost, kicked the bucket, murió, c'est fini. She died on Friday, Jan. 13, 2017, after a wimpy non-battle with multiple myeloma, a nasty bone marrow cancer, after almost two years to the date of diagnosis. No one should say she fought a courageous battle, because she did not! Unlike most folks, she complained all the way. What a whiner! She was ready to quit treatment many times but her family pushed her to continue, which was good since she then had time to have parties and say goodbye to friends and relatives.

After finishing a sometimes stormy family practice residency, she and her husband and Dr. Daniel Barry worked at the Monona Grove clinic and then a few years later, the three of them plus their manager, Alice Soule, built, stocked, and opened the Wildwood Family Clinic in 1977. The clinic has now grown to two offices, 10 doctors, four PAs, six PTs, and two psychiatric social workers. Kay left Wildwood in 2000 to become a medical director at what is now called Agrace HospiceCare and thought she had found her true calling in life, only to be "let go" after five years. After she left, they replaced her with a puppy. Paul says it was because the dog had a nicer personality. That was an extremely hard time for her.

She was saved by her volunteer work. She was a classroom assistant/tutor in algebra at Sennett Middle School for several years and she was on the national and local boards of PFLAG.

Kay and Paul Wertsch were married for 48 years and have two wonderful kids, Johanna Wertsch (Larry Kaltenberg) in Madison and Gregory Wertsch (Mark Ferrandino) in Denver; and two lovely granddaughters, Paulina Kay Wertsch, and Lila Augusta Ferrandino.

A celebration of life was held in May, 2015, a bit prematurely, and she is sorry if you missed it. She said it was the best party she ever attended. A second celebration was held September, 2016, and that was as good as the first one. She will miss the third one. She had a great life and wants people to not grieve. (In case anyone would.) Grieving won't bring her back, so what is the point...just makes you feel bad. And, she had a T-shirt that said, "I know what is right for everyone." She was right. ■

Wearing the rainbow for LGBTQ health care

PRIDE IN HEALTHCARE, a U.W. student organization for health sciences students who are devoted to LGBTQ health and closing health disparities, recently completed a successful fundraising campaign to distribute pins to area physicians who are supportive of and knowledgeable about LGBTQ patient needs. The Rainbow Caduceus Project comes in response to the continued problem of disparities in care for LGBTQ-identified.



According to a study by Lambda Legal, 73% of transgender individuals and 29% of lesbian, gay, or bisexual individuals believe they will be treated differently by medical personnel because they're LGBT. These fears lead many individuals to conceal their LGBTQ identity from their healthcare providers or avoid seeking care at all.

The white coat pins were designed for health professions students and faculty alike to wear as a symbol of support for LGBTQ-identified patients and colleagues. Since the launch of the campaign, the organization says it has partnered with five U.S. medical schools across the country also interested in distributing pins to their students and faculty. Any other interested health professions students or health professionals who want to distribute pins at their school or office are encouraged to contact the group at prideinhealthcare@gmail.com.

Mondays at 5:15 p.m. at 312 Wisconsin Avenue, and is designed for LGBTQ+ and allied young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. Proud Theater Beyond in Milwaukee is enjoying its first year and is also open to LGBTQ+ and allied young adults between the ages of 18 and 24. This group meets at the LGBT Community Center, 1110 North Market Street, 2nd floor, in Milwaukee. For more info, contact Proud Theater at info@proudtheater.org.

STAFF / BOARD CHANGES

Who's moving on or moving into org leadership

ACLU OF WISCONSIN

The state chapter is pleased to announce the hiring of a new Executive Director to lead the ACLU of Wisconsin following the retirement of longtime director Chris Ahmuty in December.

AWARDS / RECOGNITION / GRANTS

Special thanks for those who do good.

FREEDOM INC. Congratulations to M. Adams! On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, January 16, Freedom Inc's co-executive director was honored for being one of Wisconsin's influential African Americans. This list of 44 people making change was compiled by Madison365.



ORGULLO LATINX LGBT+ The group would like to thank and recognize Veronica Lazo, Executive Director of UNIDOS Against Domestic Violence Executive Director. Veronica is an LGBT+ ally and a great supporter of Orgullo Latinx. She works very hard for the better of the whole community.

PROUD THEATER The LGBTQ youth theater company has been named the Fair Wisconsin Organization of the Year, and was honored on February 25 in Milwaukee at the Fair Wisconsin Leadership Awards.

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Chris Ott will be the Executive Director of the ACLU of Wisconsin beginning on April 3, or sooner if his move from Boston allows. This will be a homecoming for Chris, who was born in Milwaukee and lived in Ozaukee County and Madison before taking a position at the ACLU in Boston.



Chris is a graduate of Brown University who has spent the majority of his career working to preserve and promote civil rights and civil liberties. After extensive work as a freelance writer for a number of major publications, Chris was hired as the first Executive Director of Fair Wisconsin, a statewide LGBT civil rights organization; he led and managed its transition from a volunteer effort to a professional organization. He served as the CEO,

registered lobbyist, and spokesperson during an intense campaign against a state constitutional ban on equal marriage rights.

At the ACLU of Massachusetts, he raised the profile of the affiliate dramatically and quantifiably. He has worked on a broad range of civil rights issues and grown a wide network of media contacts. He is highly respected for his critical thinking skills and ability to develop comprehensive strategies to address a wide variety of issues.

FORGE The group is pleased to announce the addition of the newest staff member, Ashley Altadonna, who will serve as Community Organizer and Project Coordinator.

PFLAG MADISON Lora Schmid-Dolan has been PFLAG Madison president since May of

2016 and will serve a two-year term. Current board members include Karen Baker, Susie Murray (treasurer), Anne Urbanski, Jeanne Williams (past president) and Joanne Lee.

CALLS TO ACTION

Where and how you can help

GSAFE The organization is currently working with volunteers across Wisconsin who have begun organizing Day of Learning community conversations. Day of Learning events are designed to allow communities to come together to learn about what it means—and doesn't mean—to be young and transgender. These family-friendly, educational events use video clips, children's books, news articles, guided conversations, and panels to raise awareness, understanding, and support for transgender and non-binary youth. Individuals and groups interested in organizing a Day of Learning event should contact Shawna at shawna@gsafewi.org or 608-661-4141.

LGBT BOOKS TO PRISONERS The organization has been sending more and more packages of books to queer and trans people in prison. In the first month of 2017, we sent about 400 packages, or about 1500 books, to LGBTQ-identified people incarcerated across the United States. With so much demand, we're finding it increasingly hard to keep our shelves stocked. If you're looking for a good home for your softcover books in good condition, consider donating them to LGBT Books to Prisoners. We're most in need of the following books:

- Art (drawing how-to + books with photos of art; no nudity)
- Fitness (e.g. yoga, body-weight exercises; no martial arts)
- Gay, bi and trans fiction and erotica
- Horror
- Language learning (beginning)
- Large print dictionaries
- Large print fiction (no romance)
- Makeup guides
- Math (high school level)
- Mystery
- Native/first nations (history + fiction)
- Programming (no out-of-date books)
- Psychology (general)
- Self-help (general interest)
- Spanish-language (nonfiction + fiction)
- Wicca

To make arrangements for your donation, email lgbtbookstoprisoners@gmail.com

Ali Muldrow wins primary in race for school board in Madison



MADISON ACTIVIST, ADVOCATE, and GSAFE's Director of Youth Programming & Inclusion Ali Muldrow threw her hat into the ring for Madison School Board this year, running a campaign based on creating a school system that is more fully inclusive and supportive particularly for LGBTQ and students of color.

Muldrow came in first in the spring primary, winning 40.2 percent of the votes. She will face Kate Toews in the April 4 election.

Muldrow wants every child and parent in the district to feel included and have a platform to integrate their ideas into the conversation. That includes create curriculum that better reflects the diverse backgrounds and cultures represented by Madison's and the country's students. She hopes her story and advocacy work in Madison resonates with voters to win Seat 6.

From the *Capital Times*:

Muldrow facilitated after-school programming part-time at Madison East and West high schools for four years. When she was 22, she had her first child, Adrian Whitney, now 7, and needed to find full-time work (Muldrow also has another daughter, Esau Amir, 2.) She took a job as a security guard at East, and saw firsthand how school discipline disproportionately affected some students....

After another few months working as a janitor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, she was hired as a racial justice youth organizer at GSAFE, an organization that works to create inclusive school communities where LGBTQ youth can thrive. As a queer woman of color, Muldrow saw GSAFE as a way to cultivate her voice as a part of a group of people who are often pushed to the margins.

"I'm not often offered a seat at the table when it comes to making decisions about my children's education. A lot of LGBTQ families experience that," she said. "You are not a part of the mainstream conversation."

Muldrow also created the New Narrative Project, a program dedicated to mentoring youth incarcerated at the Dane County Jail. Muldrow said it was meaningful for her to "amplify their voices" and for her work to "have a real relationship to why some people's children in this community end up incarcerated over and over again in high school." ■

OUTREACH Madison's LGBTQ center is joining 70 other non-profits in the city for their third annual online giving day, the Big Share, on March 7. All gifts designated to OutReach will be used to further their mission "to promote equality and quality of life for LGBT people." Check out thebigshare.org, and on March 7 make sure to select OutReach as the recipient of your donation.

STAGEQ The LGBTQ theater company will be holding a fundraising event in association with the photo exhibit they are producing (with LeDame Footwear) called "Sight Unseen" (see Events), on April 7. All proceeds from tickets and a silent auction of exclusive photography will go to support StageQ.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plan ahead to join in

DIVERSE & RESILIENT Reviving the Dream will be held **March 30** at the InterContinental Hotel in Milwaukee. Celebrate the life and

contributions of Bayard Rustin, chief organizer of the 1963 March on Washington and openly gay key advisor to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Featuring keynote speaker Gerard Washington, Assistant Milwaukee Fire Chief and fierce advocate for LGBTQ equality. Join Diverse & Resilient and GSAFE for A Day of Learning: A reading of *I Am Jazz* and a community discussion about transgender youth. Thursday, **March 2**, 6:00 p.m. at the Appleton Public Library, 225 North Oneida Street in Appleton.



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ARCW announces merger with Rocky Mountain CARES



BUILDING UPON DENVER'S strong response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic, Rocky Mountain CARES (RMC) and the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) are announcing their merger following the unanimous votes of both organizations' respective boards of directors. People living with HIV, leaders of both organizations, and public officials in both communities are hailing the merger as beneficial to HIV prevention, care, and treatment efforts in Colorado and Wisconsin.

"The Denver Department of Environmental Health applauds the merger of the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW) with Rocky Mountain CARES," said Ann Cecchine-Williams, Deputy Director, Denver Department of Environmental Health. "The merger will allow Rocky Mountain CARES to continue to fulfill their critical mission of providing centralized and comprehensive medical care management, pharmacy, support services, rich education, and research resources to those affected by and infected with HIV/AIDS."

The merged organization, which will continue to operate in Denver under the name Rocky Mountain CARES and in Wisconsin as the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin, will prioritize the opening of an HIV Medical Home, marking an evolution in the role of RMC in fight against AIDS that includes the organization's move into offering direct clinical care for HIV patients. ARCW currently operates the only HIV Medical Home approved by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. The HIV Medical Home is an innovative model of care that integrates medical, dental, and mental health care; pharmacy; social services and care management into one seamless organization in one location.

"Denver and RMC are tremendous leaders in the fight against AIDS," said ARCW President and Chief Executive Officer Michael Gifford. "Our merger will help build upon the incredible work already well underway by bringing the successful HIV Medical Home model of care to Denver, helping to enhance and increase access to care, attract, and retain more patients who are not currently in care or have fallen out of care, and ultimately—and most importantly—help people with HIV live long, healthy lives."

RMC and ARCW will operate as one organization serving people in both Colorado and Wisconsin. Leadership of the merged organization will retain Denver representation, with four members of the RMC Board of Directors joining the ARCW Board of Directors.

Support for due diligence and merger evaluation was supported by a grant from the AIDS United Sector Transformation Initiative, made possible by generous cross-industry support from Johnson & Johnson and Bristol-Myers Squibb. ■

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FAIR WISCONSIN EDUCATION FUND The annual Fair Wisconsin Brunch will be held at the Madison Concourse Hotel on Sunday, **April 30** at 11:00 a.m. More information is at fairwisconsineducationfund.com.

FORGE The standard meeting schedule has changed: Monthly meetings will continue to focus on skills-building and education, but they've moved to 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. on the third Saturday of the month, meeting at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center. The group also still hosts a monthly parents of trans children and youth support group. For more information go to the Facebook page at FORGE.trans, @FORGEforward on Twitter, or sign up to receive email notices at the website: forge-forward.org.

GSAFE The group will host a Spring GSA Conference at Orchard Ridge UCC in Madison on Friday, April 7. It is open to current middle school and high school students, as

well as to GSA advisors and other school professionals who are supporting GSAs and similar clubs. The day will include speakers, large-group networking, and a selection of workshops. For more information visit www.gsafewi.org or contact us at info@gsafewi.org or 608-661-4141.

Get ready to be inspired! GSAFE holds its 21st annual Celebration of Leadership on the evening of Saturday, **May 13** at Monona Terrace in Madison. The event will feature youth scholarship and community award recipients from across the state. The evening will begin with a silent auction and social hour. Groups, organizations, and individuals who are interested in supporting this event should visit gsafewi.org for more info.

LGBT CAMPUS CENTER Registration is open now for Out There Adventures: Queer canoeing, **June 17–23**. Join OTA for five days of canoeing, leadership, and community in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. This trip is perfect for any queer young per-

son looking to learn new skills, make new friends, and spend time in nature. Open to queer youth ages 14 through 22. No experience necessary, just a willingness to get OUT there! Scholarships available.

Queeries? Contact info@outthereadventures.org, register at the registration page (www.outthereadventures.org/bwca-trip), or see OTA on Facebook (www.facebook.com/outthereadventures1).

MADISON GAY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION The MGHA Classic tournament is the MGHA's way of sharing their spirit and style of play with the rest of the Gay Hockey world and the hockey community. It is a fun-filled weekend, jam-packed with hockey and social events. Games start Friday night, **April 28**, followed by a social event for everyone. Registration is open to the community and games are played at the Sun Prairie Ice Arena. More information is at madisongayhockey.org/tournament.

ORGULLO LATINX LGBTQ+ Orgullo Latinx meets every second Wednesday of the month from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Meetings are held at UNIDOS Against Domestic Violence, 2875 Fish Hatchery Road in Fitchburg.

Upcoming meetings dates and themes are: **April 12** Breaking the Silence, **May 10** Learning to be Single or with Someone.

OUTREACH The LGBTQ center is planning for their 10th Annual Garden Party on Thursday, **May 18** at Rotary Gardens in Janesville. Please see lgbtoutreach.org for updates.

Due to construction around the Capitol Square, the final date of the 4th Annual **OutReach Pride Parade** has yet to be set by the City. The tentative date of **August 20** is still not firm. Check outreachprideparade.org for updates and more information.

PFLAG MADISON The group has its annual end-of-year picnic in May. Contact MMSD LGBT Liaison Sherrie Hohns at shohns@madison.k12.wi.us for more information.

PROUD THEATER The youth LGBTQ theater company hosts its second annual LGBTQ+ intergenerational conference, called "Connections 2017: Milestones," on **March 11** at the First United Methodist Church at 203 Wisconsin Avenue in Madison. The event is open to members and allies of the LGBTQ+ community, and will be held from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Connections 2017 is designed

Sheltreese McCoy recognized nationally for work in LGBTQ rights



EACH YEAR THE CONSORTIUM of Higher Education LGBT Resource Professionals recognizes excellence in the field of LGBTQ student services. The 2017 Award for Outstanding Social Justice Practice was awarded to ELPA PhD student Sheltreese McCoy. The Award for Outstanding Social Justice Practice recognizes a significant contribution to the growing body of social justice and intersectionality work in theory and practice. The award was presented at the 2017 Creating Change Conference in Philadelphia, PA.

Additionally, Sheltreese has been invited by the American College Personal Association (ACPA) Coalition for LGTBTA to share her research on May 1 at 12:00 p.m. This will be on an online platform to be determined later. ■

Cardinal Bar closes after 43 years, will reopen under new name and management



LONGTIME CARDINAL BAR OWNER Ricardo Gonzalez is finally getting his well-deserved retirement, after selling the beloved Madison hotspot to new owners earlier this year. The club saw its last night as the Cardinal on January 28, and will reopen as the newest location of the Nomad World Pub this spring.

Mike Eitel, owner of the Nomad, stressed in an interview with the Capital Times that he wants to retain the spirit of the Cardinal and will keep many of its most popular theme nights running, including jazz and fetish nights. Nomad pubs are venues for various styles of music from across the globe and hope to be a good fit for continuing to be a gathering place for Madison's Latinx, Cuban, and Hispanic communities, as well as LGBTQ people.

Changes to the space will include "state-of-the-art video enhancements" to support Nomad's tradition as a soccer pub. It will also be open every day of the week, including some early mornings, in order to show a variety of soccer match-ups. Otherwise, Eitel says he doesn't plan to remodel the bar itself.

Gonzalez originally leased and converted the property to a dance club in mid-1974 and has run it almost continuously during that time. Though he's sad to see the 108-year-old Cardinal close its doors, Gonzalez expresses support for the new owners and says he's excited to spend time writing a book about his great-grandfather, who fought with the Spanish Army during Cuba's fight for independence. ■

to bring together multiple generations of the LGBTQ+ community with the express purpose of building positive bonds among LGBTQ+ community members of all ages.

Proud Theater Sun Prairie's second show, "Queer World," will be presented at the Sun Prairie United Methodist Church, 702 North Street, on **April 28 and 29** at 7:30 p.m. Tickets go on sale April 1.

STAGEQ On **April 7** StageQ and LeDame Footwear are sponsoring "Sight Unseen," a photo exhibit and fundraising event featuring the works of Natalie Kirk and Kyle Krueger. The works



Sight Unseen

explore the idea of visibility by reexamining gender performance expectations and shining a light on LGBTQ sexual violence. Proceeds from a silent auction benefit StageQ.

The next regular season production is "Perfect Arrangement" by To-pher Payne and runs from **April 21 to May 6**. Set in McCarthy-era DC, this play is surprisingly relevant as it explores the lives of two couples—one gay, one lesbian—whose perfectly constructed cover begins to come undone as they find themselves in the roles of persecutors and persecuted and must decide if "perfect" is good enough. ■

LGBT Center opens in Marinette

THIS JANUARY THE LGBT CENTER @ U.W.-Marinette opened its doors to serve LGBTQIA residents of Marinette, Oconto, and Menominee (MI) counties and the U.W.-Marinette campus. The organization was created in response to a clear need.



"For years the only LGBTQIA organization for many counties was our campus student club," explains Amy Reddinger, Associate Professor of English and Director of the LGBT Center. "I would regularly get calls from community members asking for resources and support." Northeast Wisconsin and the lower UP is vast, and while there are plenty of LGBTQIA people in this region, there are few resources.

There are a lot of stereotypes about anti-LGBTQ bias in rural and remote communities, and yet the larger Marinette community was quick to respond positively to Reddinger's request for support. The campus provided space; community members provided money. Reddinger can't say enough about the generosity of community members: "I had a perfect stranger hand me money in Shopko and tell me 'this is for your center.'" The Center was able to raise more than \$3,000 in individual donations in a short amount of time, enough to hire a student worker and buy basic supplies.

The next phase is to host a series of events in the community. The LGBT Center @ U.W.-Marinette has already created an active Providers' Group for social service and health providers who would like to build better networks of support for their LGBTQIA clients. In the next few months the organization will be sponsoring a bystander intervention training which focuses on LGBTQIA people, co-sponsoring a GSAFE Day of Learning about transgender youth with the local public library, working with Diverse & Resilient to conduct alcohol awareness training with LGBTQIA youth, and bringing Minnesota-based author Elizabeth Jarrett Andrew to campus to talk about the intersections of LGBTQIA identity and Christianity.

The Center's Advisory Council met recently to craft the mission of the organization: The LGBT Center @ U.W.-Marinette works to enhance and sustain the lives of LGBTQIA people in our community through resources, support, information, and the creation of safe, inclusive spaces. "It feels like the right time to do the hard work necessary to build more support and resources in this community," says Reddinger. ■



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Ride for Life

Simone Justice found her life's drive in cycling and is determined to see the sport better reflect and reach out to minority communities.

WHO WOULD HAVE EVER THOUGHT I would end up in Madison, Wisconsin? Somehow a 29-year-old, African-American lesbian from Queens, New York did, though.

It's been biking that has inspired all of my many goals and travels and brought me this far. I currently work at Trek Bicycle Corporation as a warranty/technical support representative. Basically, my days are centered on providing technical support and managing/processing warranty claims for parts of the east coast region. But it all started with me riding around the neighborhood in Queens—biking for fun, to my grandma's house, and to just get away for a bit.

"Are you one of those 'lesbionics'?" my Nana used to ask. I knew from a very young age that I was attracted to women. Man, have the times changed! I never thought growing up as a lesbian could be so easy and even trendy. I never experienced overt prejudice because of

my sexual orientation.

Basketball, volleyball, and cycling are just a few of the sports I participated in, so I've always been a tomboy. Cycling is the one I chose to make a career out of because it was the sport with the least injuries. Seriously.

This sport has broadened my horizons and granted me access to people and things I never knew existed, such as mountain biking trails in New Rochelle where I attended college, and a century (100 mile) ride to Montauk, Long Island. It is also an easy and simple means of reliable transportation. Attending Monroe College, I decided one day to pop into a local bike shop on campus. I got a job there the next day.

From there, I excelled. Starting as a cashier and then moving to sales, I earned promotions up to the manager position. Working in the biking industry also exposed me to careers I did not know existed. Now, biking is my life, but I'm one of very few African American individuals who fall in that category. I never saw a clear image of what I wanted for myself because it didn't really exist. So, here I am now, breaking barriers and putting myself out there for people like me who may not see themselves represented in the bigger picture of sports. Sometimes you have to be your own role model.

Since moving to Madison, I've been an active member of this thriving community, volunteering for Women's Mountain Bike Clinics, Trek Women's Summit Event, Wheel & Sprocket and Bikeorama Expos, and as an active member of Black Girls Do Ride.

Black Girls Do Ride Madison is a group I can relate to the most. It reaches out to a non-represented culture within the biking community. The founder of this great organization, Christina Outlay, has been an



awesome example and motivator for me and others to feel part of a community. Working in the cycling industry for more than 10 years does not mean I feel represented, which is why organizations like this are so important.

I will continue to be involved here, participating in mountain bike clinics and basic skills courses. Moving forward, my ultimate goal is to be a brand ambassador, joining a marketing team to reach and gain more traction from all minority audiences in cycling. I want to be the first to take a step in the biking industry to spread equality in both representation and availability. Ultimately, I want to change the world by spreading wellness and helping people experience the greatness I have—one bike ride at a time.■

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Universal Dance

Madison's first queer tango community aims to bring a timeless tradition to new heights and a more supportive space.

"TANGO IS LIFE," Antonio Testolin told me, handing over a cup of tea in the bright sunlight of his east side home. A tango teacher of 13 years, Testolin is now teaming up with close friend and fellow dancer Amy Groshek to start Madison's first Queer Tango and Práctica courses.

Sensing my naiveté regarding the subject, Testolin elaborated, "Tango is life. It really is. You will see everything on the floor: sadness, happiness, passion, loneliness, fear, aggression, on and on...and that is the vocabulary of human beings." Fascinated, I urged him to start at the beginning.

The basics of tango, I learned, are fairly simple; the dance involves a couple, one lead and one follow, which moves constantly in an oval-like shape on the dance floor. There are also certain codes such as the "cabecero" or way to ask for a dance using only your eyes. Once these rules are learned, however, the dance is created entirely of what you bring into it.

"Tango is totally improvisational. What you're doing is working within the shared vocabulary of movements and the formal constraints of the music to produce something that belongs to just the two of you," Groshek said. Her journey with tango began just two years ago and has since evolved into a lifelong passion. Certain obstacles along the way, however, opened her eyes to the need for a local tango community that is safe and welcoming for queer people.

"It's hard to get good if you don't go to the straight community," Groshek said. Elaborating, she pointed out the double-edged sword of trying to learn an incredibly difficult art form while also navigating a

"It's hard to get good if you don't go to the straight community," Groshek said. For gender-queer people especially, negotiating one's role in a room full of cisgender dancers can be an awkward and isolating experience.

straight community. For gender-queer people especially, negotiating one's role in a room full of cisgender dancers can be an awkward and isolating experience.

Internationally, such issues of access have been met with thriving queer tango scenes in many cities, first beginning in Germany and Argentina in 2001. These communities, according to Groshek, "are very much a response to rigid gender roles as presumed within the dance." Instead of playing up the gender binary, which often happens in straight tango communities, queer tango communities generally aim to create a safe, gender-neutral environment in which queer people can learn the dance according to whichever role they desire.

"Leading and following are very polarized, and they are understood in the straight community as aligned with gender roles. What we're going to do is really different from that," admitted Groshek. Instead of seeing the roles as a gender interaction, Groshek and Testolin consider them to be a human one. In this way, any individual can identify with either role, and, further, can make that role their own through their unique expression of it on the dance floor.

Opening his laptop and pressing play, Testolin began to hum along with the staccato beats of the tango track. Our conversation shifted along with the music, turning toward the importance of providing a space for people to learn the dance. Aside from the obvious benefits of mastering a style of movement, Testolin and Groshek insist that tango has greater, lifelong rewards such as self-discovery and empowerment.

"Tango is not athletic, it's more about really understanding yourself as a human being," Testolin told me.

For queer individuals especially, this journey of self-discovery can be very profound. "A lot of queer people have been taught that the way in which they are embodying is not correct, that it's not appro-

priate. And tango [can be] a process of unmaking a lot of learned postures," Groshek explained.

Testolin and Groshek hope their eight-week Queer Tango and Práctica courses, the first of which began in January, will be the starting-off point for a larger, ongoing queer tango scene in Madison. The pair ultimately wants to provide local LGBTQ individuals with the ability to learn, grow, have fun, and thrive in an accepting community of queer dancers.

The lessons are currently being held Mondays at Happy Bambino on Madison's east side. Each two-hour session will include an hour of beginner lessons followed by an hour of dance práctica. By giving participants time to socialize and get to know each other through dance, Testolin and Groshek hope to foster the community aspect of the course. At the end of each eight-week session they will hold a "milonga," or social dance, where participants can dress up and show off their tango abilities.

"A journey of discovery is really what we want to provide," said Testolin, adding that he hopes participants will "have fun, grow, enjoy, and challenge [themselves]."

Queer tango lessons and práctica are held on Mondays from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. The cost is \$15 for a 2-hour lesson and práctica. Happy Bambino is at 4116 Monona Drive, Madison. For additional details, contact Antonio Testolin, testolina@aol.com, or Amy Groshek, redclient@protonmail.com. You can also like or follow tango Queer Madison on Facebook and Twitter: facebook.com/tangoqueermadison, twitter.com/tangoqueermadison. — **Elle Duncombe-Mills**

You Are Here: Finding LGBTQ Community

Andrew Shaffer offers us a further update of the **LGBTQ Archives Project**, including upcoming exhibits.

Last April we opened up the Madison LGBTQ Archive and invited you to come and take a peek. From students to seniors, more than 150 people came out to learn from each other, share in community, and add their voices to the archive. This year we are inviting you back to explore brand new collections and to learn more about the process of finding and preserving our history.

Our upcoming exhibit, "You Are Here: Finding LGBTQ Community," presents a rich history of Madison's queer life and communities. The archive has grown substantially, and we are excited to share what we have found. More importantly, we invite you to find your own place in this history, and to contribute your memories to the collection.

Make sure to save the date now, and follow us online to keep up-to-date with the latest from the archive, at go.wisc.edu/LGBTQ60s or on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram at @MadisonLGBTQ. This archive is for all of us—to create a permanent statement that we are here, that our stories are important, and that our lives belong in the pages of history. Join us as we preserve and celebrate our history.

Friday, April 28, 5:00–8:00 p.m.
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Funding has been generously provided by the New Harvest Foundation, Inc. and the George L. Mosse Program in History.

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A Different American Dream

Rodney Lucas, aka **F. Stokes**, talks about his new documentary ***Ain’t No Babies in the City*** and why he felt compelled to tell the story of his sister and her partner’s decision to start a family in the face of massive societal prejudice.

THE BEST FATHERS I KNOW are Black women. So when I got the call that my sister and her lady were having a baby, I was knee-jerkingly compelled to amplify their shared love, ambition, and passion with the world.

As a society, we have largely neglected young women of color. Chaka and Star represent the voice of an unspoken sub-culture of the LGBTQ community; they’re disenfranchised, African-American, and want to create their reflection of the American dream. Despite disadvantages, they’ve always dreamed of having a baby together. With little hope, they resort to a method that directly challenges society’s moral fabric regarding childbirth—while redefining the nuclear family. In Chaka’s words, “Ain’t nobody gon’ let me adopt no child, I ain’t got no money to do it the other way, so I got it the best I know how. I prayed for a boy.”

This piece will bring light to their story. It’s a story of passion, of heartbreak, and of celebration and triumph.

These Queens are the strangest fruit, hanging from the rotten and hollowed trees of inequality and injustice, yet ripe with life and glow-

ing with hope—they shine. Words can’t express how fortunate and privileged I am to have their trust and confidence.

Only a Black man who was raised by Black women can articulate this story effectively and correctly—and I’m not saying it’s a color thing, because it’s not, it’s a culture thing: these brave women and I share the collective misfortune of heartache and heartbreak at the hands of the Black man. And it takes more than some kids with cool cameras to capture that. It takes tears. It takes being able to identify with ghetto pain. It takes guts. Fact is, the Black man is hurting. Hurting cause ain’t no jobs, hurting ‘cause a mistake he made at 16 derailed his future, hurting cause he can’t make enough to take care of his babies. And that hurt, oftentimes, translates into hurting his family and those around him; Poppa goes out, gets slapped in the face by the hand of oppression at every turn, walks down his street and sees disparity and hopelessness at every turn, and because he can’t win against this monster of a system, no matter how square of an act he puts on, he goes home and slaps his woman, fights his sons, and neglects his daughter. This nation has slowly decayed the pride of so many outstanding young Black men.

Ain’t No Babies in The City is not a documentary in the literal sense. The days of documentaries are over. It’s an antiquated format, typically packed with talking heads, throwback pics, and data. *Ain’t No Babies in The City* is what I refer to as “visual vinyl.”

I knew before I wrote this film that certain LGBTQ media outlets, especially in Madison, would be apprehensive about giving it the light it deserves. It fucks up the paradigm, it interrupts the convenient perception that all gay people are singing Kumbaya together and supporting all forms of queer life—by highlighting the racism and inequality that exist in the gay community. The fact is, despite their

ZAZA WEISGERBER

OURLIVESMADISON.COM



progressive agenda and civil rights megaphones, most gay organizations largely exclude people of color from top positions and the allocation of resources.

People make films every day, all over the world. We live in an age of fast-food content, and rapidly shortening attention spans, so when I decided to make this film, my team and I focused on one goal: how do we use our artistic vision to make the world a better place? Though I’m not sure if the right answer exists, I truly believe that *Ain’t No Babies in The City* is a solid start. ■

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Local Shorts

Madison based author **Alan Semrow** releases a debut short story collection with a very queer twist.

BRIEFS (LETHE PRESS), the debut short story collection by Madison local, Alan Semrow, was released November 1, 2016. The collection is filled with dark humor and covers a variety of social topics, centering primarily on LGBTQ themes.

The lives of Semrow's characters in this debut collection are "like the charged particles in the atmosphere before the storm." The stories, while brief, are torrid and turbulent, as relationships crash apart, people find themselves damp with more than tears, and the silver linings of the storm clouds remain tantalizing and out of reach.

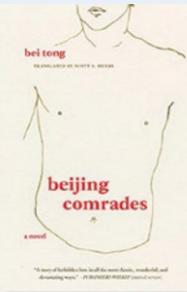
Signed copies of Semrow's book are available at A Room of One's Own bookstore in Madison or on its website at roomofonesown.com. Semrow is scheduled to have a book discussion and signing at the store on March 27 at 6:00 p.m.

Semrow's work has been featured in more than 30 publications. He has a degree in English from U.W.-Stevens Point. Apart from writing fiction and nonfiction, he is a professional copywriter. He is also the Fiction Editor for *Black Heart Magazine* and was a Guest Fiction Editor for the summer issue of *Five Quarterly*. In his free time, he likes to be with his friends, family, and shih tzu, Remy. You can visit his blog at alansemrowwriter.wordpress.com.

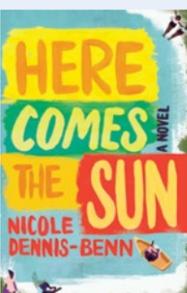


LGBTQ Reading List

A current LGBTQ reading list at the Madison Public Library, compiled by Madison librarians **Ed Graves** and **Beth McIntyre**.



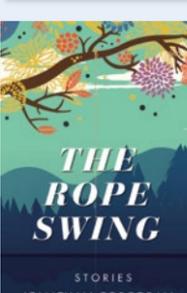
Beijing Comrades, by Beitong. Feminist Press, 2016.
Recently translated slash fiction that first appeared online for a Chinese audience about a wealthy businessman who falls for a working class student during the Tiananmen Square protests, circa 1989. With an extra helping of gratuitous sex, the novel offers glimmers of gay life in China and pushes back against censorship.



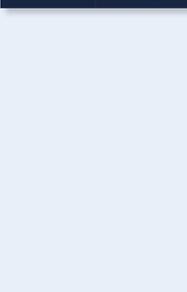
Cursed Queen, by Sarah Fine. Margaret K. McElderry Books, 2017.
A young warrior inherits powers she can't quite control in a world where magic is considered evil. Great lesbian representation in mainstream YA fantasy.



Eleanor and Hick: The Love Affair that Shaped a First Lady, by Susan Quinn. Penguin, 2016.
A biography of the former First Lady sympathetic to her extramarital relationship with a working class butch reporter named Lorena Hickok in the 1930s. Through cozy proximity, Hick empowered Eleanor to wield greater influence and lobby FDR for New Deal social programs.



Here Comes the Sun, by Nicole Dennis-Benn. Liveright, 2016.
In the resort community of Montego Bay, Margot hustles to keep her sister safe from harm. When she reveals she loves another woman, getting by becomes even more risky. If you think Jamaica is just beaches, you may not expect her story to cover so much ground.



History is All You Left Me, by Adam Silvera.
SoHo Press, 2017 Adam Silvera's emotional second novel follows a young man whose (ex)boyfriend dies soon after their break-up, and the friendship and grief he shares with his ex's new love interest.



Our Own Private Universe, by Robin Talley. Harlequin Teen, 2017.
This story of a bisexual teen's first love and first sex, much like *Forever* by Judy Blume and *I am J* by Chris Beam, serves as both a compelling narrative and an information source for young people exploring sex and sexuality. Sweet stuff.

How to Survive a Plague, by David France. Knopf, 2016.
A narrative of the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Power, an activist response the AIDS crisis, and companion to the documentary of the same name. Plenty relevant in today's United States, when people challenged the federal administration to take action and began fighting for their lives.

The Rope Swing, by Jonathan Corcoran. Vandalia, 2016.
Short stories about the heartache and dignity of small town young people, gay and straight, and their complicated relationship to place. Appalachia's small towns are dying and young people choose between leaving, staying, and being careful.

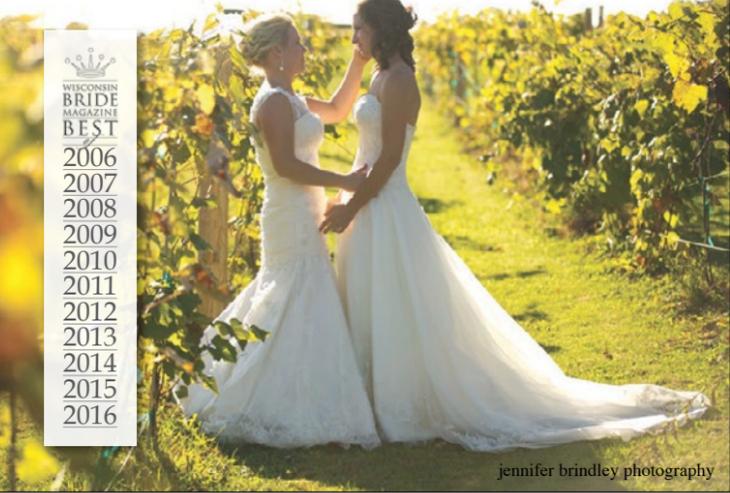
Small Favors: The Definitive Collection, by Colleen Coover. Oni Press, 2017.
As perky as it is filthy, Coover's lesbian erotica cult comics from the early 2000s are gathered into one volume. Adorable and blush-worthy.

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March & April

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For more LGBTQ-specific events, see our Organization Updates on page 19.

MARCH

21-26

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www.overture.org



MARCH

10

OPEN ANNUAL DINNER

Monona Terrace

Madison's LGBTQ+ professional networking and support group hosts its annual dinner and celebration of the community. Keynote speech by Dr. Tamara Queen, emceed by Miss Gay Wisconsin USofA at Large and Symphony Alexander Love, and music provided by DJ Nick Nice.

openmadison.org

CANOECOPIA

Alliant Energy Center

The largest paddlesports event in the world features hundreds of vendors, demonstrations, and networking with fellow paddle enthusiasts, just in time for spring.

canoecopia.com

10-12

PEAK PERFORMANCE

Overture Center for the Arts

Madison Symphony Orchestra welcomes Norwegian trumpet

virtuoso Tine Thing Helseth and guest conductor Carl St. Clair for three nights of Strauss' Alpine journey, "a towering evocation of the awesome splendor of the composer's beloved mountains, realized in a magisterial orchestration of formidable instrumental forces."

madisonsymphony.org



11

LGBTQ+ INTERGENERATIONAL CONFERENCE

First United Methodist Church

Proud Theater presents the second annual conference to bring together and build connections between all generations of LGBTQ people and their allies.

proudtheater.org

19

BLADES AGAINST AIDS

Hartmeyer Ice Arena

Madison Gay Hockey Association offers a fun day of ice skating for all levels, food, an exhibition game, and more—all to raise funds for AIDS Resource Center.

madisongayhockey.org

26

CAMP BINGO

Madison Sheraton Hotel

"Wizards & Witches Bingo" casts a spell over an always lively crowd for this ARCW fundraising event, featuring celebrity ball callers and big cash prizes.

madcampbingo.org

30

REVIVING THE DREAM CELEBRATION

InterContinental Milwaukee Hotel

Diverse & Resilient hosts their 5th annual event to honor individuals and organizations

for their leadership in Wisconsin's LGBTQ community.

diverseandresilient.org/reviving

APRIL

2

3RD ANNUAL LGBT WEDDING EXPO

Madison Sheraton Hotel

The Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce hosts their wedding expo, featuring a variety of vendors of everything from florists to photographers and more.

wislgbtchamber.com/weddingexpo

7-9

COLOSSAL PIANO

Overture Center for the Arts

John DeMain conducts the Madison Symphony Orchestra and guest pianist Philippe Bianconi in performances of Rachmaninoff's legendary concerto, known as the most difficult piece ever written for piano, and the composer's favorite among his own works.

madisonsymphony.org

21 & 23

THE MAGIC FLUTE

Overture Center for the Arts

Madison Opera stages this classic tale of a fantastical world of charmed musical instruments, mystical rituals, and a quest for enlightenment and wisdom. Written in the last year of his life, Mozart's sublime opera is part fairy tale, part adventure story, and all enchantment.

madisonopera.org

27

HAIR AFFAIR: THE ART OF HAIR

Madison Museum of Contemporary Art

MMoCA hosts its fifth biennial celebration of all things hair. High-flying hair sculptures, designed by premier Madison-area salons, will take center-stage as models descend the museum's stunning glass staircase and mingle with guests in the lobby. The event benefits MMoCA's free exhibitions and education programs.

mmoca.org



28 & 29

QUEER WORLD

Sun Prairie United Methodist Church

Proud Theater of Sun Prairie presents its second show, created and performed by LGBTQ+ youth.

Tickets on sale April 1. proudtheater.org

29

MAD ROLLIN' DOLLS

ROLLER DERBY

Alliant Energy Center

The final and championship game of the 13th season of home team roller derby play in Madison will feature high energy competition and halftime family fun.

madisonrollerderby.org

28

PERFECT ARRANGEMENT

Bartell Theatre

StageQ presents a tale of gay love under the Red Scare of the 1950s. Two U.S. State Department employees, Bob and Norma, have been tasked with identifying sexual deviants within their ranks. There's just one problem: Both Bob and Norma are gay, and have married each other's partners as a carefully constructed cover. Inspired by the true story of the earliest stirrings of the American gay rights movement, madcap classic sitcom-style laughs give way to provocative drama as two "All-American" couples are forced to stare down the closet door.

stageq.com

SAVE THE DATE

- MAY 5: Red Ribbon Affair at the Concourse Hotel
- MAY 13: GSAFE's Celebration of Leadership at Monona Terrace
- MAY 13: Madison Annual Compost Bin & Rain Barrel Sale at the Alliant Energy Center
- MAY 18: OutReach Garden Party at Rotary Botanical Gardens
- JULY 6-9: National Women's Music Festival at Marriott West
- JUNE 9-11: PrideFest Milwaukee
- JULY 28-30: WI AIDS Ride
- OCTOBER 6: OutReach 25th Anniversary Awards Banquet at Monona Terrace

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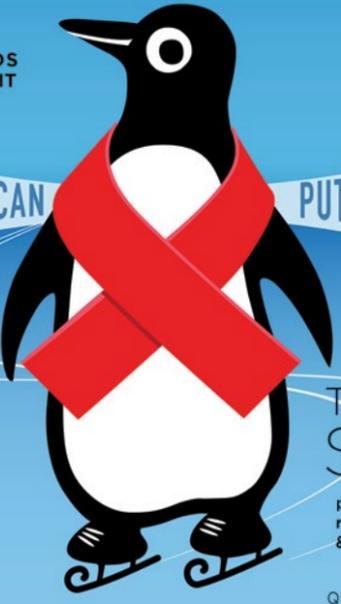
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Judy in the Isthmus office at 100 State Street in Madison.

Storyteller

Isthmus editor **Judith Davidoff** takes the not-so-straight-and-narrow path to journalism.

"My mother did not play mahjongg, and my father did not drive a Cadillac."

IT'S BEEN A WHILE, but I'm pretty sure that is how I started one of my essays when applying for graduate school. The task was to explain in some measure who I was, where I came from, and why I wanted to do graduate studies in public policy and journalism.

Looks like I decided to declare my outsider status early on.

I grew up in Bellmore, Long Island. Remember Joey Buttafuoco and Amy Fisher? Fisher, dubbed the "Long Island Lolita" for shooting Buttafuoco's wife while having an affair with Joey, went to my high school—though more than a decade after I graduated. More distinguished alumni include economist and *New York Times* columnist Paul Krugman and fashion designer Michael Kors.

Bellmore was a suburb of New York City, a 50-minute ride on the Long Island Railroad or a car ride of several hours, depending on traffic. I lived in a newer part of town, along a canal that emptied into the Great South Bay.

Many of the families had left New York's boroughs for promised good schools, clean living, and the relatively safe life of the suburbs. There were enough Jewish families that the school district closed for the High Holy Days in the fall; these newer arrivals, which also included Italian and Greek families, were often first- or second-generation immigrants. For reasons still unclear to me, someone thought it would be a good idea to change the nuns to social workers when we performed *The*

For a long time, I did not know what I wanted to be. My very circuitous route to journalism should give those without a clear career focus hope that they, too, will someday find their way.

Sound of Music in elementary school! "How do you solve a problem like Maria," sung by three social workers (including yours truly) makes a certain sense when you think about it.

Bellmore was a community of strivers—education was a priority, extracurricular activities were encouraged, and almost all students were on a college, if not professional, path. Money was an object of desire and a measure of success; displays of wealth, whether in the form of jewelry, clothes, or cars, were common.

My parents were of a different ilk. My father, a dentist, and my mother, a reference librarian, believed strongly in education but did not see it as solely about grades or a means to an end. Accumulating knowledge and being intellectually curious was something worthwhile and noble in itself—and personally enriching to boot. I remember once studying late for a science test until my father suggested that I call it a night, saying I had studied enough and would do fine. They were comforting words,

Timeless Looks



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One exciting trend is the revival of the mid-century modern kitchen. New styles are showing combinations of rich darker wood cabinetry (walnut or cherry) with high gloss white accents. Counter tops are clean, white quartz. Open shelving and back splashes featuring a bright single color tile (like Fireclay tile) allow homeowners to personalize their space. The result is a timeless look with warmth, simplicity, and character!

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While adding "Outdoor Rooms" with patios, fire pits, and water features is still popular, I've seen a trend toward Tranquility Gardens. These create a much more intimate space that provides an area to sit and read, meditate, do yoga, or just have a quiet conversation. Tranquility Gardens often use natural stone and, along with native plants, may add some exotics such as Cannas, Elephant Ears, and Palms to create a warm, serene space. If a water feature is added it's subtle and often tucked away to add to the mystic feel of the garden. Landscape lighting has become a must-have, too, since most fixtures are LED and have several programming capabilities as well as the option for color changes. Lighting really adds dimension to any garden.

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given the competitive pressures at school.

My dad was an old-school dentist. One chair, one assistant. He worked early and late, Monday through Saturday, to accommodate his patients' work schedules. You didn't have the money to pay? The matter was left there. He was a great dentist (and, I heard, a pretty good therapist), but not a great businessman. My mom went back to graduate school and became a beloved, though slightly feared, reference librarian. You will not crack your gum while others in this room are trying to concentrate! I heard from more than a few patrons who credited her with helping them through graduate school. When she retired from Bellmore Memorial Library, they named the reference desk after her.

Neither of my parents brought in big bucks. Hence, no Cadillac. My parents also never seemed to fit in socially, though I'm not sure my mom would have played mahjongg even if asked—playing games was not her thing.

The sum total is that I don't think they ever felt part of the community that they had moved to with such high hopes. They felt like outsiders, and, to some extent, so did I.

SUPPORTED, NOT DIRECTED

My mother was perhaps most ill at ease. She grew up in Kansas City, Missouri, and was a Midwesterner at heart (you say creek; I say crick). She lived through the Great Depression and legal segregation and shared stories of that time.

She told me about how Hallmark Cards, based in Kansas City, did not hire Jews when she was growing up, and how she and a black friend were denied service at a luncheon counter. I remember her grief at the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. I also learned that her parents, immigrants from Lithuania, had been active in helping relatives escape

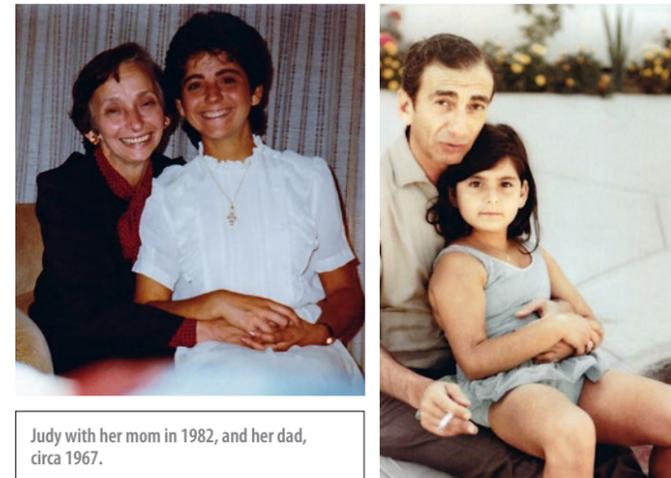
from Nazi-occupied Europe. When going through some papers collected by my parents, who are both dead, I found letters my maternal grandfather wrote to diplomatic offices vouching that these relatives would have a place to stay and work if they were allowed to immigrate to the United States.

Most women assistants moved up by becoming an editor on the romance novel line. But I was never drawn to the books myself (too focused on a happily-ever-after conclusion) and wouldn't have known what to do with a bodice ripper.

My father grew up in the Bronx, surrounded by relatives in neighboring apartment buildings. He was quiet and did not talk much about himself. He went into the army immediately after dental school, seeing combat during World War II as part of the Third Armored Tank Division. He brought back a missile that someone, somehow, had converted to a shot glass dispensary. Scotch was his drink.

Both of my parents were readers and they kept up on current events. We had two papers delivered daily to our house, *The New York Times* and *Newsday*, and my mother always had the news playing on the radio in the morning. She taught me how to read before I started school and, later, how to organize a paper and argue a point. I guess she was my first editor. She was passionate about the written word and passed that passion on to me.

My parents also instilled in my brother and me values of social justice, fairness, and kindness. They were helicopter parents only when it



Judy with her mom in 1982, and her dad, circa 1967.

came to matters of safety. I always had to have money for a phone call (yes, this was before cell phones) and I remember a lot of embarrassing calls at friends' homes about my whereabouts.

But they were remarkably hands-off in other ways. They never forced me into a sport or hobby or tried to steer me on any particular path. I felt supported but not necessarily directed.

For a long time, I did not know what I wanted to be. My very circuitous route to journalism should give those without a clear career focus hope that they, too, will someday find their way.

A WINDING ROAD TO WRITING

College, unfortunately, did not clear much up for me. I attended a liberal arts state college, SUNY-Binghamton, but it was in many ways a repeat of high school—good academics but insular. The student body, at least in 1978, was pretty homogeneous; I think about 30 classmates from high school joined me there.

Through my history major I was turned on to social history, which focuses on the lives of ordinary people, rather than those of kings and presidents. It provided a good perspective for future reporting. Two semesters of art history also opened up a new world to me; my friend Marie and I sought out many of the masterpieces we studied in those classes on a trip to Europe after college.

I took one course in journalism and volunteered briefly at one of the campus papers but it was not love at first write. More significant was a work-study job in the Women's Studies program; already a feminist, I became more interested in women's issues, including poverty and reproductive healthcare and access. I thought about going to graduate school for history but made no real moves in that direction.

After graduating college in 1982 I moved back home with my parents and purchased a skirt suit and pair of heels, the job-search uniform of the day. I'd ride the Long Island Railroad to Manhattan to meet with hiring agencies. I was asked at one interview to list some things I like to do; "research and analysis," I answered. I remember thinking to myself how vague that sounded.

I got an entry-level job as an editorial assistant at *Computers and Electronics*, which had recently morphed from *Popular Electronics*. It's the first time I witnessed how the march of technology would change people's jobs and livelihoods. Another takeaway? No need to leave two spaces after a period. Also, refusing to fetch a cup of coffee for the editor-in-chief raises questions about whether you're a team player.

A year later I went to work as the editorial assistant to the editor-in-chief of Dell Publishing. The first day on the job I got a taste of the blossoming love affair between celebrity and book publishing.

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Judy and her partner, Rhonda Lanford, play with their “dogter” Ursa in a park near their home in Madison’s Vilas neighborhood.

Colonel Tom Parker, Elvis Presley’s manager, was calling on the phone.

I fell in love with book publishing. Yes, there was a lot of typing (ugh, white-out), answering phones, and making lunch reservations for my boss (the book I would have written was *The Devil Wears Birkenstocks*).

But there was also reading and evaluating manuscripts for publication and the constant search for exciting new writers. Somewhere I have a letter from singer-songwriter Suzanne Vega, whom I had contacted to see if she might be interested in doing a book for us. Her evocative lyrics suggested she might have other writing projects in mind. She wasn’t ready at the time, but I see she has since written two plays.

I was on my own by then, living in Brooklyn and getting to know the city that had seemed so far away when I was growing up. After about three years I became a junior editor, acquiring and editing my own books, mostly how-to and wellness. The transition took a little longer than usual because I did not go the traditional route—most women assistants moved up by becoming an editor on the romance novel line. But I was never drawn to the books myself (too focused on a happily-ever-after-ever conclusion) and wouldn’t have known what to do with a bodice ripper.

I wrote a few freelance pieces during this time and thought about going to graduate school. I loved book publishing but felt the writing bug more and more. I loved the city but yearned to see more of the country. In 1987 I got the push I probably needed. We were bought out by an international conglomerate, and I was laid off.

I applied to both public policy and journalism programs around the country. Had there been an internet at the time I might have known, from a three-second search, that some schools combined both in a single program. I did get into the Columbia Journalism School, the top J-school in the country, but ultimately decided on the Robert M. La Follette School of Public Affairs at U.W.-Madison. I wanted a better grounding in the subjects I intended to report on, and U.W. offered me a nice scholarship. My mom got her undergraduate degree from U.W.-Madison, and my cousin Miles was working in the med school at the time. I liked the feel of the town and its progressive politics. It seemed the time was right to explore my own Midwestern roots.

FINDING A BEAT

I took just two courses in the journalism school—actually I took the same course, in-depth reporting, twice. In the second semester I wrote a story about how Wisconsin’s law banning abortion was still on the books and would become law if *Roe v. Wade* were ever overturned.

My professor suggested I submit it for publication to *Isthmus*. I got a call from news editor Bill Lueders, who was incredulous Wisconsin still had this law. It was true, I told him. And it’s true to this day.

After graduating, I paid the bills with project work at the city transportation department and freelance work. I did some daily stories for the *Milwaukee Journal* (it had not yet merged with the *Sentinel*) and contributed arts, features, and news stories to *Isthmus*. If I had a mentor along the way, the editors at *Isthmus* were it: Cathy Harding, Dean Robbins, and Bill.

I left Madison briefly to work at Rockford’s city magazine, but a couple of staff positions opened at *Isthmus*, and I was lucky to get one. I returned to Madison after a few months with a fresh appreciation for what our midsize city offers in terms of culture and quality of life—and acceptance. The “Jesus is Lord over Rockford” signs never sat well with me.

On staff at *Isthmus*, I felt that my gamble on a nontraditional path to journalism had paid off. I could write about things I was passionate about at a publication that valued long-form journalism, quality writing, and independent thinking. I was the features editor, but because of fluid lines between sections, I got to dig into some of the issues I had long sought to explore: gay and lesbian rights, reproductive health access, poverty, and welfare reform. Eventually I wanted to write more and edit less. I left *Isthmus* in 2000 to cover local government for *The Capital Times*.

While I missed some of the in-depth focus of *Isthmus*, I found a different kind of satisfaction in turning around breaking news quickly and following one beat closely. I followed the approach I learned while tracking legislation at *Congressional Quarterly* in Washington, D.C., where I had a summer internship during graduate school—context matters and should be included in stories large and small. It was also a pleasure to cover a city where true professionals were in charge of running government and were free to speak to the media. (Me to former City Comptroller Dean Brassler: “Uh, can you explain how Tax Incremental Financing works once again, please?”)

I eventually fashioned a social issues beat there before becoming an editor in 2008 when we ceased daily print publication. I returned to *Isthmus* in 2011 as news editor to write more and edit less (see a pattern here?) and became editor in 2014, just a few months after new owners bought the paper from its founder and sole owner.

I know there was trepidation in the community about whether *Isthmus* would maintain its news focus and in-depth reporting, but I hope we’ve since allayed those fears. Under our new ownership we completed a much-longed-for redesign of our print paper and website, *Isthmus.com*, beefed up our food and restaurant coverage, and added more multimedia reporting.

With my editorial duties, I might not be doing as much of my own writing as I would like, but there are other rewards, both creative and personal: steering coverage and story development; mentoring interns and newer writers; massaging final copy for publication.

My friend Linda noted that, when it comes to editing, I’m a natural: “You’re a perfectionist and a bit of a control freak.” Guilty as charged.

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS AND STOKING FIRES

When I moved to Madison, I thought I’d finish graduate school and move back to a larger city: New York; Washington, D.C.; or maybe Seattle, where my brother lived at the time.

Love kept me here after graduate school and, when I next considered moving for greater professional opportunity, I ultimately decided I was attached to Madison and wanted to stay.

And I’m now truly settled. I like a good, muddled Brandy Old Fashioned and the comfort of a Friday night fish fry. My partner, Rhonda, a Wisconsin native, and I are going on 10 years together; we share a



1 Judy on the roof of her apartment building looking out over Lake Monona, circa 1993
2 With her brother, Andy, and cousin Amy (left), who is now the founder/publisher of NYC-based *Go* magazine 3 With her brother at partner Rhonda’s 2013 judicial investiture
4 With Rhonda waiting for friends to return from the 2015 AIDS ride.

house, our “dogter” Ursa and cat Max. We have great friends, our chosen family, with whom we share both the good and hard times. And I feel connected to the greater community, not on the outside as in my youth.

As for my career, I feel grateful that I survived the tsunami—and its aftershocks—that saw thousands of reporters and editors across the country lose their jobs when the economy tanked in 2008, and the journalism industry imploded. That doesn’t include those who have decided to leave on their own in recent years, tired of low wages, long hours, and the constant threat of future cuts. I’ve watched demoralized reporters lose their drive and motivation—what we call in the industry “fire in the belly.” It’s sad not just for journalists, but for our community and democracy, too.

Of course we’re now in a whole new era, where all media are lumped together and our worth, legitimacy, and credibility are questioned on a daily basis by, arguably, the most powerful man in the world. Incredibly, President Donald Trump recently tweeted that the media is “the enemy of the American people.”

The unparalleled attacks and falsehoods coming from Trump have pushed media to respond. I’ve been happy to see reporters like Chuck Todd and Anderson Cooper call out false statements and push back on obvious spin offered by Trump and his people. There has long been a tendency in mainstream media to rely on, in the interest of objectivity, “he said, she said,” journalism. The idea was to simply allow both sides to have their say, rather than to contest information that was patently false.

That was never the orientation of *Isthmus*. We always thought it was important to at least try to cut through the spin in order to get to the truth. It’s part of what drew me to the paper. And it’s something we remain keenly committed to.

The next four years promise to continue what is already a turbulent and transformative time for my industry. But I come from a long line of fighters. And I still love what I do. My work has always been more of a passion. I think about stories while on a bike ride and mull headlines in the shower. Perhaps that was my parents’ plan all along. They didn’t push, but maybe they had quiet faith—faith that I’d find my own way.

And I have. ■

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Legacy House

Renee L. Herber & Tamara B. Packard on preserving the history of their east side home and renovating with community support and outreach in mind.



That summer found us hustling home from work and laboring on the house until dark when we would gobble down supper, fall into bed, and start the process over the next day. The excitement of the new place gave us boundless energy.

Tamara and Renee, together in the living room of their lakefront home in Madison's Marquette neighborhood.

OUR FRIEND SCOTT grew up in Monona, gazing across the lake at a quaint lakeside property with a yard so sloping it required switchbacks to descend. In 2008, he called us to say the property was for sale and encouraged us to buy it. A quick look at the listing suggested that it would be a good match for us: located on the isthmus near Williamson Street, walkable to all of our favorite restaurants and grocers, and harboring an old, reasonably sized house with lots of character.

We lived in the neighborhood affectionately known as Dyke Heights, only a mile east of the house, so it was easy to saunter over to check it out. What we saw from the exterior was a fairytale stuc-

co and stone Tudor, decorated with original personality but longing for a gentle facelift. We called a realtor to arrange for a showing. Of course

Scott came along to nudge and cajole—just in case.

When we walked inside we were immediately hooked. From the front door, the open floor plan welcomed us. A slight turn to the left awarded us with an awe-inspiring view of Lake Monona. We were instantly drawn to the lake-facing sunroom, a space running the width of the house and surrounded on three sides by windows. It was bursting with sunshine and radiating energy as the sun played with waves, casting twinkles on the ceiling, the walls, and us. With much resis-

tance we pulled away from this spectacular setting and investigated the rest of the house. True to its age, it was chock-full of character with beautiful hardwood floors, built-ins, and a tiled fireplace. Also true to its age, it was pleading for some restoration—but would it be cosmetic or structural?

A HOUSE WITH HISTORY

We left the showing feeling exuberant but cautious. We wanted to be good stewards of the house but we worried that the needed repairs might turn this jewel into a money pit. We also knew that moving from our cozy house just east of the Yahara River to this lakeside property would be a stretch financially. In the end, we took the leap. Buying the house and bringing it back to life meant that we would not have the funds to support political candidates and advocacy groups at the levels that we had in the past. Part of our compromise was that we committed to hosting fundraisers in our new home to continue that financial support for a better future.

While we waited to close on the house, we ventured to the State Historical Society to unearth its history. This Tudor-style house was built on speculation by John C. Collins and designed by Alvan E. Small, an architect who studied under Louis Sullivan and eventually designed several Prairie-style houses in Madison. The original blueprints were on the kitchen counter during our showing and we made sure to obtain them as part of the sale. The house was built from 1923 to 1925 and first occupied by Dr. Claire Vingam and his wife Esther. Bill and Connie Thompson bought the home from the Vingams in 1978, and we became just the third owners of this more-than-90-year-old house when we purchased it in September 2008.

PUTTING IN THE WORK

Between the two of us we had owned three old houses before, so we knew we had a lifetime of projects ahead of us. We understood that the first year in our “new” old house should be dedicated to keeping water out and repairing any past water damage. Our first project that winter was to replace the lakeside wall of picture windows in the sunroom. They had likely been installed in the 1970s and offered an unobstructed view of the lake, but the frames were rotting, seals were broken, they did not open to welcome the lake breezes, and they were decidedly not true to the period of the home.

Due to the downturn of the economy, in the spring and summer of 2009, we were fortunate to find many skilled tradespeople who were immediately available to aid in the restoration and who even allowed us to help out. We replaced several more windows along with large amounts of rotten exterior wood trim; had the chimney re-flashed, capped, and tuck-pointed; and repaired and painted the stucco. Our friend Scott, who has a background in landscape architecture, drew up plans for a yard filled with ornamental grasses and flowering shrubs. We eagerly implemented the design, beginning with the removal of trees and shrubs that had grown too close to the foundation and obscured the house. That summer found us hustling home from work and laboring on the house until dark when we would gobble down supper, fall into bed, and start the process over the next day. The excitement of the new place gave us boundless energy.

We have also had lots of fun bringing our own color palette and design sense (with help from Connie at Iconi Interiors) to the home, refinishing the oak and maple floors, and redoing the kitchen (which still had the original 1920s cabinets!) to add functionality while preserving the style. Throughout the process, with any changes we made, we were cautious to maintain the integrity of the architect’s intent.

TIPS & TRENDS

conditions and to survive and recover from these disturbances. In particular, the Dept. of Homeland Security (DHS) launched the Resilience STARTM Home Pilot Project in 2013 to create resilient communities by recognizing homes that include design features that resist the destruction associated with hail, tornadoes, hurricanes, and more. In concert, the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS) developed standards to provide guidelines to provide stronger, safer homes with increased resistance to the forces of nature. Since then, the FORTIFIED Home program, a combination of both efforts, evaluates the condition of the residence and recognizes homes that are constructed for strength and preparedness and promotes the return on investment that resilient homes can offer. Learn more about this program at www.fortifiedhome.org.

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CARRYING ON A PROGRESSIVE TRADITION

The property sits on a corner south of Spaight Street, and one of our neighbors is a city “pocket” park that offers public access to the lake. Our street happens to be a frequent mis-turn for folks attempting to bike around the lake. So, although we are officially on a dead-end street, we in fact get a great deal of non-vehicle traffic. In our first year here, as we were gardening or working on the house, bikers and walkers would stop and engage us in conversation. Numerous people

told us they had been inside “Connie and Bill’s” house years ago for events. We heard recurring tales of progressive local candidate fundraisers in the house, a theme that we were delighted to hear.

Additional intel from neighbor and historian Dick Wagner informed us that Connie Thompson had been instrumental in developing the near east side into the home of progressive candidates and causes. She not only opened her doors for candidate fundraisers but also held salons with like-minded neighbors to strategize on candidates who



BEFORE: Kitchen

BEFORE: Basement

BEFORE: Yard



BEFORE: Basement

should be “encouraged” to run for various offices. Dick, one of those early and ground-breaking progressive politicians, lovingly called the group the east side mafia. With this news we were doubly gratified by our earlier decision to use the home to support our favorite politicians and non-profits.

Over the past eight years we have been fortunate to (literally) fill the house with supporters of Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson, U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin, U.S. Congressman Mark Pocan, Dane County Clerk Scott McDonnell, and gubernatorial candidate Mary Burke, as well as Fair Wisconsin, Lambda Legal, and others.

Speaking of parties, with the preservation work completed (for now), this past year we turned our ordinary old basement into a party room. We put in additional living space, a bar, refrigerators for kegs of home brew, and sliding glass doors for more great views and easy access to the lake and outdoor patio.

In reflecting on our decision to buy this house we have no regrets. She was definitely a beauty worth saving, and we have done our best to be good stewards in maintaining her history. In return she has allowed us to be good stewards for future generations by providing a space to offer support to those candidates and causes committed to a better world for all. ■



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From Dream to Reality

Marge Anderson tracks her upbringing during the heyday of Wisconsin's manufacturing industry to her current work in sustainability, and how she sees hope for a better world even amid life's many ups and downs.

I CAME OF AGE in the last gasp of the Rust Belt's glory. In the late 1970s, Janesville possessed one of the best school systems in the state. Children of General Motors and Parker Pen line workers could choose from three foreign languages plus Latin as early as middle school. A former ballerina taught us ninth graders how to spot a logical fallacy as we constructed an argument. A teacher who graduated summa from Harvard ended our Humanities course not with an exam, but with a "creative response" project.

In the Janesville where I grew up, my family went to church every Sunday at a United Church of Christ congregation. Our pastor had marched in Selma. He taught us about white privilege. In tenth grade, our church took us out of Janesville into methadone clinics in inner-city Chicago, and to service projects standing chest-deep in icy northern lake water breaking down a pier at church camp.

My grandmother taught me to set the table as if "Pat Nixon were coming to dinner." She taught me that we all owe the world some service in exchange for taking up space. My father, the child of two immigrants, dropped out of school in ninth grade and became a high-skilled, blue-collar worker after he served during World War II. He wore his name on his work shirt, and he carried a black lunch bucket and a half-gallon thermos of black coffee to work. My mother was a secretary for a non-profit adoption agency. Once in a while she brought babies home to spend the night, in transit from foster homes to their new families, with our living room as a rest stop.

EVOLVING THE DREAM

The American Dream was never a concept to me: It was just the way my family—and everyone we knew—lived their lives. My uneducated father was not satisfied if I got Bs on my report card. My pink-collar mother expected good grades, a full calendar of nerdy extra-curriculars like theater and Model United Nations, and "act like a lady" behavior in full hair and makeup. I was expected to do well enough in school so that the assumed progression to college would be covered through academic scholarships. My parents certainly couldn't afford tuition. So in 1981 I went off to Mount Holyoke College, the oldest women's college in the country, an elite educational institution focused on preparing women for a life of leadership and purposeful engagement.

I was raised—and then educated—to be useful. Back in 1985, I didn't anticipate that my service would be to preserve the American Dream that created me. My hometown's General Motors plant rolled its last truck off the line on December 23, 2008 into an American economy ravaged by the Great Recession. Six months later, the long-downsized Parker Pen closed its plant.

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Marge, in her office at Seventhwave's Madison Headquarters. Learn more about Seventhwave's free webinars and videos on energy efficiency topics at seventhwave.org

This year I am leading Seventhwave's collaboration with the Green Veterans to launch Green Vets in Wisconsin. I've seen first-hand how plugging into the green movement helps ease the military-to-civilian transition.

opportunities fueled by clean technology and respectful of limited resources. This is the work I've been doing for more than 30 years. We're not there yet. But we will be, soon.

"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." Nineteenth-century theologian Theodore Parker, then Martin Luther King, Jr. promised us this. When I was young and part of the dimming tail of the comet of American industrial might, I didn't see where the trajectory was going. When I started my career in energy efficiency, I didn't see where it was going. One of the great delights of middle age occurs when you have logged enough time to see the arc, and you can plot yourself and your path along the way.

QUEERING THE DREAM

I have seen this happen with LGBTQ people in my lifetime. I've seen us move from barely-visible glimmers—like that boy in my high school swing choir, or the girls in gym class, just a little "different" back in 1977. Then we became visible—the big group of women in flannel and severe haircuts in my college dining room. (One of the first things I did when I was coming out was to chop off all my hair. It's what you did to be identifiable to other lesbians in the hair-dominated '80s, when full hair and makeup was considered a sin of collaborating with the oppressor. Thankfully we're past that now.)

We marched. We wore pink triangles. We started to show up on TV. We became squares on the AIDS quilt as it grew and grew across the country. By the late '90s, my best friend and I were begging her 13-year-old not to come out in middle school—to wait until high school, when his peers would be more reasonable. His response? "Silence didn't free the slaves, mom." My wife and I were married by our church in 2002; it took government 11 years to catch up with the arc's trajectory towards equality and justice. But once popular culture and half the churches are on your side, official institutions limp along behind. And we get there.

GREENING THE DREAM

I've seen it in our relationship with the environment and economy, too. I remember the first Earth Day. I was in second grade. We planted

a tree in the front yard of Adams School in Janesville. In those days, we all loved the environment. We stopped littering. We started to clean up some of the messes left in the wake of the industrial revolution. Environmental protection made so much sense to so many people that the polluters had to start pitting workers against endangered species to hang on to the legal blessing to trash the biosphere.

In 2015, I was in Paris as part of the U.S. Green Building Council's delegation to the U.N. Climate Conference. I sat in a room with 1,000 mayors from across the globe while United Technologies asked cities to stand up and demand a global climate agreement; while Elon Musk, founder of Tesla and Solar City, demanded a price on carbon. Every city leader in the room spoke about climate solutions as a way to make their cities healthier, more inclusive, and more equitable in the face of accelerating urbanization. Muscle cars and designer pens are part of the old economy; super-efficient air conditioners and electric vehicles powered by rooftop solar will pay for the next generation of blue collar workers' college educations.

Most of my work is closer to home. For nearly 20 years, my team at Seventhwave gathers the best builders and remodelers in Wisconsin at the Better Buildings, Better Business conference. Nearly 1,000 come. Their political views run the gamut, yet there is universal agreement around what quality looks like: homes that don't waste energy, that are properly ventilated and healthy, that are easy to maintain, and that retain and build their value as part of a family's American Dream.

EXPANDING THE DREAM

This year I am leading Seventhwave's collaboration with the Green Veterans to launch Green Vets in Wisconsin. I've seen first-hand how plugging into the green movement helps ease the military-to-civilian transition. Vets find a new mission that's as big and inspiring as protecting our country. They find a path that makes sense for them—whether its mediating food waste through vermiculture and literally



1 Marge with family in Janesville, 1967. 2 At the Women's March on Washington. 3 With the Poet Laureate of the American Dream Bruce Springsteen. 4 Marge's legal wedding at Mount Holyoke in 2014.

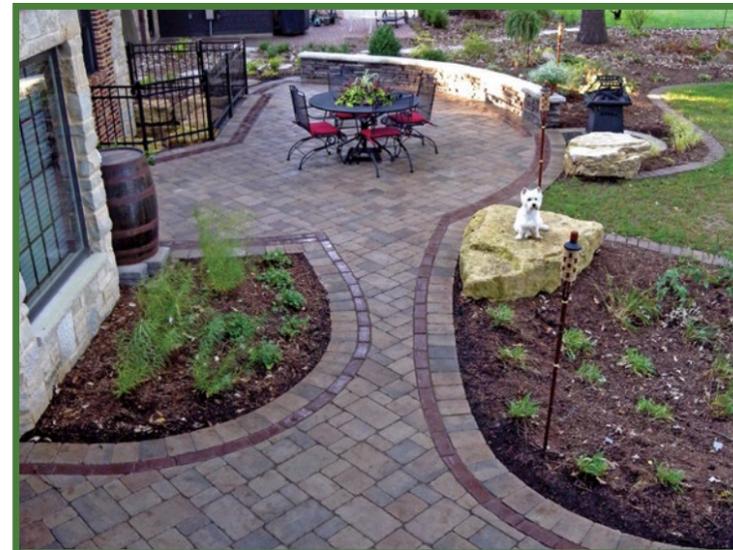
building new soil to grow food, or becoming a building scientist to improve the buildings where Americans live and work. Veterans are breathing new life into sustainability, feeding the movement with their energy and work ethic, making it more diverse, and helping us bring the health and economic benefits to underserved people.

That's the arc of the American Dream. The language is poetic. It is aspirational. But the path is real and personal and concrete. It's the insulation crew plugging up the leaks in my house. It's the hybrid car that I drive that was built by U.S. workers. It's my friends Lorenzo and Brian, Army vets who have six acres between them to grow organic food out of garbage. It's using daylight to illuminate Seventhwave's office instead of electric light, making our space efficient and beautiful and healthy. It's a 13-year-old who can come out in middle school without worrying whether or not they'll be safe.

These are the fundamental American values I learned at home, at church, and at school in Janesville and took with me to college and then to work. There have been setbacks, and there will continue to be setbacks. But what I know is that every individual decision—at home, at work, in our community—can move that arc forward. Each of us carries the American Dream inside us and the power to bring it alive with every choice we make.

In January, my college girlfriends and I marched in Washington, DC. States' support for energy efficiency and renewables are surging, and Seventhwave's experts are helping to craft the new regulatory paradigms that will accelerate a clean energy transition. More important than policy, the public has begun to expect energy efficiency and to demand renewables—especially solar. Like the first Earth Day, clean energy inspires most Americans.

My optimism comes from two forces: First, the smart millennials I work with. They back their values with technological savvy and the certainty that they can create something better than the status quo. They fire me up. Second, by the roar of millions of Americans rising to defend the values we share. The American Dream is not in government—it's in each one of us. I will continue to work with millennials and veterans and builders and anyone else who heals the environment and secures our energy future to keep the American Dream as alive and tangible as it has been for me. ■



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Early Warning System

Historian **Dick Wagner** looks at the early history of HIV/AIDS in Wisconsin and some of the people who sounded the early alarm about its deadly reach.

DUE TO THE RELATIVELY LATE timing of reported AIDS cases in the state in the early 1980s, Wisconsin was given the chance to craft a thoughtful response to the disease.

Dr. Roger Gremminger, the medical director of the Milwaukee Brady East STD Clinic (founded in 1974) had already been working in the field of gay health for years when AIDS became known nationally. Gremminger had done perceptive research. In November 1982, based on Wisconsin data, he presented a paper on “Rural Homosexually Active Men and Hepatitis B Risk” at the American Public Health Association Annual Meeting. He identified that “societal prejudice is still a very real factor and the fear generated in a number of homosexually active men is based on real examples of sometimes vicious and unjust treatment.”

His study data from questionnaires showed types of sexual behavior and places for new sexual contacts for four major cities in the state. He discussed those rural men who came to these urban communities. He found most men had become sexually active by their 20th year and urged that high school classes and college organizations should be used for sexual health education. By 1982 the Milwaukee clinic he managed also had begun working with Chicago’s Howard Brown Clinic on AIDS.

On June 24, 1983, Infectious Disease Day, Gremminger presented a paper on “AIDS Risk Evaluation for Four Wisconsin Communities,” at the Medical College of Wisconsin. He conducted his study January–March 1982 before the first reported AIDS cases in Wisconsin. Again, from his experience he

On Aug. 1, 1983 the *Appleton Post-Crescent* broke the news of Wisconsin’s first reported AIDS death; a man in his 50s who had died the previous week. The paper could not get the local pathologist to comment on the autopsy that had been conducted, and the physician refused to say what was listed on the death certificate.

knew that “the effect of prejudice, hatred, and irrationality of society, collectively called homophobia” would be a factor in terms of the disease spreading. “The internalized psychic adjustments of gay men to this homophobia” was also relevant.

He identified three groups of homosexually active men of which only one was deemed accessible—men who accept their orientation and

socialize in gay bars. Men who rejected their orientation, and those who did accept it but did not socialize in bars, were deemed not accessible. Gremminger believed 50% (approximately 33,000) of homosexually active males were accessible for a proposed epidemiological study of the 66,500 men in Wisconsin his data showed as being at risk for AIDS.

Using information from his hepatitis study he made risk estimates from information on the number of contacts, the fact of anonymous contacts, and the incidence of non-AIDS STDs. In general, he thought Wisconsin would present low risks in most of the cities, with Milwaukee having the largest number of potential high-risk individuals. His paper emphasized, “We must avoid the prejudiced assumption that all homosexually active men are at risk for acquiring AIDS and work to create a better environment for homosexually active men and for all men to continue to lead productive lives with satisfying relationships... The fatal disease must not spread to our area.”

In May 1983 Tim Tillotson, a former Army medic from Wauwatosa who had served in Korea and was then associated with the Blue Bus Clinic of Madison, reported in *OUT!* on remarks by a physician from Northwestern University in Chicago. That area was dealing with 25 AIDS cases, of which 17 had already died: “Now is the time to take action—before AIDS cases are recognized and reported in this area.” The remarks had included that “AIDS has been identified in homosexually active men at a much greater frequency than in the general population.” This would later be commonplace, but in early 1983 in Wisconsin getting this word out was important.

The early dearth of real information and its vagueness was shown in the reported statement, “Current thinking is that a communicable agent such as a virus may be involved.”

An AIDS information card displayed risk recommendations, included decreasing the number of different sex partners (not the frequency of sexual activity) and avoiding intravenous drugs or sex with IV drug users. Tillotson’s advice was, “Because of our current incomplete state of knowledge and due to the seriousness of the disease, we believe that it is better to be overly cautious.” His later research would show the virus was present in Madison as early as 1980 among gay men. Tillotson was an advocate of testing linked with counseling as done at alternative health sites. He believed it could be “an empowering situation rather than being slammed with this bad news.”

Mark Behar was another key resource, already in the field when AIDS arrived in Wisconsin. Behar, a physician assistant, was a chairperson and a founding member of the National Coalition of Gay STD Services in 1979. The organization in 1984 listed 69 member organizations with four in Wisconsin. Behar edited and contributed to the group’s newsletter published from Milwaukee. Designated in March 1983 as an “official interim national communication device” for disseminating information on AIDS, it was an important early source for both AIDS information and the community responses that were being organized.

MEDICALLY SPEAKING

Gremminger begins new medical column

By Roger Gremminger, MD

I am delighted to have the opportunity again to write about Gay health issues and wish to sincerely thank the editor of *Wisconsin Light*. For those of you who may remember, I wrote health columns in *Gay Milwaukee* and *Our Horizon* from 1979 through 1982. The first and unfortunately the last article I wrote about AIDS was in the February 1982 issue of *Our Horizon*. When *Our Horizon* folded, I was never asked by *Out!* or *In Step* to write about Gay health and thus have been silent in the Gay press since then. Thus I am especially delighted to have this opportunity now.

For those of you who do not know me, I am a full-time emergency medicine physician (no private practice) who in addition has provided health care services to the Gay community for ten years on a volunteer basis. It was on January 11, 1978 when I was oriented and began to provide medical services at what was then the GPU VD Clinic. That was the occasion of my very first professional actions as a newly licensed physician. Since then I have remained a member of the medical staff of the clinic — which has been known as the GPU VD Clinic, the GPU STD Clinic, then the Farwell STD Clinic, and finally as the present Brady East STD Clinic (BEST Clinic). I did not found the clinic as some believe. It was founded in September 1977 as a service providing clinic by Robert Bolan, MD who served as the first Medical Director until 1979 July when he moved to San Francisco. I was appointed as the second Medical Director and served from July 1979 to April 1985. And I have continued on the medical staff since then, staffing the clinic one or two times per month. I was succeeded as Medical Director by Maureen Small, MD and presently by Marc Huffman, MD.

In addition to BEST Clinic, I am presently Medical Director of the Herpes Health Center at St. Anthony’s Family Medical Center, since September 1983.

Over the past ten years, I have gained experiences that no other doctor will have the opportunity to gain again. And I have enjoyed the respect and trust of my patients and the community at large and I am very grateful. In the Pre-AIDS era, I had worked diligently to control gonorrhea, syphilis, giardiasis, amebiasis, warts, and Hepatitis B. I had seen AIDS enter the community although at first I did not know what I was seeing. After completing a hepatitis B study and starting a hepatitis B vaccination program, I began to work feverishly from December 1982 to July 1984 to alert the community of the danger of AIDS. Some thought of my efforts to start an AIDS initiative as ill-conceived.

Love, Roger



Roger Gremminger, MD

alarmist, and hysterical, at some listened to me and hopefully were spared. Unfortunately, most of what I saw and predicted has come true. And I continue to spend many a night feeling depressed thinking of my patients and friends who are or perhaps will succumb to AIDS.

For professional and personal reasons, I resigned as the medical director of BEST Clinic in July 1984 (I was replaced in April 1985) and drew back from many of my activities to contain AIDS. I had been over-extended for too long and needed more time for myself, my relationships, and my career. But I never stopped my work for the Gay community.

Over the years, those who had sustained and encouraged me had been the wonderful troop of dedicated volunteers. At first the group was small but in recent years the number of volunteers has grown immensely. The kindness, concern and love shown by these volunteers to myself and the people we served is truly the greatest mainstay and strength of our community. It is with singular pride that I have seen the growth of generosity in the Gay community. The fabric of our community has become more complex and rich over the years and speaks well of the sincerity, honesty, and responsibility of this Gay community.

Thus it is indeed with pride and excitement that I begin to write to you again in a column in *Wisconsin Light*. Numerous topics come to mind — AIDS, and other STD’s, the psychology of dealing with AIDS and death, hope, and despair. I am very open to suggestions and if you have a topic or issue you wish for me to address, please contact the editor of *Wisconsin Light*. Till next time, take good care of yourself and best wishes.

The Coalition also published pamphlets on healthful gay sexual activity starting in 1981. Behar also used “BEST NEWS,” the newsletter of the Brady Street Clinic, to get AIDS information out in Milwaukee. The advice to use condoms against AIDS was there early, and backed up by the distribution of free condoms at the clinic.

On Aug. 1, 1983 the *Appleton Post-Crescent* broke the news of Wisconsin’s first reported AIDS death; a man in his 50s who had died the previous week. The paper could not get the local pathologist to comment on the autopsy that had been conducted, and the physician refused to say what was listed on the death certificate. Eventually the certificate showed “‘fever of undetermined origin’ influenced by an ‘immune-compromised host,’ without mentioning AIDS.” The Outagamie County coroner claimed to be unaware of any AIDS death. The man had previously been a patient at the Mayo Clinic in Minnesota. The *Appleton* paper reported, “Gays are scared.” *The Milwaukee Journal* on May 31 reported, “Milwaukee not immune to AIDS outbreak.” While there were 1,450 cases known nationwide, the paper reported there were two known cases in Milwaukee, both homosexuals, and six more cases were suspected. One specifically was described as an “active homosexual,” and “a promiscuous person” with multiple sexual contacts in Milwaukee.

Madison’s first AIDS death occurred in later summer 1983 when a man travelling through the city was admitted to the Veterans Hospital. Dr. Jeff Davis, the state epidemiologist, was quoted that, “Virtually no cases have been found anywhere outside of the high-risk groups.” In this same early period the *Marinette Eagle Star* ran a syndicated column that discussed the homosexual lifestyle as a “deathstyle” and “the premises of gay rights rhetoric” as entirely false. These state newspaper stories help set the tone for the Wisconsin general public to view AIDS as a gay sexual disease. Journalist Neil Rosenberg, who had done *The Milwaukee Journal’s* pioneering series on the gay community in the 1970s, was now the medical reporter for the paper. His epidemic coverage tried to convey “correct messages” about AIDS. Many state papers tried to present factually correct coverage, too. *The Portage Daily Register*, noting that the *National Enquirer* “is probably not the best source for your information,” editorialized, “Only education will fight the hysteria.”

OUT! alerted the gay community to a concomitant worry. “No to the Witchhunt,” the paper editorialized. “[W]e worry about another epidemic—an epidemic of homophobia.” The fear, “If every gay man is defined as a potential carrier of AIDS, then any and all form of discrimination against them become possible.” The warning, “The disease will surely come closer and closer to home.” *OUT!* demanded, “We need assurances that the research dollars and heightened public awareness of AIDS will be used to eradicate the disease, not gays.”

In a letter to the Division of Health in December 1983, Governor Anthony Earl expressed his ideas: “I continue to be deeply concerned about the spread of this disease in Wisconsin and the nation. Of equal concern, however, is the anxiety and fear which has accompanied the spread of information about new cases which is often based on misinformation.”

In January 1984 in conjunction with the Great Lakes Lesbian/Gay Health Conference on Abuse, AIDS and Alcoholism, Earl proclaimed February 1984 as AIDS Awareness Month. Katie Morrison, Earl’s appointee as head of the Division of Health, had in 1983 begun the reallocation of public health funds to the state effort over AIDS. The Governor would go on to describe AIDS as “the gravest epidemic and challenge to our health care system in my lifetime.” The battle over the epidemic was just being joined in the state. Sadly, many would still be lost. ■



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



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Rocky Road to Healthcare Equality

Attorney **Tamara Packard** explains what exactly happened with state insurance when transgender state employees lost their transition-related coverage in Wisconsin.

FOR ONE BRIGHT, SHINING MOMENT, a group of Wisconsin transgender people had insurance coverage for gender-related health care, including medically necessary medication and surgeries. That has now been snatched away by the Walker administration. But the story of how equality was momentarily achieved, and how it was taken away, offers guidance for the future. As George Santayana said, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

Historically, health insurers refused to cover “gender care:” medical visits, hormones and other drugs, and surgeries to treat the disconnect between one’s birth sex traits and their gender identity. This meant that people had to pay for such care themselves. Many people could not, which led to further tragedies such as depression, destructive behaviors, and more. Then came the Affordable Care Act (“Obamacare”). A part of the law that was to go into effect on January 1, 2017 forbade discrimination based on gender identity. As such, though it did not technically require coverage for gender care, it forbade the common practice of denying coverage based on gender identity.

In anticipation of this nondiscrimination requirement, health insurers all over the country revised their coverage rules for 2017. In Wisconsin, the state Group Insurance Board (GIB), which contracts with insurers for group coverage of State employees and employees of some other governmental entities (collectively, government employees), quietly repealed a rule that had required policies covering such employees to exclude gender care. That is, forced by the Obama administration, GIB allowed insurers to cover gender care. GIB’s repeal was effective January 1, 2017. Insurers, comfortable that they would not be forced by the GIB to violate federal law, wrote their 2017 policies to cover gender care and signed up to insure government employees for another year.

Then a Catholic health care provider brought a lawsuit in a Texas federal court, challenging the nondiscrimination law (*Franciscan Alliance, Inc. v. Burwell*). The judge assigned to the case was believed to be ideologically aligned with the challengers. He promised a decision on a motion for a temporary injunction to enjoin (halt implementation of) the law by year’s end. The State of Wisconsin, at Governor Walker’s

request and with Attorney General Schimel’s eager agreement, joined Franciscan in opposing the nondiscrimination law.

Of course, the idea of gender care being covered by state insurance was almost more than the majority-Walker-appointed GIB could bear. So they scheduled an extra meeting late in the day on the last business day of the year, December 30, 2016, in anticipation of a decision from the court in Texas halting the nondiscrimination requirement. The plan for that meeting was, with that requirement removed, GIB would put back in place the gender care ban before gender care coverage existed for even one day.

Mobilized by alerts on social media from *Our Lives*, dozens of transgender advocates attended the December 30 meeting to look the GIB board members in the eye and appeal to their humanity. As the business day drew to a close and no decision came from the court in Texas, the GIB faced an interesting dilemma: without putting its ban back in place, in a few short days, transgender people under government employee plans would begin to receive coverage for medically necessary gender care. But if they put the ban back in place while the Obamacare law was still in effect, they, and perhaps more importantly, the insurers, could be found in violation of the law and face penalties.

Ultimately, after several hours of meeting (almost entirely in closed session, isolated from the people who would be directly affected by their decision) the GIB agreed that the ban on gender care would go back into effect as soon as four conditions were met.

1. A ruling halting implementation of the nondiscrimination law;
2. Verification that reinstating the gender care ban would not increase program costs;
3. Renegotiation of contracts with insurers to remove gender care coverage with no increase in premiums;
4. A legal opinion assuring the GIB that re-imposing the ban would not violate their fiduciary duties.

On Saturday, December 31, the judge in Texas halted implementation of the nondiscrimination law. By the end of January, the GIB had the assurances required to meet items 2 and 4, and also had issued contract amendments to the insurers, reinstating the gender care exclusion,



Transgender advocates attending the December 30 Group Insurance Board meeting.

Let us be clear: This was not about money. The estimated cost of gender care coverage among those in a GIB-contracted plan was 0.007% to 0.018% of total premium cost. Furthermore, nothing required a ban on gender care coverage. This was pure transphobia.

and asked them to sign them. While it is unknown if the insurers have signed these amendments, the GIB is behaving as though they did. GIB announced that effective February 1, gender care was no longer covered in its contracted government employee insurance plans.

Let us be clear: This was not about money. The estimated cost of gender care coverage among those in a GIB-contracted plan was 0.007% to 0.018% of total premium cost. Furthermore, nothing required a ban on gender care coverage. This was pure transphobia.

Yet, keep in mind that for a whole month, the GIB ban on gender care was lifted. Through other insurance policies not connected to GIB, more gender care is now covered than ever before, all over the country. The ignorance, fear,

and misunderstanding that underlies GIB’s ban as well as the rest of the anti-LGBT agenda, will erode. We must keep educating people about the real harms that come from denying transgender people medically necessary care. We must work to ensure politicians supporting equal health care for transgender people are elected, and laws requiring nondiscriminatory gender care coverage are enacted. It has happened before. We can do it again. ■



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



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Queering the Medical Record

The exam room should be a sacred space between doctor and patient, but **Kathy Oriel, MD** notes ways in which we must be selective with where and how our private information is used.

I ALWAYS TREASURE sitting with another person in the privacy of the exam room. In that room, time and distraction dissipate: I focus on one human and their story. Profoundly private conversations occur there. I tell her the cancer has progressed. He tells me he's having an affair. She recounts horrific childhood sexual trauma. They come in, vomiting, sweating, and bent over in pain. They've relapsed and want my help to get clean again. Others utter, "I'm trans."

The small and sometimes awkward exam room is where I've witnessed resilience, courage, and inspiration. I've struggled to balance what I include in the medical record: I aim to capture the essence of the visit without delineating intensely private information which may be viewed with prejudice.

CONSENT TO DOCUMENTATION

In the mid-90s, when I first taught medical students about LGBTQ health, I counseled them to document sexual orientation or specific details about gender identity only with the patient's specific consent. Someone being outed as LGBTQ or HIV positive could place them at risk for losing a job, being denied health coverage, or losing custody of children. In my own practice, I used to draw genograms, or "family trees," on the inside cover of the paper chart. These circumspect jottings were not part of the official medical record but served to remind me of someone's partner situation, sensitivity to certain exams, or to follow up about substance use.

I was stunned when a woman was denied life insurance because I documented routine advice about alcohol consumption. I stood by helplessly as hormones for a trans woman were used against her in a gruesome custody dispute where she lost custody and was mandated to present as male during parental visits. I was horrified when a young woman with a work-related injury unknowingly signed a release for all of her medical records, instead of only the ones related to her work



Such information was not only visible to others but was "blown into" other physician's notes: my words were automatically copied into another provider's note with a paucity of keystrokes.

injury. Her employer used a history of mental illness and sexual assault to imply she was an unreliable person regarding her injury.

DIGITAL RECORDS ARE VISIBLE TO MANY IN THE SYSTEM

As the electronic medical record became ubiquitous, I typed in what I needed to in order to provide care for the person who trusted me. I soon learned that what patients shared with me within the sacred space of the exam room was now visible to an absurd number of others, miles away from my clinic. Such information was not only visible to others but was "blown into" other physician's notes: my words were automatically copied into another provider's note with a paucity of keystrokes. A trans man was seen in urgent care for sinusitis and was subjected to repeated questioning about completely unrelated gender surgeries and what his legal gender was. Another physician questioned a woman about her history of genital herpes and a pregnancy termination in front of multiple family members. A woman who had been clean and sober for decades was grilled about her cocaine use history after a minor surgery.

The electronic medical record has done much to improve safety of care and engage patients in their own care by providing them access to important information. Most physicians and other health care providers want to be sensitive, inclusive, and ethical. Sharing private, sensitive information is important so each person can receive the best care possible.

I stood by helplessly as hormones for a trans woman were used against her in a gruesome custody dispute where she lost custody and was mandated to present as male during parental visits.

Still, we live in a time where any provider can use the search function within the medical record and any search will return matches from hundreds of pages of visit notes, lab results, and other documents. I've not known anyone to misuse it, and this search functionality is important for a physician to understand medical history. Still, the potential harms for those with nefarious intent are chilling. Misunderstanding and bias regarding sexual orientation, gender identity, sexual assault, substance use, and mental illness remain too frequent within the medical setting.

You should feel safe with the person providing your health care. Thank goodness we've made the progress we have: being queer is no longer the great distracter it once was. You should be able to share the real you, the queer you, the trans you, the recovering you, the survivor you. When you trust us as physicians, we are better able to appreciate and assist you.

ASK QUESTIONS AND USE GOOD JUDGMENT

Even so, I want you to understand what is not immediately obvious as you sit in the room with a single caregiver: what you tell that person might not stay in that sacred space. Ask why they are asking specific questions. Ask how they plan to enter information in your medical record. Ask whether they feel obligated to write down anything you tell them regarding information that feels intensely private or sensitive. Most of all use your good judgment. You have the most experience and perspective in living your life with all the complexities therein. ■



KATHY ORIEL, MD is a family physician in Madison who identifies as a middle-aged, frumpy, lesbian mom. She has been caring and advocating for LGBTQ people within medical settings for over 25 years.

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Becoming One

A trip to their birthplace in Hawaii helped **Marcelle Richards** find a more whole self, and to at last feel at home in their surroundings.

I AM BI-RACIAL: my mom is Korean, and my dad is white. Besides my mother, I grew up with only my dad's paternal side of the family (my French grandmother and namesake was, like my mother, first generation and the only one from her family in the states). My mom didn't teach us her language, and we grew up playing with cousins that most people didn't believe were our cousins.

WHAT ARE YOU?

Even as a kid in California I remember being asked, "What are you?" I'd say: "I'm Hawaiian." Now, this was around the time when those spandex bike shorts with the color stripe down the side were in style, along with scrunchy socks, before I really understood a need to define myself much at all. Rather, it was by necessity that people wanted to know... whatever it was about me.

I grew up listening to the backhanded racism of folks telling me how mixed race people are more attractive. I grew up wondering when I would have a "grown-up" nose like my blond haired, blue-eyed cousin Katie. What none of my friends knew was that I went to sleep at night with a hair clamp on my nose to try to narrow my "button nose" and there are a number of years of school pictures in which I look surprised because I am holding my eyes as wide open as I can.

I grew up learning to define myself to defend against the many ways others tried their damndest to define me. It has taken years to come from a place of self-knowing rather than a place of internalized whitewashing.

I was born in Hawaii, Honolulu on the island of Oahu, so my young self jumped to the seemingly logical conclusion that I must be Hawaiian. I was wrong, but I think my young self also was onto something: Hawaii would

feel like home. I found different language later, understanding that I am not Hawaiian by ethnicity. For many years, I adopted the word "hapa" for myself. It's a word that originated in Hawaii (the rough translation is "half") and it has since been used by people who are mixed race of Asian descent. Given the history of colonization, militarization, and the degradation of landscapes leading to well-known plantations, Koreans and Japanese people were brought over to work the land. People intermarried. Or there are folks like my parents, a white military guy with a Korean bride who married there, had me, and then kept migrating. Even though "hapa" offered solace in the succinctness with which I could describe myself, I have very recently abandoned the term for myself after engaging more deeply in conversations about how this phrase can perpetuate cultural appropriation when used by non-Native Hawaiians. Once again I had to grapple with how to describe myself and the best answer I have is to allow myself to embrace my multitudes, being everything that I am.

A RETURN TO HAWAII & SELF

We moved to California before my first birthday and I had never been back to Hawaii since, until I decided to finally go for my birthday last December. The trip coincided with the full "super" moon in parts of the world. In Hawaii, this moon fell on the 13th. For me it represented the theme of coming full circle.

I received a traditional Hawaiian tattoo, called kakau, a living sacred art, on my birthday. The tattoo, or uhi, symbolizes many things, some of which are just for me, but essentially it is a connection to my birthplace, and honoring the forward movement of my path. I had been in communication with the artist, Kahuna k̄ uhi Keli'ioikalani Makua,

for over a year before my arrival. His teacher, Kahuna k̄ uhi Keone Nunes, is responsible for bringing the sacred practice back to life after it went underground for generations. Makua graduated just after my departure and is now only the second living person to hold the title shared by his teacher.

It was a healing in itself to have the honor to receive kakau, but really, it was also everything that came before I stepped onto the platform. I credit the blessing of crossing paths with Makua, and also witnessing Nunes at work, with the opening of a different door within myself, including a connection to my ancestors, my truth. Before receiving the tattoo, I participated in a traditional Hawaiian water cleansing in the ocean called kapu kai. You go in naked. It was one of the most beautiful experiences of my life. I was very present to the healing of all the shame I had carried with me around my race, and the projected shame and rejection that belong to other people that I had internalized about my fluid sexuality and gender.

CREATING RIPPLES, EXPERIENCING FREEDOM

Being someone who is chameleon-like, and authentically so, I am aware of the ripples I create when I float through the world, and why I feel resistance or tension. Sometimes it is my ethnicity (I find that what is even more upsetting to people than knowing what you "are" is not knowing what you "are"), or my gender presentation (sometimes so varied that people who have met me before don't recognize me on a second meeting), or my visible queerness or some intersection of all of the above.

What I experienced in Hawaii felt like freedom. To be surrounded by people who look like me was profound for the reason it has not ever happened anywhere else, even when returning to countries of origin tied to my blood. I became keenly aware of how much energy it takes sometimes just to be. In Hawaii, I felt reborn in many ways, but one of them was in experiencing what it feels like to be embraced on a whole different level. And what was interesting is that knowing I was in a place where a third gender has historically been honored and recognized also let me relax in other ways with my identity. I became one with my surroundings, which is an ecstatic way to fall in love. ■



MARCELLE RICHARDS is a writer, editor, and artist whose work has appeared in *Isthmus*, and *Love, Always: Partners of Trans People on Intimacy, Challenge and Resilience*. They are active in ArtWrite Collective.

Elder Orphans

Caroline Werner highlights the unique challenges faced by members of our aging population who don't have a traditional family unit to help care for them.

RECENTLY, AN ARTICLE in the September 2016 issue of *Forbes* by Carol Marak on the concept of "Elder Orphans" caught my attention. "The effects of aging land harder on an 'elder orphan,'" she wrote, "because the worry and concern of 'what will become of me if I can't care for myself?' triples when no one is around."

An elder orphan is someone who has no adult children, spouse, or companion to rely on for company, assistance, or input. About 29 percent (13.3 million) of non-institutionalized older persons live alone. The majority are women—9.2 million, vs. 4.1 million men.

While this article focuses on the current heterosexual population with "fewer children, more childless marriages and more divorces compared to earlier generations," our aging LGBTQ boomer population also includes many elder orphans.

Our LGBTQ elders are "two times as likely to live alone, four times less likely to have children, and five times less likely to access aging services compared with heterosexual older adults" (SAGE, New York). We rely on informal 'families of choice' for social connections, care, and support.

Knowing that we rely on our informal families as we age, it could be important to consider how we support each other intergenerationally. A few years ago, OutReach volunteers successfully served three individuals with a Share the Care program—gathering people known to the person in need of care to find ways to help. Proud Theater members are emphasizing the intergenerational linkage through their recent annual "Connections" workshops, the next of which is March 11.

Marak's article invites people to consider joining the Elder Orphan Facebook group where elders can find information and support around legal and care issues, as well as affordable housing and transportation. I am not sure how this site would benefit LGBTQ elders or our families of choice, so I cannot recom-



mend it. I recently learned that the U.W.-Madison Engineering Department designed a Facebook page where confidentiality can be maintained. Staff from the Madison Senior Center and I may continue conversations with the engineering department staff to consider a page to assist local LGBTQ elders.

Further looking to Marak's article, we see some of the other particular issues facing the community: "The research from the city data across the country shows that thousands of older adults receive nominal Social Security benefits and live on average incomes. However, for those who are lucky enough to own a home, many still have mortgages. For older adults who rent, in some cities close to half don't own a vehicle, and fewer have jobs. The data illustrates the need for local social services and more attention from policymakers and thought leaders."

Madison ranks high by Milken's Best Cities for Successful Aging because of our health care systems, our economy, and "enriched environments that help older adults remain safe, secure and enjoy a sense of community." However, it

goes on to note, "The public transportation system needs work and affordable housing ranks low. Accessibility, low cost of living and healthy lifestyles remain a challenge as well."

This article encourages holding "city officials' feet to the fire so old Americans can truly age successfully at home." The city, of course, cannot answer all our needs and concerns. It will still be up to us, as individuals and communities, to find ways to work together. Facebook may be one avenue for connection as more elders become technologically savvy. Phones are another nice option when we're not on Facebook.

On a personal note, I can be considered an elder orphan. Accepting that I'm aging and knowing there will be times I may want to rely on other individuals, I've made a concerted effort to make friends of a variety of ages. I know it can be difficult, however, for some people to make contacts. It's even harder to actually ask for help and figure out which of your friends or an agency may be best suited to handle a particular request.

Reduced financial security is often a big concern. Some advance preparation with the free support from a Benefit Specialist at the Aging and Disabilities Resource Center in Madison may be helpful. The Dane County office is at 2865 N. Sherman Ave., Madison 53704. Phone: 608-240-7400 or toll free: 1-855-417-6892 or adrc@countyofdane.com.

We will have our own personal barriers to overcome, including the pride we have around being independent. That's been our "survival" mechanism for years. Aging means gradual changes to which we can adapt with information and the support of a network, and the personal skills we've developed over time.

Recently, OutReach received funding from the New Harvest Foundation to offer at least 10 discussion sessions related to "Healthy LGBTQ Aging" this spring. These sessions are intended to help you plan ahead by offering information from local resources. ■

ILLUSTRATION BY RACHAL DUGGAN

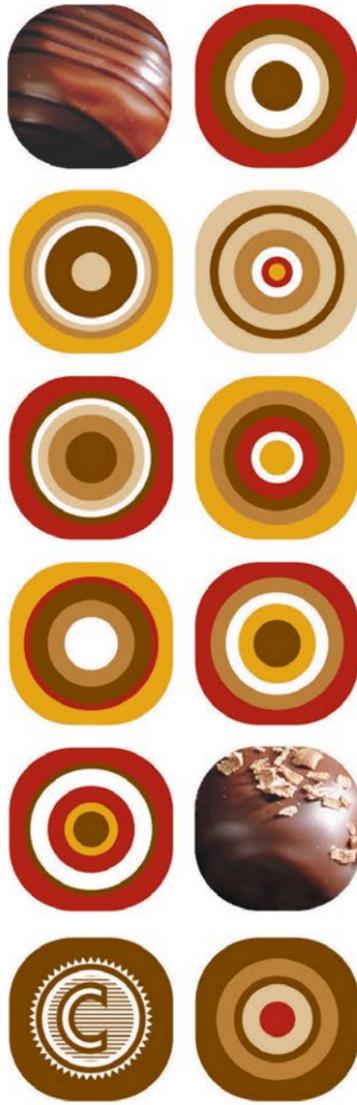


CAROLINE WERNER has a Master's Degree in Social Work. She did case management with Dane County seniors before retiring.

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Self Advocacy for Transgender People

Seeking proper health care is often a minefield for transgender people. Therapist **Dale Decker** offers tips for advocating and caring for yourself during the process.

WITH THE RECENT CHANGES to coverage of trans health services for state employees, many people assume that no health insurance will cover trans health services. While that was true even a few years ago, more and more insurers are covering these services completely. However, even with insurance that covers trans health services, the process of obtaining them can be complex and discouraging.

SELF-CARE IS THE FIRST STEP

Before we get into the details, let's talk about the psychological side of advocating for yourself. The process can be time-consuming and frustrating. It requires you to come out to complete strangers about the most intimate details of your personal history. Without a plan to support yourself, you won't have the energy to put forth the steady effort it takes to wade through the red tape.

All insurers have appeals processes. Ask for the contact information for the "patient advocate" or "ombudsman." By using those specific phrases you will let the people you are speaking to know that you are serious.

Get some paper or your favorite device and actually write your self-care plan down. During times of stress, anger, or fatigue, you can simply refer to your plan instead of wracking your brain. Here are some suggestions that work for many people:

- **Identify people who are your direct support system.** Keep them in the loop, and ask them for their assistance. Write them down in your plan. When you're upset it's easy to forget how many people are willing to help.
- **Schedule regular social contact.** Get things on your calendar and make sure people know these engagements are an important part of your plan for self-care.
- **Get 30 minutes of exercise at least three times per week.** You don't need to run a marathon. Brisk walking is a perfect exercise, but if you have another favorite activity, go for it.
- **Keep doing things that you enjoy and that en-**

gage you. It sounds simple, but when people become stressed the first things they tend to let go of are hobbies or interests. These things sustain us even in times of stress.

FIND A HOPEFUL, REALISTIC OUTLOOK

It's likely you will hit roadblocks in your attempts to find trans-specific health services. A good dose of hope is necessary to motivate you to keep going, but too much can lead to despair when things don't go smoothly. Temper your hope with realism. Expect the process to take months, not weeks. Remember that even when things seem rocky, you always have options.

GET ORGANIZED

Get all your insurance information in one central place, along with records of all the contacts you've made. This way, you aren't hunting around for details when that phone call you've been waiting on for days is finally returned.

KEEP CAREFUL NOTES OF EVERY INTERACTION

Try to get the full name of each individual you speak with. Keep notes as you speak on the phone. This is stressful work and you risk forgetting details, which will slow you down. Ask for direct phone numbers to avoid going through endless menus every time you call. Be polite but firm and assertive.

DON'T TAKE "NO" FOR AN ANSWER

All insurers have appeals processes. Ask for the contact information for the "patient advocate" or "ombudsman." By using those specific phrases you will let the people you are speaking to know that you are serious. Most appeals processes have multiple levels. Keep escalating your concerns up the ladder.

BUILD A MEDICAL CASE

At the same time you are working on your insurer, get connected to a physician and a therapist who can assist you by verifying the medical necessity of the care. Those are the key words: "medical necessity." Let providers know that you are exploring gender-confirming medical care. This will allow them

to focus on the best ways to prove medical necessity. Initial assessment visits are almost always covered by insurance. Many insurance companies require a certain number of months under the care of a therapist before they will authorize services. You may as well get started with that process.

ENLIST AN OUTSIDE ADVOCATE

Outreach, Inc. in Madison and FORGE in Milwaukee are good places to find support groups and referrals for medical professionals and legal assistance. Hiring an attorney is always an option but can be quite expensive. You can also ask your employer for assistance if you feel comfortable. Even if you're the first employee to ask about these issues, you will likely receive a good response, es-

Even if you're the first employee to ask about these issues, you will likely receive a good response, especially if you work for a large corporation. Several local large employers have negotiated trans care through their bargaining power.

pecially if you work for a large corporation. Several local large employers have negotiated trans care through their bargaining power.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Advocating for ourselves can be very challenging, especially for Midwesterners! However, with a good self-care plan, an organized strategy, a healthy dose of assertiveness, and the assistance of knowledgeable health professionals, you might be surprised by how easily you can access the medical care you need.

RESOURCES

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Conscious Caffeination

It's all in the family, as Vivienne Andersen profiles the new **Café Social** and its owners **Omar Lopez** and **Doug Swenson**, who strive to bring Madison a truly sublime cup of joe.

HOW FAR WOULD YOU GO for a good cup of coffee? Some folks will answer that question by rehydrating crystals in the microwave and being satisfied. Others will insist on only locally roasted, organically grown, fair trade, cruelty-free, whole beans from their preferred local coffee shop, finely ground, tamped, and carefully brewed only with cold reverse-osmosis water. Most of us fall somewhere in between. For Omar Lopez, co-owner of Café Social, one of Madison's newest coffee shops, that sort of work and dedication was still not providing a satisfactory cup of joe.

Omar, who was born and raised in Columbia, came to Madison in 1999 to study English. He quickly fell in love with the city, its culture, its people—but not its coffee. “What people are drinking here, this is crazy,” says Omar. Despite the coffee situation, though, Omar decided to stay in Madison and earned an MBA from Edgewood College in 2008.

Seeing an unmet need in the market, and having connections to coffee growers back home in Columbia (Omar's sister owns the coffee plantation that Omar sources his beans from), Omar decided to start importing coffee himself. He began selling the coffee to local grocery stores, but with no brand awareness, he initially suffered lackluster sales. Selling coffee at farmers' markets turned out to be the ideal way to introduce the Madison community to what truly yummy coffee Café Social was providing.

Part of Omar's decision to stay in Madison was informed by



Seeing an unmet need in the market, and having connections to coffee growers back home in Columbia (Omar's sister owns the coffee plantation that Omar sources his beans from), Omar decided to start importing coffee himself.

a chance encounter with Doug Swenson (Omar's partner of 12 years and the other co-owner of Café Social). The two sat at adjoining booths at Laredo's Mexican restaurant one evening in late 2004. Doug admits that he had “worked it out so we could be at the counter paying our bills at the same time.” Coy about their relationship details, Doug did let slip that only two months elapsed between that meeting, and when he rented a U-Haul truck and moved in with Omar.

With Doug's prior experience working in coffee shops, and the coffee bean business going strong, expanding Café Social into a brick and mortar location was the next logical step. In August of 2016, the stars aligned, and the perfect opportunity presented itself in the first floor of the new Uncommon building at the corner of Bedford and Mifflin Streets, and the guys jumped at it. “The first month was hard,” Doug said, but the café has since been a rousing success. The pair is excited about opening a second shop in

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Champaign, Illinois.

Café Social, besides slinging the most delicious cup of mud in town, also features food options from an impressive list of local suppliers providing some of their signature items. Fraboni's pizza, empanadas from La Taguara, tamales from El Poblano, the Paoli Bread and Brat House is a non-exclusive list.

“Everything is local, hand made, nothing comes off the truck from Sysco,” Omar says. The space itself is sleek and modern, with high ceilings and lots of windows.

Many folks in Madison prefer to support locally sourced goods whenever possible, and buy fairly traded coffee from woman-owned farms, out of a sense of social responsibility (which is important to Omar and Doug, too). For Omar, it is all just a part of what it takes to get a truly good cup of coffee. ■



VIVIENNE ANDERSEN, who's first word was “eat,” is a full-time REALTOR® with eXp Realty in Madison. She grew up in California, but is not at all what the Beach Boys had in mind. She serves on the Cultural Diversity in Housing Committee at the WRA, and blogs about the Madison Real Estate Market at VivienneAndersen.com.

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Let Youth Lead

Diverse & Resilient's **Katie Abbott** highlights the benefits of a **Youth Advisory Board** to help guide the organization through a changing world.

PEOPLE OFTEN EAGERLY SHOUT “youth!” as a solution to the acceptance and inclusion issues facing LGBTQ people in this divisive year. Whether their response is that young people are more accepting and open, that young people now demand inclusivity, or that they are simply the next generation of LGBTQ people, the future of acceptance often comes down to an age range. Working with youth has been at the forefront of many LGBTQ organizations for years; now, the work is changing, the need is different, and the youth are leading.

I've had the privilege of working with Diverse & Resilient's Youth Advisory Board (YAB), a group of LGBTQ and allied young leaders in Milwaukee that provide feedback and direction for our programming and community building. What better group to discuss the inclusion and engagement of LGBTQ youth?

CELEBRATING THE Q

Based on this group's input, Diverse & Resilient has made critical changes when engaging youth. One seemingly small change with a huge impact has been consistently including the “Q” in LGBTQ. The word and use of “queer” has been somewhat divisive in our community, and often the line is drawn between generations. Queer is an increasingly common and celebrated identity—particularly held by younger people—while others remember quite keenly the hurt caused by the same word. Now, queer as an identity is used to describe gender and sexuality in unique and diverse ways; it categorically fights common labels by forcing a dialogue about identity when it is claimed. Including this identity in the work recognizes diversity and uniqueness in the LGBTQ community and the changing understanding of identity. The YAB points in part to gender and sexual fluidity as discussed far more often now for this, and with that comes a recognition that everyone has the right to fully express themselves and claim their own unique identity. Ignoring the “Q” is ignoring and denying a changing population of the community.

FLUIDITY OF IDENTITY & SERVICES

In a similar line, Diverse & Resilient focuses on both identity and behavior to provide inclu-



sive events, activities, and programming. Identity is claimed by an individual to understand and express themselves within the broader community, and behavior refers to the feelings, thoughts, and actions they take—which may or may not be mirrored by their identity. For example, there are many people who identify as straight that have relationships or sex with people of the same sex or gender. Identity can be, but is not necessarily, impacted by behavior. Including one, but not the other, ignores another important part of our community. As another example, organizations focusing on HIV-prevention often provide services for men who have sex with men rather than for only gay, bisexual, and queer identified men; ignoring behavior again excludes a wide breadth of people.

SAFE SPACES AND ALLY-INCLUSIVE SPACE: DEFINING WHICH IS BEST WHEN

As identity and behavior diversifies, those working with youth need to keep pace. People who have worked with LGBTQ youth for years have noticed the change. The mentality of “build it and they will come” around LGBTQ youth groups no longer works. Today, there are more spaces in which young LGBTQ people feel comfortable expressing themselves. Alena from the YAB shared their experience with this: “Now we're able to discuss these topics at a younger age and become more comfortable with it instead of having to wait.” Another YAB member, Alexis, added that it is in part due to increased acceptance by society; in some ways, LGBTQ inclusion is popular to care about. With more spaces to feel safer expressing their identities, LGBTQ youth groups and programming need to focus on intentionality and focusing on whether their space should be designed only for LGBTQ youth or for

LGBTQ youth and their allies.

The YAB offered their insight on the two types of groups. When asked which they prefer, the resounding answer was, “It depends.”

Kailee, one YAB member who has been involved at Diverse & Resilient for a few years, encompassed much of the feeling expressed: “There are some things that need to be a queer-only space. Sometimes straight and cis people can overpower queer voices. But I also think that there is space to kind of...reprogram that hurtful thinking they've learned.” While it may not be the intention of allies to overpower LGBTQ voices in groups, it is a common issue that is brought up from LGBTQ youth groups across the state. However, the YAB advocated that inclusive LGBTQ youth spaces can advance their allyship and appreciation of LGBTQ people while learning advocacy skills.

A recent winner of the Be Y.O.U. Youth Leadership Award at the 2016 Reviving the Dream celebration, Shannon commented on a primary challenge of LGBTQ-only spaces: “It puts the individual on the spot to be willing to identify. If a person is questioning or later finds out that they are LGBTQ, there is more comfort in identifying as an ally in that space.” Providing space for youth to explore and grow in a group can be challenging, and allowing only LGBTQ-identified youth into the group can exclude those whose identity and behaviors don't align. As mentioned above, sexuality, gender, and identity are all fluid and youth that identify as straight or cisgender today may discover a new part of their identity tomorrow.

Shannon touched on another difficult aspect of queer-only spaces: “I think that places that are only queer end up being a small crowd.” This can impact group dynamics; a fight between friends can nearly disband a group entirely. In addition, with funding in the LGBTQ youth sphere so competitive, smaller group numbers can mean reduced funding.

So how do we move forward in 2017? Percy succinctly summarized much of the group's conversation: “Starting the conversation at a younger age will impact their lives a lot more as far as acceptance goes. It's important to target younger kids that are open.” Ignoring the conversation—usually under the assumption that youth simply are not “ready” to discuss LGBTQ identities—can continue the stigmatization of the community. Normalizing our identities early can lead not only to healthier self-esteem and de-stigmatization, but it can also help build a supportive community of allies. Kailee said it best: “The exposure of our existence is going to increase acceptance.” ■



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