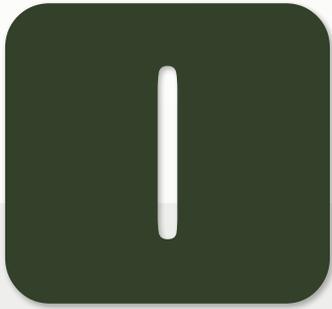


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# SPECIAL ISSUE

**TENTH ANNIVERSARY:** Looking Back on Our First 10 Years

Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

July / August 2017

## QPOC PRIDE LIST

Over 40 local  
& statewide  
LGBTQ leaders  
of color

INSIDE

## PRIDE PARADE GUIDE



## THE WHOLE PICTURE

**Vauce Ashby**

Wisconsin Historical Society's  
Director of Education  
advocates for inclusion

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“All of us who are openly gay are living and writing the history of our movement. We are no more—and no less—heroic than the suffragists and abolitionists of the 19th century; and the labor organizers, Freedom Riders, Stonewall demonstrators, and environmentalists of the 20th century. We are ordinary people, living our lives, and trying as civil-rights activist Dorothy Cotton said, to ‘fix what ain’t right’ in our society.”

- Senator Tammy Baldwin

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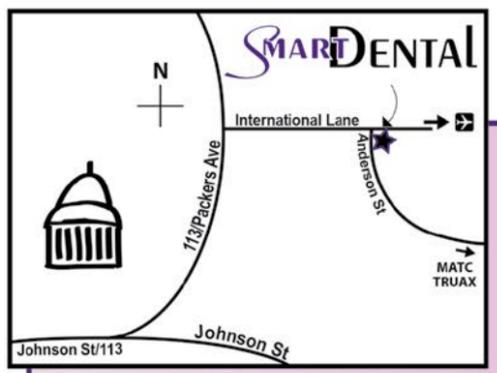


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## A DECADE IN THE MAKING

**TEN YEARS.** This issue marks the tenth anniversary of the magazine, from being a glimmer in the eye of Publisher **Patrick Farabaugh** to the full-color, community-driven effort you now hold in your hands. I've had the privilege of being part of this endeavor for five years now (the longest I've stayed at one job, for the record) and it's done more than I could possibly explain to both expand my awareness of and connection to Wisconsin's incredible LGBTQ+ community, and to whip me into shape as an editor.

We're beyond thrilled to bring you this special anniversary edition, packed with more content than we've ever had in a single issue. It's not just for the reminiscing, either, though looking back at how far both this publication and the community have come in that time is heartening. The biggest feature inside is our first-ever Queer People of Color Pride List, compiled and reported for us by **Amber C. Walker**, and featuring dozens of folks from all walks of life and professions who are doing crucial work.



This is a project we've wanted to tackle for some time, in the vein of other lists, though specifically to better lift up the QPoC

leaders and innovators already doing the work in our communities—and who deserve more support for it. As a magazine with just a few staff members, of all us white, we try to be extra vigilant that our pages reflect the full spectrum of our LGBTQ+ community and not just our personal networks and inherent biases. We hope this is one giant leap in service of that goal, though we recognize that the work is never-ending, and offer our sincere gratitude to everyone who has helped us along the way (even and especially in the form of hard reality checks). These pages also include a special Pride section, with an updated Pink Plaque walking tour guide and map by historian **Dick Wagner**, showcasing some of Madison's queer history, as well as poignant stories from all of you, our readers, about where and how you first came out. **Ngozi Nwangwa** takes a deep dive into the state of LGBTQ health care providers, and an anonymous author offers an affecting and incredibly personal look at his struggles with sex addiction and self-acceptance. **Marcelle Richards** was kind enough to pen a fascinating profile of an emerging field called "erotic bodywork," before they headed out of state for a new (and we hope exciting/productive) chapter of their life.

I could go on, but I truly hope you'll spend time with all of the fantastic stories included in this issue. It continues to be my absolute privilege to serve as editor for this little, independent, magazine-that-could. I never cease to be grateful for and amazed by the wide array of people I get to meet and help share their stories through this work. It's all about creating a reality in which LGBTQ+ people can envision (and attain) any kind of life they want.

Here's to (at least!) 10 more years of pride, unity, storytelling, and love. ■



### OUR STAFF SALES ADMINISTRATOR

Please welcome the newest member of the *Our Lives* staff family, Sales Administrator **Brienne Mueller**. Bri received a B.A. from Lawrence University in Appleton in 2007. A proud-and-out pansexual, Bri has always been an activist at heart and is excited to be part of the *Our Lives* team. Her background includes marketing, customer service/support, community outreach, and the performing arts.



### COMMUNITY GIVING

## Madison Community Foundation Marks 75th with a Year of Giving

**IN CELEBRATION** of 75 years supporting the greater Madison area, Madison Community Foundation (MCF) is giving a major gift each month for a year. More than \$1 million in grants will go to nonprofit projects chosen to reflect many of the Madison area's most unique natural and cultural assets, including our children and families, history and heritage, learning and education, arts and culture, environment and more. The gifts will be announced each month through May 2018.

"Our community is home to so many unique features that are important to our quality of life," says MCF President Bob Sorge. "Together with our donors, we're thrilled to support and celebrate these community treasures."

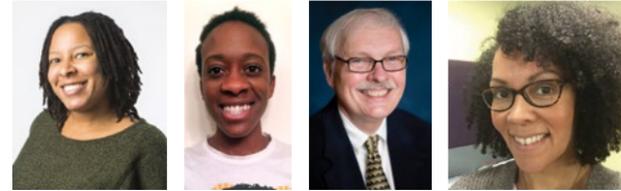
The first grant, entitled Evolution Madison was announced in May. It funds an in-depth assessment of the Nolen Waterfront Plan for a nine-acre park between Monona Terrace and Machinery Row, as well as an art exhibit that explores dreams about Madison's future with the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters.

In June, MCF awarded \$75,000 to Clean Lakes Alliance for a Back to the Beach initiative, which will foster a renewed investment in all 25 major Yahara lakes beaches and parks. As part of the project a family beach event will be held at Olbrich Park on Saturday, July 29, incorporating the Loop the Lake bike ride, Paddle & Portage and a sandcastle competition.

Established in 1942, Madison Community Foundation stewards more than 1,075 charitable funds with \$218 million in assets. In the last 25 years, together with donors, MCF has awarded some \$200 million to nonprofits in Dane County and around the world. To consider donating, or to follow monthly grant announcements, visit [madisongives.org](http://madisongives.org) or find #MCFYearofGiving. ■



Clean Lakes Alliance Executive Director James Tye with MCF's Brennan Nardi.



**AMBER C. WALKER** is a Madison-based writer who unapologetically centers her work around stories from communities that are ignored by mainstream media. She has an affinity for the narratives of Black womyn and LGBTQ+ folks, which is why she was so excited to partner with *Our Lives* to write its first QPOC Pride List. Walker attended Oberlin College and double majored in Africana Studies and Gender/Sexuality/Feminist Studies. She decided to pursue writing full-time and accepted a job as the K-12 education reporter for the *Capital Times* in Madison. She is grateful that her work allows her to maintain a connection to young people and the classroom while developing her craft as a writer.

**NGOZI S. NWANGWA**, known to most as Shirley, received her Bachelor's of Science degree in chemistry in 2013, from IIT in Chicago. After a few years, she decided to leave science behind. She will be starting a Master's in Journalism at NYU this fall, with a concentration in literary reportage. Shirley is passionate about everything social justice, specifically issues that involve intersectional identity, mental health, and LGBTQ life. Shirley listens to the following podcasts: *Politically Re-Active*, *2 Dope Queens*, *Sooo Many White Guys*, *The Read*, *Fresh Air*, and *NPR Politics*. Right now, she's quite immersed in the shows *Grace & Frankie*, *The Handmaid's Tale* and *The West Wing*. Once Shirley moves to NYC, her goal is to meet and befriend John Oliver.

**DICK WAGNER** was among the first dozen out elected officials in the country when elected to the Dane County Board of Supervisors in 1980. Governor Tony Earl appointed him in 1983 to co-chair the first-in-the-nation Governor's Council on Lesbian and Gay Issues. Since, he has served on the boards of the New Harvest Foundation, the Madison AIDS Network, UW LGBT Alumni, and Fair Wisconsin. A history Ph.D. from U.W.-Madison, he has been writing and presenting on gay history for a decade. The Wisconsin Historical Society is scheduled to publish his two volumes on Wisconsin gay history for the 50th anniversary of Stonewall.

**BETHAMIE WYATT** is a Milwaukee native with an extensive background in community health education. She is thrilled to bring this to Diverse & Resilient as its Prevention Program Manager. Bethamie obtained a master's degree in women's studies with a concentration in women's health from Eastern Michigan University in 2005. For over a decade, she has worked with nonprofits to provide community-based health education and programming serving marginalized communities. As a healing arts practitioner, she is excited about bringing holistic health practices to various communities and to aspects of her work in public health.

### CORRECTION

Contributor Alaura Seidl's name was spelled incorrectly in their story in the **May 2017** issue of the magazine, and we apologize sincerely for the mistake.

In the **March 2017** issue article titled "Becoming One" by Marcelle Richards, it read "I had been in communication with the artist, Kahuna kā uhi Keli'iokalani Makua...Makua graduated just after my departure and is now only the second living person to hold the title shared by his teacher." The information presented should be that Kahuna kā uhi Keli'iokalani Mākua, who heads Ka Pā 'O Hūnōhūnōholani in Waianae, HI, is the only person who holds this elevated title. Richards apologizes for the mistake.



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## Steph Tai

At my core, I'm really a big nerd. I also believe in trying to do what I can to help the world and my community. It's why I switched from researching atmospheric chemistry to practicing law, so that I could better advocate for environmental protection. Even though I now teach law fulltime at the U.W. Law School, I still do as much legal volunteer work as possible. I've written a number of amicus briefs in environmental cases, mainly before the Supreme Court and various federal appellate courts. One of my proudest moments was representing many prominent climate scientists in *Massachusetts v. EPA*, where the Supreme Court held that the Environmental Protection Agency could regulate greenhouse gas emissions under the Clean Air Act. And recently I worked with a group of environmental law professors to draft a regulatory comment to respond to the EPA's general proposal to withdraw existing environmental regulations.

It turns out that many of the same skills I have with regulatory and statutory interpretation can be used in other areas, so I've been trying to use those to help the LGBTQ community to which I belong. In the past, I've overseen students who helped provide background research for the legal briefing in *McConkey v. Van Hollen*, a challenge to the anti-same-sex marriage referendum in Wisconsin. We lost (alas), but at least my law students got a chance to tackle the various legal precedents that existed. And more recently, I was especially excited to serve on the U.W.-Madison Ad Hoc Committee on Equitable & Inclusive Health Care, which was charged with developing a university policy statement that better supports health care for HIV-positive and transgender members of the university community. I'm happy to say that—even with various state agency setbacks around withdrawing transgender healthcare coverage—the U.W.-Madison Faculty Senate unanimously approved a motion adopting our recommendations. Now, as one of the new co-chairs of the university LGBTQ faculty/staff/student committee, I'm working with the university administration to explore insurance top-up options to ensure that HIV antiviral drugs are more affordable under our insurance policy, and that transgender medical treatments are fully covered. A lot of this, in turn, entails looking at state and university regulations to see what is available. We'll see where this goes!

In the end, what I want to say is that there are many, many ways to help our community. Some of it is more in the public eye—taking leadership positions, rallying the community, building coalitions—and I absolutely admire those who can do that. But some of it is just really technical wonky stuff that also needs to be done. That's what I try to do, even though it's not really sexy at all. (I'm single, by the way!) Join me in the nerdtivist world.

**I'm working with the university administration to explore insurance top-up options to ensure that HIV antiviral drugs are more affordable under our insurance policy, and that transgender medical treatments are fully covered.**



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# Summer Baby

*Our Lives* turns 10 years old this month, 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.

**TEN YEARS AGO THIS MONTH**, *Our Lives* magazine was born in Madison. The brainchild of Publisher Patrick Farabaugh, the very first issue was very much a labor of love. It's no easy thing to launch a new print publication in the age of the Internet, but the Madison community quickly stepped up to offer invaluable support, input, and the vibrant color that makes the magazine what it is. We've since been proud and grateful to expand our reach somewhat more statewide, too, and as we look forward to the never-ending work of becoming more representative of Wisconsin's diverse LGBTQIA+ community, we take a moment to look back at where we've come from.

## 2007



**IN A QUEST TO PUT** down roots and build sustainable community, Patrick founded the Madison Gay Hockey Association—and it was that organization that played a critical role in the beginning of the magazine, too. It's why we featured the first "What Gay Hockey Means to Me" essay contest winner in that issue, and why we're happy to continue to do so each year.

We were also humbled to feature a piece by much-beloved community rock, Felicia Melton-Smyth, who talked about her experiences as a transgender woman of color

and as a community caregiver during the AIDS crisis. Her work was centered in the LGBTQ+ bar communities that were, especially then, so central to the scene.

In a bit of heart-wrenching foresight, Felicia hand delivered a letter to Patrick two weeks after he finished writing her feature in which she included instructions for its publication and her self-written obituary in the event that she should die before it went to print. We had to publish it in our first anniversary issue, after Felicia was murdered while on vacation just under a year later.

Kay Heggestad wrote on the significance of the PFLAG community, and we included one of the first of what would become our regular columns, *Our Issues*, as a way to help us deal with emotional stresses (that first column was written by Dale Decker).

## 2008



**OUR COVER STORY** featured Bob Bowers, a longtime HIV+ activist whose work centered on finding ways to turn the diagnosis into positive action and living for those impacted by the disease. We also

included as an emotionally powerful, raw, and surprisingly mature reflection on being recently diagnosed with HIV by a young man by the name of Dustin Smith. We were honored to feature the coming out story of Zachariah Strong, a transgender man of color—one of (if not the) first times that particular voice and lived experience was represented in the magazine.



The staff of Diverse & Resilient in 2011.

ROBERTO AMECCIA, PAUL SWANSON, JESS HORN, RACHEL CROWL, SAMANTHA DUTCHER, ERIC BAILLIES.

## 2009



**OUR FIRST ISSUE** to (somewhat unintentionally) hew to a Health & Wellness theme, our cover story featured the folks who brought the Asana Softball Tournament to Madison—possibly the biggest queer national event brought to the city. Kathy Flores and Ann Kendzierski wrote about dealing with Kathy's multiple sclerosis diagnosis and a legal system that didn't allow hospital visitation or medical decision-making rights for same-sex partners. Kathy and Ann testified in Fair Wisconsin's case pushing to secure domestic partnership rights and motivated many of their neighbors to donate to the cause. Brian Powers took a personal look back at 50 years of LGBTQ rights, setbacks, and victories with a unique narrative flair.

## 2010



**THE THEN CITY OF** Madison's Director of the Department of Civil Rights, Lucia Nuñez wrote in her cover story about her work and came out as a survivor of pancreatic cancer, and how that influenced her decision to work toward establishing genetic identity as a protected class. We talked to Henry Sanders on his run for Lt. Governor, and to attorney Lester Pines (of Pines Bach) about his decision to represent Bill McConkey pro bono in his lawsuit against the state that aimed to undo marriage inequality. The case was eventually



Plan B co-owner Corey Gresen in a 2010 fashion feature.

ERIC BAILLIES.

thrown out by the Wisconsin State Supreme Court for a lack of standing to bring the case, since Bill was not LGBTQ-identified.

Our Organizers piece profiled the folks behind Wisconsin Capitol Pride, which attempted to fill the gap left by the demise of Madison Pride the year prior. Historian Dick Wagner profiled "gay boulevardier" Ted Pierce, a Madison cultural fixture and fashion plate who also served as executive messenger to five governors, among other fascinating details. This was the first year that Kraft flew the rainbow flag for Pride over their corporate headquarters, representing one of the first major companies in the area to do so.

## 2011



**WE MOURNED** the loss of two much-loved community members with obituaries for both Nikki Baumblatt and Harry Straits, personal blows to many and also to OutReach, where both worked.

Though he'd been out to most of the people in his life, Craig Samitt, president and CEO of Dean Health System, came out publicly in

Wishing *Our Lives* a Happy 10th Anniversary!



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his feature for the magazine, wherein he also reflected on his life and work. We introduced the Madison community to the work of Milwaukee's Diverse & Resilient via its then-executive director, Gary Hollander.

## 2012



**HEALTH AND** wellness must involve a whole body and mind approach, so we were happy to feature Mare Chapman on the cover, talking about mindfulness and mental health. Septimiu Teodorescu (of Septi Fitness) wrote about his experience immigrating to the United States and pursuing his own version of the American Dream—and how working for a traveling circus initially brought him here! Our Taste column was our first real look at Michael Dix, owner of Michael's Frozen Custard, who would later go on to write a powerful cover narrative in a future issue.

## 2013



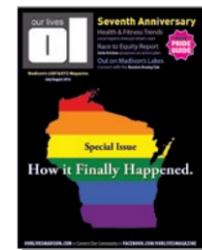
**TRIATHLETE COLLEEN** Capper graced this cover and reflected on her athletic journey, including becoming second in world for her age group in the famous Ironman Triathlon. Having just

joined the magazine staff earlier that same year, Emily Mills wrote a detailed piece on the state of LGBTQ health care and disparities, including the alarming statistic that only 30% of gay men were out to their primary care physicians—a number that remains largely unchanged to date. Cathy Noth wrote about her time playing volleyball with Team USA in the 1988 Olympics, struggling to reconcile her identity with a homophobic culture, overcoming alcoholism, and going on to become a coach.

Dick Wagner wrote about two-spirit people and their history in Wisconsin's native tribes, a subject and voice that we still recognize the magazine largely lacks (we are always looking for like-identified folks to write about this perspective!). Pride in Healthcare, an LGBTQ+ affinity group

within the U.W.'s medical school, rolled out their LGBTQ "friendliness" toolkit/guide for physicians. We also introduced Rep. Mark Pocan as regular columnist, and continue to be grateful to have that direct connection to our representative in the U.S. Congress right here in the magazine.

## 2014



**THE BIG NEWS** that month was the establishment of marriage equality in Wisconsin. News broke from Judge Barbara Crabb's ruling very late in our publication schedule but thanks to many

helping hands we were able to include lots of content about the win, including information about the legal implications, personal reflections, a timeline of the legal fight, a list of the first couples to legally wed in Dane County, and more.

Alex Hanna wrote about her experience playing roller derby and how that community helped her embrace being transgender, supported her transition, and rekindled a love for physical activity lost after toxic masculinity and homophobia drove her away from high school wrestling. Alex now plays for Toronto's all-star roller derby team! Vered "Gypsy" Melzter became the first trans person elected to office in Wisconsin (as an alder in Appleton), Linda Ketchum addressed the Race to Equity Report through a queer lens, and OutReach took over the Pride parade, which they've successfully run ever since.

## 2015



**WE DELVED INTO** the world of gay football player Dalton Ray, who came out while playing for Edgerton High School. AIDS Network announced its merger with ARCW, which we took a closer

look at in this issue. Margaret Kucera wrote a deeply personal story about growing up athletic and closeted, and the struggles she faced and discrimination endured as a star basketball player. Brian Juchems of GSAFE

wrote a powerful and honest Intersections piece on "Getting Past Good," about how good people can and still do harbor biases, and how we all might approach the self-reflection needed to work past them.

## 2016



**ANOTHER LATE**-breaking piece of news dramatically altered our plans for the issue, only this time it was for heartbreaking reasons. The massacre at Pulse Nightclub in Orlando took the lives

of 49 people—mostly LGBTQ and Latinx, and left the entire queer community reeling. Diego Campoverde, Alex Hanna, William Frahm-Gilles, and John Smallwood shared reflections on the tragedy and its impact on their lives and the wider community. We took a reader poll asking for people's first gay bar experiences and received an outpouring of memories of places that served as crucial lifelines and safe spaces for many—a concept that felt deeply violated in the wake of the shooting.

Karma Chavez penned a piece on resisting the attempts to divide and pit marginalized communities against one another, as well as calling out media erasure of the (LGBTQ and Latinx) identities of those who were killed in Orlando. It's an issue and point that feels all-too relevant even today.

## 2017



**HERE WE ARE**, 10 years later. It feels a bit like the Little Magazine That Could. In the face of both a difficult publishing economy and a society still ambivalent at best and actively antagonistic at worst

to LGBTQ media and people, *Our Lives* continues to grow each year. Why? Because of you. None of what our small staff does would be possible without the incredible support of our community—whether that's through the businesses who advertise with us, the people who share their stories and expertise in our pages, our readers, and so on. From the bottoms of our hearts, thank

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ourlivesmadison.com/magazine

you. We will continue to do this work for as long as we can, because holding space for LGBTQ+ voices and experiences from a wide array of backgrounds and perspectives is still so crucial to helping our community not just survive, but thrive.

In this issue, we are incredibly excited and grateful to include the first-ever Queer People of Color Pride List (#QPOCPride), compiled and reported by stalwart freelance reporter Amber Walker. We're thrilled to feature people both known and new to the magazine's pages, and we hope our readers will learn much from them and their unique experiences. This is just the first run at the idea, and we hope to only expand the reach of the list in the future, including support for events where the folks featured can meet and network. Centering and lifting up the voices and leadership of people of color absolutely must be a priority both here at *Our Lives* and in the greater LGBTQ+ community.

There's a whole lot more good content in this issue, but instead of continuing to summarize it here, we hope you'll keep turning the pages to read on. Share the issue with a friend. Encourage someone you know to sign up for our (free!) subscriptions. Reach out to share your own stories and recommendations. Let's keep up this work, together, for another 10+ years. ■

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Growing Together

Publisher Patrick Farabaugh shares the personal journey he's been on to create a magazine that's truly representative of our diverse community.

FOR THE PAST 10 YEARS it's been my tradition to reread my publisher's note from our first tiny black and white issue.

THE EARLY YEARS

As cliché as it sounds, the first few years of Our Lives were a real rollercoaster of stress and celebration. We launched just a few months before the Great Recession hit...



When we launched, I don't think there was a way to prepare me for the anti-LGBTQ hate we encountered.

by anonymous homophobes at our distribution locations downtown. Their consistent tampering mandated a weekly routine of walking our 'paper route' to flip over the stacks of magazines...

The other major challenge we faced came from inside the community. Understandably, in the early years it felt I was swimming upstream to earn our community's trust.

'This isn't my coming out story, but it is part of Our Lives' coming out: I was at the Shamrock Bar the night that Patrick dropped off the first issue of the magazine...

PHOTO BY ERIC BAULLES.

he didn't expect Our Lives to last a year in business when I approached him about advertising. In those years what kept both me and Our Lives going was a deep belief in our mission...

The highs have always been stronger than the lows, though. I did have a few angels appear, as I've often described them during those first two years. The magazine had an amazing way of reaching and touching people in the community that compelled them to get involved...

A RELATIONSHIP EVOLVES

Like any relationship, trust has to be earned over time. Over the years, I am deeply grateful for the trust Our Lives has been given. It has been one of the greatest honors of my life to watch the magazine become embraced across our community...

All of this brings us to where we are today. Because of this magazine, I have been blessed with an opportunity to learn and grow with you. The road hasn't been without potholes and missed turns...



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## Young Pioneer

Kenosha's Ashton Whitaker went to court to ensure his and other transgender students' rights to use school facilities that match their gender identities—and won.

**ASHTON WHITAKER** hadn't set out to make history, but the 17-year-old Kenosha high school student has done just that, winning a case that will have wide-reaching implications for transgender students across the upper Midwest.

Ashton's case arose when his school refused to let him use the boys' restroom, in accordance with his gender identity. He won his initial case before a U.S. District Judge, but Kenosha Unified School District appealed the decision, claiming that any harm to Ashton was minimal compared to the alleged harm to other boys sharing facilities with him.

The 7th Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals dis-

agreed, and the three-judge panel ruled unanimously in favor of Ashton and other students like him. Judge Ann Claire Williams wrote, "The harms identified by the school district are all speculative and based upon conjecture, whereas the harms to Ash are well-documented and supported by the record. As a consequence, we affirm the grant of preliminary injunctive relief."

The 7th Circuit covers Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana.

"I am thrilled that the Seventh Circuit recognized my right to be treated as the boy that I am at school," Whitaker said in a statement released by the Transgender Law Center, which helped

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JULY 20

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**Date:** August 20  
**Time:** 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM  
**Where:** Red Elephant Chocolate  
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Our Pre-Pride Parade Brunch features a light brunch of various chocolate specialties including chocolate-covered bacon! Each guest receives one mimosa with registration, additional available for purchase.

Guests in attendance will receive 10% off Red Elephant Chocolate purchases.

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bring his case. “After facing daily humiliation at school last year—from being threatened with discipline and being constantly monitored by school staff just to use the bathroom, the district court’s injunction in September allowed me to be a typical senior in high school and to focus on my classes, after-school activities, applying to college, and building lasting friendships.”

We’re thrilled to feature Ash and his personal story in the Our Future Leaders column at the back of this issue.

The wider legal implications for the case are far-reaching. This was the first case in which a federal appeals court recognized the right of a transgender student to use the bathroom facilities that align with their gender identity. The court did not rely on President Obama’s guidelines to school districts on how to interpret Title IX, which provides protections based on sex, guidance that was later withdrawn by President Trump.

Kenosha Unified has since decided to ask the United States Supreme Court to hear the case. The district’s lawyers have until



late August to file the appeal.

Ash came out as transgender to his parents when he was in 8th grade, and says most of his peers reacted positively

to his public transition. He used the boys’ bathroom at Tremper High School as a new freshman for six months, without incident, until school administrators told him he could only use the girls’ restroom or a gender neutral bathroom located in the main office. Ash refused, risking discipline, while also severely limiting his fluid intake so as to avoid having to use the facilities at all. It led to fainting and dizziness.

When the school continued to refuse to let Ash use the correct restroom unless he “completed” his gender transition first, with help from the Transgender Law Center, he and his mother sued. The final ruling came just one week before Ash graduated from high school. ■



## LGBTQ Organizations Update

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

Reported by **Emily Mills**

### NEWS

*Important notes about area LGBTQ groups*

**FAIR WISCONSIN** Wisconsin’s LGBTQ rights organization welcomes new board members: Candice Cole (Mequon), Jessica Polacek (La Crosse), and Kristene Stacker (Weyauwega).

**GSAFE** GSAFE recently organized the first Northwoods Youth Leadership Summit, which brought together high school students and staff from Ashland and Superior School Districts for a day of community building and allyship development. The event was hosted by Messiah Lutheran Church in Washburn. GSAFE wishes to thank PFLAG Washburn and the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction for their support of this project. Plans are afoot for a similar

gathering this fall. Please contact info@gsafe-wi.org for more info.

The Foundations of Leadership class is expanding. A collaboration between GSAFE and the Madison Metropolitan School District for the past three years, FOL has brought together students from Madison high schools for a weekly, off-site class. Starting with the 2017–18 school year, the class will be taught daily at Madison’s East High school in addition to the weekly, off-site class. FOL is a leadership class focused on the experiences of LGBTQ+ youth of color.

**LGBT BOOKS TO PRISONERS** The group is excited to announce the generous support of a number of new organizations and individuals. The U.W.-Madison Department of Afro-American Studies and various students from College

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

Library collected great books on their behalf and they’re excited to include them in book packages. The group is also grateful for partnerships with local bookstores, and they’re excited that Mystery to Me has donated brand-new, soft-cover advanced reader copies for folks. They’d also like to thank those who have sent them numerous high-priority books from their Amazon and Room of One’s Own wishlists, including some of the most-needed books on the Black Panthers and art/drawing.

**MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY CLUB** The team finished up their spring season with a strong showing at the inaugural North American East gay rugby tournament in Philadelphia, coming in second in their division.

**OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER** Executive Director Steve Starkey will represent OutReach and the LGBTQ community as a board member of United Against Hate—We Are Many. The organization “desires a nation that is not divided between white, black, brown, Hispanic, Muslim, Jewish, LGBT and numerous other groups.” The organization believes people of different ethnic backgrounds, genders, skin colors, religions, and belief systems should join this movement to help fight against hateful speech and actions.

## Democratic legislators introduce slate of pro-LGBTQ bills



**DISCRIMINATION AGAINST** transgender and gender non-conforming Wisconsinites would be prohibited under a new bill introduced by Democratic legislators.

Reps. **Mark Spreitzer** (D-Beloit) and **JoCasta Zamarripa** (D-Milwaukee), as well as Sen. **Tim Carpenter**, are pushing for bipartisan support for and passage of their Privacy Protection and Gender Identity Anti-Discrimination Act, currently in circulation for co-sponsorship. Members of the transgender community joined Rep. Spreitzer to share their stories about the need for this important legislation at a press conference early in June, also LGBTQ Pride month.

The lawmakers note that, “As with other legally protected groups, this bill rests on the simple concept that transgender people are people, and should be treated equally under the law. No one should be discriminated against based on a core part of who they are. The bill will provide critical protections in areas such as employment, housing, public accommodations, job services, the UW system, Wisconsin Technical College system, public or charter schools, health insurance, car insurance, jury duty, and the Wisconsin national guard.”

“In Wisconsin we have a rich history of leadership on issues of nondiscrimination and today we seek to continue that tradition by including critical legal protections for the transgender community in our state law,” said Rep. Spreitzer.

Also present to support the bill was **Loree Cook-Daniels**, FORGE Policy and Program Director.

“There are approximately 58,000 Wisconsinites who are transgender or non-binary. All we ask is that people treat us with respect and judge us as individuals rather than assuming we are stereotypes,” Cook-Daniels said.

Colonel (ret) **Sheri Swokowski**, Fair Wisconsin Education Fund Vice Chair & ACLU of Wisconsin Board of Directors Member, as well as **Sarah McBride**, Human Rights Campaign National Press Secretary, also spoke in support of the legislation.



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## Sun Prairie passes LGBTQ non-discrimination ordinance

**AFTER A LENGTHY PUBLIC** comment session that drew several out-of-town anti-equality groups to testify against it, a LGBTQ non-discrimination ordinance passed the Sun Prairie City Council in a 5 to 3 vote. Spearheaded by the city's diversity commission, which includes resident Ginger Baier of OutReach, the ordinance aims to expand employment and facility protections to include gender identity and expression.

An outpouring of support from residents of Sun Prairie and beyond helped push the ordinance through, with many council members expressing open support as well.



Anti-equality protester

## Local man takes star turn on this season's "Bachelorette"

**REGULAR OF FIVE NIGHTCLUB's** volleyball scene, Peter Kraus is one of the top contestants on ABC's popular reality series "The Bachelorette" this season. The Madison native, 31, is the owner of WORTH personal training. He graduated from Madison College in 2010 with an Associate of Science in Dietetics/Dietician and is also a volunteer for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. The season is especially notable for its Bachelorette, who is the first African-American woman to appear in that role on the show.



Kraus

## American Family raises the LGBT Pride flag over world headquarters

**AMERICAN FAMILY** once again raised a rainbow Pride flag for the month of June to show support for the LGBT community. In 2016 American Family Insurance was the first Dane County business to earn a perfect score of 100 percent on the Corporate Equality Index (CEI), a national benchmarking report on corporate policies and practices related to LGBT workplace equality, administered by the Human Rights Campaign Foundation.



**U.W. PRESS** Among the U.W. Press's current top-selling and widely reviewed books is *Money, Murder, and Dominick Dunne: A Life in Several Acts* by Robert Hofler, our biography of Dominick Dunne, including a full discussion of his gay life. Also Lucy Bledsoe's novel, about her gay namesake aunt, continues to do well and was nominated for a Lambda book award. Upcoming: a memoir by gay poet Rigoberto Gonzalez. Our Living Out series continues to be the only series in the world of course devoted to LGBT memoirs.

Bledsoe's novel is called *A Thin Bright Line*. It was a runner-up for a Publishing Triangle fiction award.

Anne-Christine d'Adesky, a pioneering AIDS journalist and activist, looks back at the 1990s in her memoir *The Pox Lover*. Amy Hoffman's *The Off Season* is also on our upcoming

list. It's a wonderful, comical-but-poignant lesbian romance set in Provincetown. It might be interesting at some future date to do a story on the U.W. Press's growing list of lesbian fiction.

### AWARDS / RECOGNITION / GRANTS

*Special thanks for those who do good.*

**AGRACE HOSPICE & PALLIATIVE CARE** One of Agrace's employees, **Cass Downing**, has gone above and beyond for two years organizing the "Girls with Grace: Care for All Fundraiser" drag show extravaganza at FIVE Nightclub. All proceeds went to benefit Agrace's Care for All Fund—which ensures everyone has access to compassionate end-of-



Downing

life care. The first year in 2016 raised \$2,853, and this year's show (which took place April 8) raised \$5,000! Agrace would like to thank Cass for her amazing act of generosity!

**FAIR WISCONSIN** The group honors retiring board member and past chair, **Jason Rae**, for his leadership and incredible dedication to equality under the law. Jason started on the Fair Wisconsin board in March of 2008. His service of 9 years and 3 months is so greatly appreciated.



Rae

**STAGEQ** StageQ would like to make a special shout-out to outgoing Graphic Designer, **Reg Mortimer**. Reg has been working with the company for over three years and has done some amazing design work, even winning a Bartell Community Theater Award for his design of the "Finding Human" poster in 2015. "Congratulations on your future endeavors, Reg. We will miss you!"

**TRANSLIBERATION ART COALITION** A huge thank you to our sponsors from the 2017 Spring Show: Outreach, Just Bakery, **Dr. Erica Rotondo** of Serenity Osteopathic, Willy St. Co-op, and Best Cleaners of Madison.

And a huge thank you to the High Noon Saloon who continues to host our events at an incredibly reasonable and accessible price.

**U.W.-MADISON SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK** The department wishes to recognize and congratulate the LGBTQ members of its graduating class. For the Masters of Science in Social Work: **Jess Draws**, **Andrea Mitchell**, **Kelly Quilty**, and **Sierra Widule**. For the Bachelors of Science in Social Work: **Aurelio Espino** and **Josephine Shabbit**.

### STAFF / BOARD CHANGES

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

**CREAM CITY FOUNDATION** The Milwaukee-based LGBTQ philanthropic organization's board of directors selected Monona resident **Brett Blomme** to serve as its next President & CEO. Brett will oversee all day-to-day operations of the Foundation, including its convening, grant-making, and philanthropic initiatives and assumed his duties on June 5.



Blomme

"The board is very pleased to welcome Brett as our leader," said Eric Peterson, Chair of the Cream City Foundation Board of Directors. "His passion for philanthropy is contagious. Brett believes that philanthropy has the power to bring people together, transform

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lives and make meaningful, positive change within communities.”

Brett has nearly 15 years of experience in philanthropy, community organizing, law and nonprofit management. He currently serves as the Director of Major Gifts for the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin (ARCW). Prior to ARCW, he worked on campaigns for Congresswoman Gwen Moore and Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, in addition to Fair Wisconsin. Brett has a B.A. in Political Science from Marquette University and a J.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia.

### DIVERSE & RESILIENT

D&R welcomes **LaMarshall Harris** and **Lorenzo Rivas** as HIV/STI Counseling, Testing & Referral staff. Both men know the Milwaukee community well and will continue D&R's outreach efforts to encourage men of color to get tested for HIV/STIs on a regular basis, and consider PrEP as an HIV prevention tool.

**Jessica Ginster** has joined D&R as Development Coordinator. Jessica previously did development work for the Wisconsin Bike Federation and Mental Health America of Wisconsin.

### MILWAUKEE LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

The newest board members are **Blake McKinney**, **Carmen Pitre**, **Tony Snell-Rodriguez**, and **Vincent Withers** (all member-elected seats). Staff who transitioned out are **George Giannaras**, Youth Programs Coordinator; and **Devin Thomas**, Anti-Violence Program Manager.

### OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER

**BOARD RECRUITMENT:** OutReach is looking for passionate, energetic, hardworking people to grow our board of directors. LGBTQ people of color, people who are disabled, women, people who are transgender and/or gender non-conforming, people of varying faiths and backgrounds are welcomed and encouraged to apply. Anyone who is interested should reach out to Steve Starkey at [steves@lgbtoutreach.org](mailto:steves@lgbtoutreach.org) or call 608-255-8582.

### PFLAG MADISON

The local PFLAG chapter president is **Lora Schmid-Dolan**, with president-elect **Susie Murray**, and past-president **Jeanne Williams**. The treasurer is **Susie Murray**, and current board members include **Joanne Lee**, **Sandra Feria**, and **Paul Wertsch**.

### STAGEQ

**Brian Belz** has joined the theater company as volunteer Bookkeeper. They are very pleased to welcome him. **Sara Beth Hahner** and **Dawn Bankers** have been elected to the board.

**Dino Maniaci** is the new Graphic Designer, and **Thomas Valley** is the new Webmaster.

### TRANSLIBERATION ART COALITION

We've put together a board of directors to increase our diversity of leadership. The coalition is honored to welcome **T. K. Morton**, **Rhea Ewing**, and **Steven Sullivan**. We look forward to taking on additional board members at the end of this year. We are specifically seeking queer people of color and transwomen of color.

### CALLS TO ACTION

*Where and how you can help*

### DIVERSE & RESILIENT

There is a new group for parents of transgender, gender non-conforming, or gender non-binary children starting in the Fox Valley. The group will be led by parents and **Kathy Flores** of D&R. Please contact Kathy at 414-343-9032 or [kflores@diverseandresilient.org](mailto:kflores@diverseandresilient.org) for more information.

### FAIR WISCONSIN

The legislative session is underway, and there are already several positive LGBTQ bills that have been introduced: a ban on the practice of conversion therapy for minors, a bill to update the state laws to conform with the U.S. Supreme Court decision granting the freedom to marry to same-sex couples, a bill to begin the process to repeal our state constitution's ban on marriage equality, and a bill to add gender identity and expression to our state anti-discrimination laws. Visit [fairwisconsin.com/action](http://fairwisconsin.com/action) for more information on how to get involved.

### GSAFE

The group is looking for volunteers for its October 15 Trick or Trot 5K Walk/Run in downtown Madison. Volunteer opportunities include day-of event course marshals, registration, and water tables. School and community groups and businesses are encouraged to sponsor trick or treat candy stations. More info at [gsafe.org](http://gsafe.org) or by emailing [info@gsafe.org](mailto:info@gsafe.org).

### LGBT BOOKS TO PRISONERS

In a recently received letter to the organization, the envelope had a written message saying, "I am who I am & I am PROUD OF IT. #LGBTALOVENOREGRET." This beautiful message from a gay man in California was a reminder of "why we do the work we do—to support LGBT people in prison and work against the prison system. We cannot change who we are, and we will not."

You can help them work towards that goal. The group is currently looking for any dona-

## South-Central Lutheran Synod of Wisconsin officially embraces LGBTQ community



**AT ITS ANNUAL ASSEMBLY**, ELCA Lutherans in southern Wisconsin affirmed their work of the church as welcoming and open to all, particularly emphasizing inclusion of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions.

By a nearly unanimous vote, the synod chose to identify as Reconciling in Christ, the term for congregations that have adopted a statement of welcome for all people, with specific inclusion of LGBTQ+ people. The approximately 350 voting members adopted this statement for the synod: "Following Jesus, who commanded his followers: 'Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another,' and believing that all persons are created in the image of God, the South-Central Synod of Wisconsin strives to be fully inclusive for all. This synod welcomes people of every race, background, age, political affiliation, economic and social status, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and mental and physical ability and strives to enable all people to participate fully in the life and work of the church and its expressions."

Synod Bishop Mary Froiland celebrated the affirmation by saying, "Of course, it should go without saying that all are welcome in the church as they are, but in today's culture where hate speech is rampant and acts of discrimination and violence continue against our LGBTQ+ siblings, it is important and necessary to make a public statement of solidarity and full inclusion. I am proud to be a part of a church that says 'Yes!' when so much of the world says 'No!'"

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tions related to gay fiction and bi books, as well as volunteers to help select books that match the requests of queer and trans people in prison. Please join them every Monday and Tuesday in the basement of the Social Justice Center (1202 Williamson St.) from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., as well as Saturday mornings, to help fulfill book orders. A full calendar is found on their website (lgbtbookstoprisoners.org), along with information about donating books.

**OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER** The center will host a fundraiser on July 13 at the Mendota House from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. in support of the Rainbow Railroad, an organization dedicated to fighting LGBT persecution worldwide and assisting LGBT refugees escaping violence, including Chechen refugees facing an anti-gay purge.

**STAGEQ** The company will be introducing an Education & Outreach program for children and adults to participate in workshops to learn about various aspects of theater work; everything from stage managing to acting to set design. They are very fortunate to have board member Bri Mueller heading up the committee. Bri is a teacher by profession and comes with a curric-

ulum already in place. Look for the announcement coming soon.

**TRANSLIBERATION ART COALITION** We're currently planning our 2017 Fall Show, which will be very much like our 2017 Spring Show. We are also launching a fundraising campaign that will allow us to rent a much larger venue for our 2018 Spring Show, which we want to be a regional event attracting artists, vendors and performers from around the Midwest. With enough funds, we would also be able to make travel grants available with priority being awarded to queer people of color. Diversity doesn't happen all on its own, the coalition takes responsibility for finding ways to reach all communities and provide equal platforms to all. Please consider donating to our cause: [gofundme.com/transliberationartcoalition](http://gofundme.com/transliberationartcoalition).

**YELLOW BRICK ROAD ORGANIZATION** The newly formed Janesville/Beloit-area LGBTQ+ group is seeking to expand and grow, and is looking for individuals who would like to volunteer and/or serve on our board. If interested, contact Marilyn at (608) 774-8639 or [marilyn@attentivecs.com](mailto:marilyn@attentivecs.com).

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

*Plan ahead to join in*

**FAIR WISCONSIN August 13** (11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.): Garden Party for Equality, the annual signature summer fundraising event in the Milwaukee-area. Join FW in the beautiful surroundings of Will Radler's world-class Rosarium gardens, as we celebrate the group's recent victories and look toward the future of LGBTQ equality in Wisconsin. Special guest speakers and entertainment to be announced. RSVP: [fairwisconsin.com](http://fairwisconsin.com).

**August 20** Madison Pride Parade, proud to co-sponsor with OutReach and others. Come march with them, RSVP: [fairwisconsin.com](http://fairwisconsin.com).

**GSAFE** The LGBTQ+ youth organization will hold its 18th annual Leadership Training Institute for high school activists at UWM **July 27-30**. The four-day camp brings together 40 youth leaders from across the state to build the next generation of leaders for educational and social justice in Wisconsin schools and communities. GSAFE also hosts "Captured," an art exhibition and related programming at the Overture Center for the Arts (Gallery II) from **June 13 through**

**September 3**. Captured is a series of photographs taken of youth inside the Dane County Juvenile Detention Center in Madison. The series hopes to expose the general community to what life is like for incarcerated youth in Dane County—including LGBTQ+ youth of color—while at the same time creating a visual narrative that documents and humanizes what racial disparity looks like in present-day Dane County. The photographs were taken by artist Amber Sowards in collaboration with Ali Muldrow of GSAFE's New Narrative Project, and will be on display from **June 13 through September 3** with a series of free public events in July. This exhibition is made possible by GSAFE, Justified Art!, and the Overture Center. Related programming is free, open, and accessible to the public:

**Exhibition Reception:** Friday, July 14, 6:00-8:00 p.m. | Promenade Lounge

**Screening of 13TH:** Wednesday, July 19, 6:30-8:30 p.m. | Promenade Hall

**Panel Discussion:** Wednesday, July 26, 6:30-8:00 p.m. | Promenade Hall

**INTELLECTUAL RATCHET** The social and networking group for people of color and friends holds events on the **first Friday** of August at the Nomad World Pub (formerly the Cardinal Bar), and the **second Friday** in July at Tavernakaya. Events are free for members and include sunset cocktail parties, hitting up the Madison Night Market, and their annual rooftop party on **July 21** (proceeds from that event will go to benefit Pivotal Transition, helping Madison youth look to the future while giving back to their communities). Find out how to become a member at [intellectualratchet.com](http://intellectualratchet.com).

**LGBT OF WALWORTH COUNTY** LGBT of Walworth County is hosting a Pride Fair on **August 19** in Elkhorn from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at 203 E. Walworth St. They encourage the community to come out in support of the LGBTQ+ community, meet, and get to know LGBTQ+ friendly businesses and organizations from Walworth County and across the state. If you or your organization/business is interested in being part of the event, contact the organizers at [jodylynn@lgbtwalco.com](mailto:jodylynn@lgbtwalco.com).

**MADISON MINOTAURS RUGBY CLUB** Outdoor practices will resume in July. Check out our Facebook page at [facebook.com/madisonminotaurs](http://facebook.com/madisonminotaurs) or website for updates. If you are interested in joining the team mail us at [info@madisonminotaurs.com](mailto:info@madisonminotaurs.com) for more information. New players are always welcome!

**OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER** On **July 13** the LGBT Senior Alliance is hosting their annual summer picnic at the Vilas Park West shelter

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## MG&E expands options and support for electric vehicles

**THE APPEAL OF ELECTRIC** vehicles (EVs) continues to spread. For some drivers, it's about the environment. For others, it's about running on cutting-edge technology or saving on fuel and maintenance. With advances in technology, today's EVs offer a longer range, making them more appealing to more drivers.

Madison Gas and Electric (MGE) has partnered to help grow the use of electric vehicles in our community. MGE's extensive network of public charging stations operates on 100% wind energy. MGE also works with multifamily managers and developers, and employers to install EV chargers for tenants and employees. Partnerships such as these help MGE learn how to better serve customers' needs and how to best integrate new technologies as we build a more advanced electric grid.

Charge@Home makes owning an EV even more convenient for MGE customers. Through the program, MGE installs, owns and operates ChargePoint Home Level 2 chargers at participants' homes. These chargers can charge EV batteries up to six times faster than a standard 120-volt electrical outlet. For example, it can cut the time to recharge a fully depleted EV battery in a Nissan LEAF® to just four hours. Participants pay a monthly fee of \$20 plus the cost of their electricity usage. There is no upfront charge for standard installation.

The program allows MGE learn more about the impact of EV charging on the distribution system while advancing new technologies as outlined in our Energy 2030 framework. Under Energy 2030, MGE is working with customers to reduce carbon emissions by 40% from 2005 levels by 2030. Learn more about the benefits of Charge@Home by visiting [mge.com](http://mge.com).



MGE's new Charge@Home program makes charging easy with a ChargePoint Home Level 2 charger installed at customers' homes.

## LAW CENTER ATTORNEY ELECTED AS VICE PRESIDENT OF INTERNATIONAL ACADEMY

Attorney Emily Dudak Taylor of The Law Center for Children & Families has been elected as Vice President of the American Academy of Adoption Attorneys (AAAA) and the American Academy of Assisted Reproductive Technology Attorneys (AAARTA), now known as one academy, the Academy of Adoption and Assisted Reproduction Attorneys (AAAA). The Academy is the premier association of family formation attorneys with over 480 highly vetted members across the United States and around the world. Emily became a fellow in AAAA and AAARTA in 2011.

Emily is excited to bring her experience with immigrant children and LGBT families to the Academy's critical work on behalf of children and families around the world.

The Law Center for Children & Families practices statewide in the following areas: adoption, assisted reproduction, custody, child support, divorce, dissolution, and separation, foster parent and grandparent rights, guardianships, life and estate planning, probate, school law, and LGBT issues.



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## OutReach and coalition issue statement against Trump Administration

**DONALD TRUMP CAMPAIGNED** on being supportive of the LGBT community. Analyzing whether that was true or an empty campaign promise, so far, is often overshadowed by unrelated policy shifts and nearly constant news from the White House.

Since Trump was sworn in as president in January there have been so many controversial news stories. Trump has signed more than 35 executive orders, and several have been halted in court. Banning immigration from six mostly Muslim countries to building a wall on the Mexican border and replacing Obamacare are just a few of the topics that dominated the headlines in the first 100 days of his presidency. The investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 election and recent firing of FBI Director James Comey have also added to the chaos in the early part of Trump's presidency. While these attacks have not been specifically aimed at the LGBT community, they nevertheless stand to deeply impact and disrupt the lives of LGBT Muslims and undocumented individuals and families. An attack on one member of the LGBT community is an attack on all of us.

Additionally, there have been several laws and policies passed since he was inaugurated that have negatively affected the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) community.

Here are some of the anti-LGBT actions that have taken place these past four months:

- The Trump administration removed all mention of LGBT issues from the White House website as soon as he took office.
- Trump has appointed many anti-LGBT members to all levels of federal government. Jeff Sessions, Tom Price, Ben Carson, Neil Gorsuch, Betsy DeVos all have a history of support for anti-LGBT policies.
- The Department of Justice dropped its defense of Obama-era protections for transgender students. Trump then signed an executive order rolling back Title IX guidance that required public school protections for transgender students.
- In March, the Census Bureau removed sexual orientation and gender identity from the list of topics for potential inclusion on the 2020 census. Several senators are demanding answers on whether this was due to political interference by the Trump Administration.
- The Department of Health and Human Services eliminated questions about sexual orientation and gender identity on two critical health surveys about the needs of elderly and disabled people.
- The federal Justice Department dropped its lawsuit against North Carolina over the state's replaced "bathroom bill."
- It is important to note that there have also been some victories for LGBT rights this year.
- In an historic decision, the 7th Circuit Court in Chicago ruled that the Civil Rights Act of 1965 protects lesbian and gay employees from discrimination. This is the first time a federal court has ruled on this issue, which now protects LGBT people in states that do not have LGBT non-discrimination laws.
- An early leaked version of the Religious Freedom executive order included pages of anti-LGBT policies, but after citizens pushed back, they were not included in the final bill.
- The Georgia legislature failed to change House Bill 159 which would have allowed state-funded adoption agencies that did not wish to work with LGBT couples.
- Here in the Madison area, Sun Prairie passed a non-discrimination law protecting transgender people in housing, employment and public accommodation.

LGBT people and our allies must remain more vigilant than ever now. We must continue to be aware of legislation aimed at rolling back our hard fought rights, and we must fight to keep those laws in place. We must also continue to advance laws that will give us more protections.

LGBT organizations must collaborate, cooperate and work in coalitions so our voices are amplified and we build synergy and power in order to take on the right-wing revolution that intends to crush us and roll back all of the rights we have won.

Steve Starkey, OutReach LGBT Community Center  
Morathi Adams, Freedom Inc.  
Jay Botsford, WI Transgender Health Coalition

Megin McDonell, Fair Wisconsin  
Brian Juchems, GSAFE  
Sande Janagold, New Harvest Foundation

from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. Info at [lgbtseniors.org](http://lgbtseniors.org).

**Pride Parade Fundraisers:** OutReach is working with Madison Mallards on a fundraiser and you can purchase tickets for their **July 21** game to be a part of it. On **August 6** FIVE Nightclub will host its Pride King & Queen show/fundraiser with proceeds also going to benefit the Pride Parade. On August 16 the Majestic Theater is hosting a film screening of Freedom to Marry. Woof's Block Party is **Saturday, August 19**.

OutReach's 4th Annual Pride Parade and Rally is scheduled for **Sunday, August 20**. See the pride special insert for more information!

OutReach Pride Parade does not accept money or sponsorship from tobacco corporations and will not allow any distribution of samples of tobacco products.

**RAINBOW RAILROAD** In response to the violence and persecution of sexual minorities in Chechnya, LGBTQ community members in Dane County have scheduled a fundraiser for Rainbow Railroad, a Canadian human rights project.

Organizers are recruiting sponsors and collecting donations for the event, Friends of Rainbow Railroad, to be held from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. on **July 13**, at the Mendota Lake House, 704 East Gorham Street, in Madison. The event will be hosted by OutReach, south-central Wisconsin's LGBTQ social service organization.

Rainbow Railroad is a volunteer, charitable organization focused sexual minority refugees, is registered with the Canadian government and is based in Toronto. One hundred percent of the contributions to this effort will be directed to OutReach and on to Rainbow Railroad.

Checks and call-in credit card payments are welcomed: OutReach, Inc., 2701 International Ln., #101, Madison, WI 53704 (608) 255-8582, [info@lgbtoutreach.org](mailto:info@lgbtoutreach.org), [lgbtoutreach.org](http://lgbtoutreach.org) Please write "Rainbow Railroad" in the memo.

**STAGEQ** The theater company will be hosting a fundraising event for Gays Against Guns the **week of Madison Pride** in honor of the Pulse Nightclub tragedy a year ago. Exact date, time, and location TBD.

**TRANSLIBERATION ART COALITION** The group's 2017 Fall Show, featuring art and work by transgender and non-binary artists and makers, will be held on **Sunday, August 27** at the High Noon Saloon from 12:00 to 5:00 p.m.

**YELLOW BRICK ROAD ORGANIZATION** The Janesville-area LGBTQ+ group hosts a game night **every third Wednesday** at 400 E. Grand Ave in Beloit. Free. ■

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READERS' POLL

## Coming Out

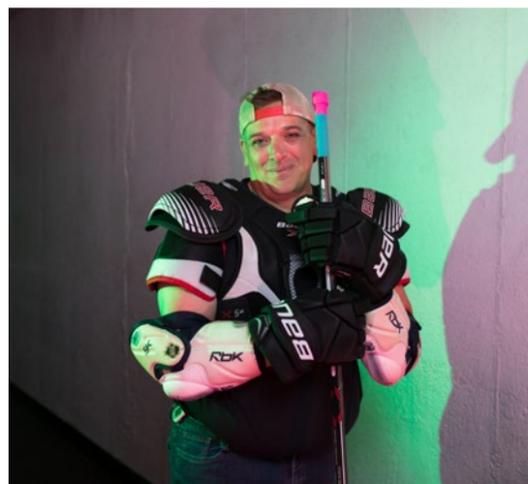
Out of the closets and into the streets, in honor of Pride *Our Lives* readers share their stories of self-discovery and public proclamation.

**ERIN C.** When I told my mom I 1) had a girlfriend and 2) dated a married couple, she freaked out and told me she figured I was a lesbian because I “seem to hate men so much.” I never really shook that one—coming out is such a tender experience. How people react matters more than they may know.

However, when I told my friends in grad school at the time, fearing judgment, one of my buddies chuckled and said, “Erin, tell me tell you about the first time I hooked up with a couple.” And I realized my relationship was a pretty normal, if under-divulged one in our society. It’s important to protect yourself and come out on your own terms, but it’s really also best never to assume that others will condemn you. I was lucky in that I encountered so much effortless support!

**NATHAN PRINCE** I was 17 or 18 and my little sister came home wanting to show me that game with the folded paper where you pick a number and a color and it tells you your fortune (really, it’s just insults), and I ended up with “you’re gay!” I paused, knowing this is how homophobia starts, and replied, “I know. So?” She paused, thought about it, and said, “Okay, well—pick another one!”

**MEGHAN R.** I’m a bisexual, female-identified human in a poly-amorous relationship. This is how my dad came to know those things about me: Before I met my girlfriend, I posted a status on Facebook about bisexual pride day, basically coming out as bi-online. My dad saw that and sent me a text, saying, “Hey read your post, is that true?” I said “yes,” and he said, “Cool, I love you.” Fast forward about a year later. My boyfriend and I had been in an open relationship for about six months, and then I fell hard for my girlfriend. My dad owns an apartment in Chicago, and I asked if I could stay there with “a friend” one weekend. My girlfriend wrote, “I love you” on the fogged up shower glass one day, intending for me to see it, but I never did. Next time I saw my dad, he asked me how me and my boyfriend liked the apartment.



## Coming Home

**Madison Gay Hockey Association’s** annual essay gave **Ashleigh Baldwin** a chance to reflect on rediscovering her life’s passion and finding a place to call home in the league.

**I HAVE JUST FINISHED** my first season in the MGHA. What does Gay Hockey mean to me? I don’t know that I have a short answer for that. I am not even sure I would want to have a short answer. For me it is a place where I am comfortable. It is inclusion without having to hide who I am. It was meeting wonderful people who are also out and share this passion for hockey with me. It has been a relighting of my passion, and understanding my dream of playing hockey my entire life is far from dead.

It was a remarkable confluence of events that have brought me here. I am not shy about sharing how I found MGHA. For me finding MGHA was a miracle. I will always be grateful for my opportunity to play here.

As I began my transition from a physical standpoint I understood that I needed to lose weight to maintain my health. I began working out intensively. As I finished my workout one hot summer day, I had some water and jumped on Facebook. There was an ad for MGHA. I had already lost about sixty pounds. I needed the proverbial “carrot.” There it was. I clicked on the ad immediately. What I believe MGHA stands for is exactly what I needed out of hockey all along.

If there was a drawback it was I found the ad in July. I wanted to play so bad that it made those summer days drag by. My excitement started building, and I began my normal hockey ritual of starting to skate late July or early August. It dawned on me that I hadn’t been on skates in roughly 20 years. Wow, where had the time go? Skating in itself was amazing to me. I started buying gear again. This was really going to happen. I was coming back to hockey as a player. There was not going to be the bad feelings I always had back in high school. I would have new teammates that accept who I am from the very first day. Can this really be happening? I found out

READER POLL ILLUSTRATION BY RACHAL DUGGAN.

the answer was “yes.” My counselor said that this was going to be a good “bridge activity” for me. I could not wait for the season to start.

Anyone who has watched me play knows I am a player of considerable experience. I have been playing since I was six or seven years old, which is ironically about the same time I started contemplating my gender identity. What I knew to be true was: if I came out as transgender in the late 1970s, or early ‘80s I would have been excluded early on. What I also knew to be true is I had some talent as a player. I also had a passion for playing hockey. So, the choice was clear for me at that time. It was to hide who I am on the inside.

By the time I finished my senior year of high school I was done with playing the game. I left multiple junior A and college offers “on the table.” It wasn’t because I didn’t believe I could play that kind of hockey. I knew I could play. I was afraid of being discovered. In those days, the dressing rooms were a house of horrors to me. Homophobia, and to a lesser degree transphobia, were rampant. I thought it best to walk away.

I battled depression, and anxiety as part of gender dysphoria. I put on a lot of weight while pretending to be who I wasn’t. I didn’t know or understand that I wasn’t done playing quite yet. It was an odyssey to get here, but worth every second.

I left multiple junior A and college offers “on the table.” It wasn’t because I didn’t believe I could play that kind of hockey. I knew I could play. I was afraid of being discovered.

What does gay hockey mean to me? It is inclusion, comfort, and coming full circle in my life, and in hockey. As I drove to the rink for the first skills clinic, I thought about everything. I thought about how, on the heels of my divorce, I begged to be able to “come home” to my ex-wife. I thought about everything else that had hurt me in life. As I pulled up to the Hartmeyer Ice Arena every bit of emotion I had came out. In a moment of clarity and happy tears I said to myself, “Ashleigh, you’re finally home.”

What gay hockey means to me: It’s community, family, friends, and of course hockey. Most of all this is home for me. Gay hockey has helped me be complete and happy. Now, I believe I am truly living authentically. ■



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**READERS' POLL**

I said he wasn't with me. He told me about the "I love you" on the glass. I told him the story and reassured him that me and my boyfriend are also doing well and we are all good communicators and very happy. He laughed and said, "I love you. Do you have any photos of her?"

**DANA ROWE** When I was 13 (1998) I came out to two people—a boy I was friends with and the one other out person at my school. My friend was never a particularly good friend and when he was asked if we were dating he told everyone that I wasn't interested in dating boys. Once everyone at school started to find out, my sister heard and told a gossipy neighbor and then it seemed like everyone knew—but no one was surprised.

That's my first coming out story, but we all really come out over and over again. Since I got married, coming out is easier because as soon as I start talking about my wife it tips people off.

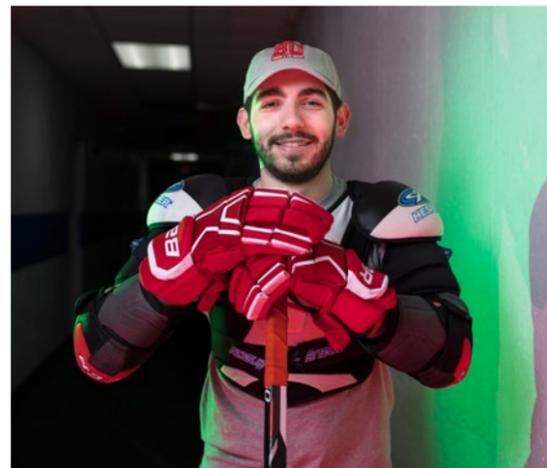
Coming out as trans has been much more nebulous. I came out briefly in high school and then backpedaled when I realized being male didn't fit me any better than being female. I have been slowly coming out again as genderqueer but it's definitely not something that comes up in conversation easily, nor is it something that everyone is familiar with yet. I still feel basically half-closeted.

**AMANDA REILLY** I was a sophomore in high school, and my rowing team and I were down in Tennessee for spring training. I was around other out queer folks and was feeling feelings and thinking thoughts (about the ladies, of course). One evening I was in the shower when it hit me: I'm a total lesbian. No doubt about it. When we returned to Madison I told my friends and my parents, and they were very accepting. Ten years later, they still are. I'm a very lucky queer.

**DANNY ATWATER** Many of us have multiple coming out stories. I think I first uttered the words "I'm gay" to my very jock/football player step-brother. He said, "That's cool."

My mother told me I was gay when a senior boy dropped me off at home. She was waiting at the door because I hadn't told her where I was after school. She called me into her room for a sit down and said, "I've been noticing some things about you lately. You're gay, aren't you."

I didn't officially come out to my dad (parents are divorced) until I invited him to my wedding! He was not surprised in the least. Parents always know.



## Finding A Place on the Ice

**Kevin Colelli** used **Madison Gay Hockey Association's** annual essay to talk about falling in love with a sport that didn't seem to love him back, and how the MGHA helped him bring his whole self to the table.

**I FELL IN LOVE** with hockey in college. I was in the marching band for a university that has no football team. Hockey is our biggest sport, and we take it seriously. The upperclassmen taught the rookies all the traditions: what songs we played, what cheers we did, what all the rules meant.

Finally, our home opener came. It was electric and I was hooked right away. The fast pace, the skill, the athleticism; I soaked it all in. Per tradition, the first song the band played is a bullfighter's theme. After the final note, the entire band and student section yells "Olé!" Much to my surprise, the student section continued yelling: "Perricone, you're gay!"

What? I didn't really process what had happened. I asked the senior next to me to confirm what I thought I heard. He confirmed, with a chuckle and a grin, that we call the other team's goalie gay to try to throw him off his game. This took me completely by surprise. The fans of the sport that I love were using homosexuality to make fun of the opposing goalie. And I, a closeted gay eighteen-year-old, stood there and listened to them do it. For every home game. I could count on one hand the number of people that knew I was gay, and my courage to expand that number vanished.

As quickly as I had learned to love hockey, I learned that the world of men's hockey is not a welcoming one for people like me. Luckily for me, my college also has a top-tier women's hockey program. Here the homophobic cheers were nowhere to be found, and the lack of fighting and machismo meant that I got to see more of what I really love; fast-paced and skilled hockey.

I started covering professional women's hockey for sports websites, and have been working with a lot of amazing folks to grow the women's game. But as a cisgender man, I know that this space

READER POLL ILLUSTRATION BY RACHAL DUGGAN.

isn't one that is directly for me, and I'm always careful to not overstep my bounds. I didn't feel comfortable in the realm of men's hockey, but don't belong in the foreground of women's hockey.

Before the MGHA, being part of any LGBTQIA+ community was not something I'd ever experienced. I had many supportive friends in college, even a few gay friends, but I was never proud of being gay. I felt that if I wanted to live a normal life—be a successful engineer, love hockey—being gay would have to be a secondary part of my identity at most.

After graduation, I moved to Madison and eventually ended a long-term relationship. It was a pretty low time for me. I lost interest in everything I had once loved. Even hockey was becoming tedious. When NHL players get suspended for using homophobic slurs, you find yourself wondering why such a huge piece of your heart belongs to a sport that at best is indifferent to you, and at worst hates you. It became increasingly difficult to reconcile my passion for hockey with my identity as a gay man.

Then I joined the MGHA. It was amazing to be around so many people who were proud to be queer and proud to love hockey. It was the first time I could be in a locker room and not fear that I was unwelcome. The first time I could play a competitive sport without worrying I wasn't acting masculine enough. It was something I didn't know how badly I needed until I found it.

The MGHA helped me finally accept myself, all of myself, and realize that I can be one whole person instead of two halves constantly at odds. Most importantly, the MGHA gave me friends.

The MGHA helped me finally accept myself, all of myself, and realize that I can be one whole person instead of two halves constantly at odds. Most importantly, the MGHA gave me friends. Friends who I can be my whole self around with no fear of judgment. Friends who invited me to Thanksgiving dinner. Friends who road-tripped with me to Michigan to watch the IIHF Women's World Championship.

Transgender NWHL player Harrison Browne said it best, "You have to be your authentic self to be happy." I honestly do not know where I would be today if I was not able to find a community of people to help me realize that my passions can live hand-in-hand with my identity. Thanks to the MGHA I can say, for the first time in my life, I am being my authentic self. I am happy. ■



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READERS' POLL

**LINDA LENZKE** My coming out wasn't a single moment or realization, conveyed to a particular individual (or myself), or shared with the world at large. It was a series of awakenings and desires, reflections on past experiences through a new lens, an acceptance of the person I had always been, and also the person I was becoming. First and foremost, it was learning how to love myself, sometimes imperfectly, and always with the help and support of friends, family, lovers, and affinity groups. In the end it was the courage to risk sharing that love with others without shame. It was both a journey and a gift.

**ORION ROEN** A number of years have gone by now, and I must finally put the nonsense lying to an end: A lot of you may have wondered why I have not had a girlfriend...ever. A lot of you have asked if I was gay, to which I had always responded: "No." Well, that my friends was a lie (I already know "finally" or "I knew it!" is going through some heads). But it goes beyond that...

I started to realize who I actually am a year ago. I met a very certain someone, and he and I are what I would consider a family. We built on each other's lives and take that experience through daily life. That support is what has pushed me to write this.

**BOB W.** For me it was not an easy road. The first person I came out to was...me. For years I hid, and then one day in the army my CO came into a gay bar where I was drinking. He claimed that he was there to make sure "no queers" served under him. But I knew why he was there. And so I left the military. After that, I decided no more sneaking. I began to tell others. Most accepted me, but my family had me kicked out of the church. Despite that, I now live openly because what I do is my business. I lived in shame too long. No shame in my game!

**CHELSEA ROWE** Throughout most of my adolescence, especially as a survivor of sexual assault from a young age, I didn't have the freedom to discover or define my own sexuality. My mother told me that everyone is bisexual but that it's easier to be with a man. I tried to fit in with my peers and had a boyfriend briefly when I was 15. I identified as heterosexual then and was attracted to boys my age. I mentally and emotionally didn't have the capacity to define my sexuality in another way but also my sexuality was fluid.

I didn't have any other consensual sexual relationships with men in my teens. When I was 19, I suddenly fell in love at first

# SEX

## Minefield

Navigating the gay dating world while recovering from sex addiction is no easy feat.

An anonymous contributor reflects on his struggles with internalized homophobia, self-acceptance, and quick fixes—and hopes for a healthier future.

**PORN. CRAIGSLIST HOOK-UPS.** Public sex. Restroom voyeurism. All of these things defined my sexual life up until about three years ago. Like many LGBTQ+ people who grew up in the '80s and '90s, the idea of being gay was unfathomable. How could I ever live being a gay man? How could people ever accept me?

Again, like many LGBTQ+ people, I knew early (probably third or fourth grade) that I was different than most kids. In sixth grade a boy in my class pretended that he was interested in me as a boyfriend, and we got into a kind-of silly relationship. When he would approach me to say hello and express interest in me, a group of his friends were behind him. One day, he came up like normal (and I was feeling particularly warm because I really liked this guy), but his demeanor was markedly different. This time, he delivered the news: This was all a joke; we were never really dating; I was a faggot, and he wanted nothing to do with me. Other people in school followed suit: making fun of me for being a faggot.

My family also wasn't big on talking about gay things. No one in my life was gay (at least, no one talked about it). At 14, I was caught by my family looking up gay porn, and the response was predictable: "Porn is bad! Don't look at it anymore!" What they were really saying to me was, "Sexuality isn't discussed in this house, and we especially don't want to talk about alternative sexuality." So, that was it. I went underground.

This laid the groundwork for a life of internalized homophobia. I started looking for guys online. I started trolling parks for anonymous sex. I started lingering around bathrooms to see what kind of action I could find. Porn was a given. Ultimately, I ended up admitting to myself that I was gay when I was 19. Told my family, friends, and so on. Enter the "double life." On one hand, I was an out young adult, trying to date guys, adjusting to life as a gay man. I didn't want to be associated with the "gay lifestyle" (attending pride, going to gay bars, joining gay groups), but I accepted the future as a gay man whose friends and family knew.

**ADDICTED TO THE HUNT**

On the other hand, I was still in the closet about my compulsive sexual behavior. The hunt and kill was exactly what I wanted—it was the hit of dopamine, the exhilaration of the chase, the validation I got from

READER POLL ILLUSTRATION BY RACHAL DUGGAN.

random guys who were willing to have sex with me. These behaviors continued through the age of 29, and I didn't realize I had an issue—until I casually mentioned to one of my boyfriends that I was camped out in a local bathroom masturbating in hopes of an explicit sneak peek. He soberly said to me, "You have an issue." Unsurprisingly, that guy suddenly fell out of love with me and broke up with me.

Never did I think that these acts had anything to do with a lack of self-confidence, the sense of abandonment I had from my dad, a sadness that I had about the fact that I couldn't be open about my sexuality, and so on. I started to realize: this wasn't some hook-up phase—my behavior was not normal. My behavior was a way to avoid uncomfortable things in my life. No matter how many guys I had sex with, I wasn't ever going to find true validation. How could I? We were using each other like gym towels. No matter how many how many guys I spied on, I would never feel satiated (my bottomless pit of a sexual appetite wanted more). No matter how much porn I watched, I would never see men as true humans—only as sex objects. Where should I go now?

**SEEKING SUPPORT**

Thank goodness for counselors and in-person support groups. In my case, I've been lucky to have found a sex therapist and a local 12-step program for sex-addicted people. But that doesn't mean the story ends there. I still have to live with my sexual compulsivity. I'm having to revisit all my old defense mechanisms (like not feeling uncomfortable emotions). I'm starting to learn about being vulnerable (see author Brene Brown's work on how vulnerability offers hope and the opportunity to live a fulfilled life for people who struggle with shame). I'm discovering

Just recently, I did a full disclosure to a new boyfriend, and he's having a hard time accepting everything. We may not make it through this disclosure. You know what's going through my mind? "Why me? This sucks. Don't I deserve a 'normal' relationship?"

mindfulness and meditation (learning that I don't have to be hijacked by my thoughts and compulsions). I've formulated a new support network who I can reach out to when I feel the urge to act out.

But it doesn't mean that I'm magically cured! As a sex addict, my new reality is this: Constant awareness. Also, when dating, before I get intimate with another guy, I need to do a full disclosure about my addiction and acting out behaviors. Just recently, I did a full disclosure to a new boyfriend, and he's having a hard time accepting everything. We may not make it through this disclosure. You know what's going through my mind? "Why me? This sucks. Don't I deserve a 'normal' relationship?" Partners often feel manipulated, isolated, afraid, and like they don't know what is real anymore. But unexpectedly, and disappointingly, I have gotten a response that some of these acting out behaviors were expected because I'm a gay guy (e.g. "who hasn't had a hook-up phase?" "who doesn't look at porn?" "who isn't curious about bathroom stuff?"). These are, perhaps, the expectations that the gay community carries within it. Aren't we all expected to hook up? Have sexual issues? The answer is no. There's help out there for a different way. I'm living proof.

**LESSONS LEARNED AND TO BE LEARNED**

Throughout this process, I've learned many things about myself, about healthy relationships, and healthy sexuality. **MYSELF:** I learned that I'm worthy and deserving of love and respect, regardless of my issues. A new way of life is out there for me. Vulnerability and rigorous honesty pays off and allows me tap into deeper

relationships with friends, family, and colleagues.

**RELATIONSHIPS:** There is such a thing as healthy belonging, and despite my identity as a sex addict, I know that I can experience relationships that fall in this category (see Brenda Schaeffer's *Is It Love or Is It Addiction*). I've experienced glimpses of people accepting and being willing to work with my issues and love me regardless. But I've also realized that a relationship is not essential to feel like I have a complete life.

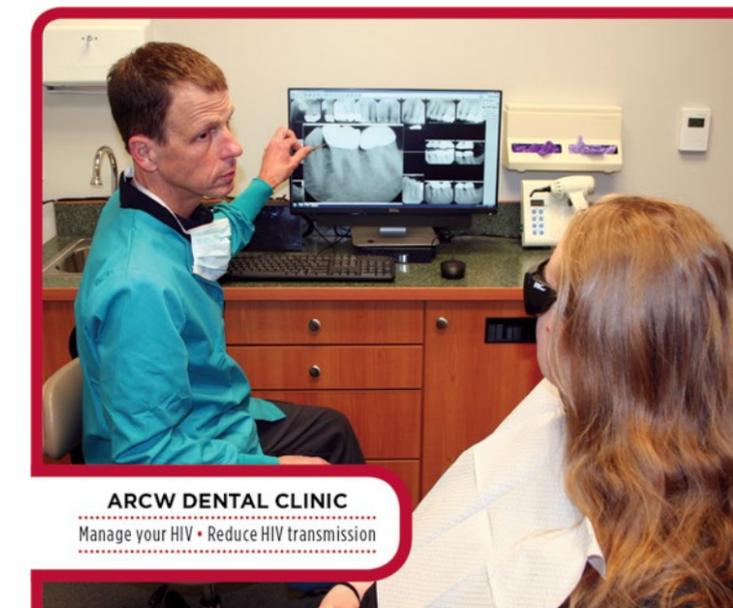
**SEXUALITY:** It starts with me and the boundaries that I draw for myself. Healthy sexuality has certain characteristics, like self-enhancing, grounding, honesty, connectivity, vulnerability, having a deeper meaning, and so on. I started to learn about these by starting with a change from the concept of masturbation to the concept of self-sex. If I can't enjoy making love with myself in a healthy way, it won't happen with others.

One reality that I've accepted is that this struggle with sexual compulsivity is a lifelong journey and is a gift in itself. What do I want for myself? To continue to live in this emotionally connected way. My battle with sexual compulsion requires a life of routine and continual renewal in my commitment to my recovery. As soon as I feel like I've "got it figured out," that's the moment when I need to recommit to recovery. ■

**RESOURCES**

If you're struggling with these same issues, here are some resources:

- 1 **Madison SAA meetings:** [madisonsaa.org](http://madisonsaa.org)
- 2 **SAA International:** [saa-recovery.org](http://saa-recovery.org). You can tap into phone meetings if you're in an outlying area.
- 3 Check out the book by Robert Weiss called *Cruise Control: Understanding Sex Addiction in Gay Men*.
- 4 **Helpful therapists in the Madison area can be found at the Midwest Center for Psychotherapy and Sex Therapy:** [midwestcentertherapy.com](http://midwestcentertherapy.com). Know that you aren't alone.



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READERS' POLL

sight with a woman. I had never consciously been attracted to a woman before. Through that experience I finally had the freedom to define my own sexuality. I didn't feel like I was coming out because I never kept my sexuality a secret, but that's not how everyone around me felt. I started to identify as pansexual after that until I realized that term didn't fit me anymore. Now I identify as a queer lesbian. For me, coming out is a never-ending process in breaking expectations and assumptions placed on me by others.

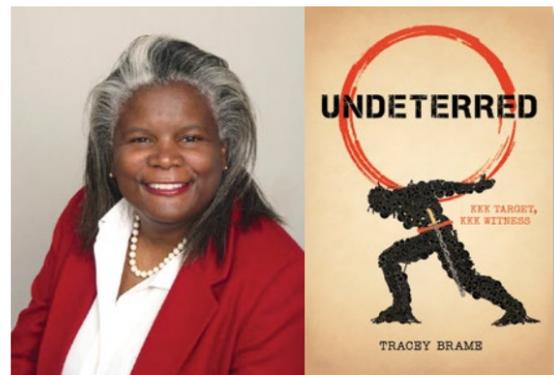
**ERIKA S.** After many years in the military, refusing to accept who I was kept me hiding and deflecting. I knew I was a girl but the fear was enormous. How to tell my wife of 20 years and be true to myself? I began to be distracted and harmful to myself. I saw the light after eight months in Afghanistan, and I had to come out. In the end, I am a better person and spouse. For me, my journey is as special as my love for my wife and family. I am out and proud, and ready to be the woman I have always kept hidden.

**ENID WILLIAMS** I was 17, and I had been having crushes on both boys and girls. I was so confused. Was I a lesbian or not? Finally, I learned there was such a thing as being bisexual and I was like, "That's it! That's me!" I had never been taught that bisexuality existed before then. I told one good girl friend (who may have thought I was trying to ask her out; I wasn't) and one good guy friend (who said, "Me too!"). I told my parents a couple years later. Now, nearly 30 years later, I'm married to a guy and still bi.

**DIANE SCHWARTZ** Coming out was a process that took years. First I came out to close friends and one family member, then to my recovery community, then to my family, and then widely to the world when I was featured in *Our Lives* magazine.

**JUSTIN WILLIAMS** My mom asked me if I was dating anyone. She used to ask if I had met a nice girl yet. Extremely uneventful.

**EMILY MILLS** I definitely remember having crushes on boys and girls when I was very young, but I always wrote off the crushes on girls as just intense friendship interest. There were almost no examples of queer people in my life, and certainly no one who was bisexual. I continued to mostly ignore my feelings for a long time, and then my older sister came out as bi when she went off to college. She took me to my first Pride, and to queer parties and club nights, drag shows and more. It was super **CONTINUED ON PAGE 38**



Undeterred

Author **Tracey Brame** talks about her new book about surviving sexual assault, coming out, fighting the KKK, and becoming a fierce advocate for women with PTSD.

TELL US A LITTLE ABOUT YOURSELF—WHO YOU ARE, WHERE YOU ARE FROM, ETC.

I was born and raised in Indianapolis, Indiana. My junior year of high school I was accepted to every top ten school in the United States. I settled on Duke, but transferred to West Point because it was harder, more prestigious, and Tom Cruise played the heck out of that *Top Gun* role. My class wanted to do something, and accepting the Army's "Be All You Can Be" motto was a convincing challenge.

My junior year at West Point, I was brutally raped by an officer. I woke up from the rape with no memory of the night before. Trauma, extreme trauma, shakes our senses, causing post-traumatic stress disorder and amnesia. I stumbled forward through half my years at the Academy in total shell shock. No one helped me, and I did not know to ask for help.

I am passionate about PTSD being viewed as a civilian disease, not just a soldier's disease. Ten percent of all women suffer from PTSD, a disease that touches nearly all families.

TELL OUR READERS ABOUT YOUR BOOK. OBVIOUSLY, YOU HAVE AN IMPORTANT AND SERIOUS STORY TO TELL. WHAT DROVE YOU TO PUT IT ALL DOWN INTO A BOOK? WHY WAS THIS IMPORTANT FOR YOU TO DO?

After serving my commission time, I took a pharmaceutical job back home in the state of Indiana. I expressed an interest in entering politics, and I paid a price. The Ku Klux Klan, who did not want an educated, African-American woman to run for an Indiana office, targeted me for continued, organizational criminal harm. I moved from Bloomington to Indianapolis, and yet again to Madison, but the KKK pursuit, ordered by two Indiana grand dragons (a father/son duo, both doctors), continued and aggravated my PTSD.

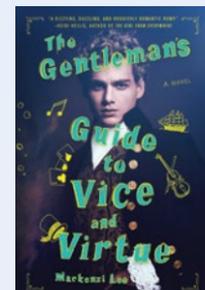
The son, an infectious disease doctor in Indiana, is the current grand dragon. Each time they hurt me, they warned me about writing a book. They specifically did not want a movie depicting the level of racism and supremacy that plagues the highest level of Indiana medicine, politics, and business.

I did not hesitate to write this book. There were Klansmen doctors

READER POLL ILLUSTRATION BY RACHAL DUGGAN.

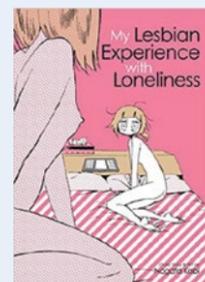
LGBTQ Reading List

By Madison librarians **Tyler Furo** and **Beth McIntyre**. Visit [linkcat.info](http://linkcat.info) to request these titles with your library card.



**Doll Parts**, by **Amanda Lepore**. **Regan Arts, 2017.**  
Forget Caitlyn Jenner. This mix of glossy David LaChapelle photography and unadulterated prose, describing Lepore's childhood, transition, '90s Club Kid infamy, and current living legend status, is summer's must-read memoir.

**The Gentleman's Guide to Vice and Virtue**, by **Mackenzi Lee**. **Katherine Tegan Books, 2017.**  
One of the blurbs for this book calls it "The John Hughes of queer 18th century adventure novels," and I can't think of a better way to describe it. Besides, maybe, DELIGHTFUL. I stayed up all night finishing this book.



**Grrrls On the Side**, by **Carrie Pack**. **Duet, 2017.**  
A young teen is exposed to gender politics and the racial injustices of the punk scene as she finds her place (and first love) with a crowd of local riot-grrrls in the mid-'90s. Weep with me that this book is labeled "historical fiction."

**Jonesy Vol 1**, by **Sam Humphries**. **BOOM Studios, 2016.**  
The wild, color-saturated adventures of a reluctant cupid. Fast and fun.



**Nature Poem**, by **Tommy Pico**. **Tin House Books, 2017.**  
Queer and Kumeyaay NDN, Pico's new poetry collection is unapologetically political, and oftentimes snarkily hilarious, as his eloquent but barbed words take aim at the cruel hypocrisies of modern life.

**My Lesbian Experience with Loneliness**, by **Kabi Nagata**. **Seven Seas, 2017.**  
A sensitive and expressive single-volume manga autobiography that outlines the author's coming of age. This story began as a smash hit web serial in Japan.

**Passing Strange**, by **Ellen Klages**. **Tor.com, 2017.**  
Speculative historical fiction about an underground lesbian community in 1940s San Francisco that deftly blends elements of romance, truth, magic, and fantasy.

**Radical**, by **E. M. Kokie**. **Candlewick, 2016.**  
A queer teen in rural Michigan is frustrated that her family won't take her survivalist preparations seriously, until they take it way too seriously. A fascinating and fair look at a complex subculture.

in Wisconsin who warned me of crossing the Indiana grand dragon.

WHAT DO YOU HOPE READERS/THE WORLD WILL GET OUT OF YOUR BOOK?

The modern tactics of the KKK undermine minorities, but they are doing a job on white women, too. This secret deserves exposure. Get ready for a gripping memoir of one woman's perseverance over adversity.

WHERE DO YOU GO FROM HERE, IN TERMS OF YOUR WORK TO EXPOSE AND HOLD ACCOUNTABLE THE KKK AND ITS MEMBERS? WHAT CHALLENGES REMAIN?

I have a second book in the works that offers more detail and tactics by the Indiana Klan from a completely different perspective. There are three books that I feel I must write in total. After that, I will take on a different challenge.

*Undeterred: KKK Target, KKK Witness* by Tracey Brame is available at [traceybrame.com](http://traceybrame.com). ■



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# July & August

Summer heats up with Pride weekend in Madison, plus a diverse array of community events to help you enjoy fair weather and good friends.

For more LGBTQ-specific events, see our Organization Events on page 24.

## AUGUST

# 20

### OUTREACH PRIDE PARADE

*Downtown Madison*  
The annual LGBTQ+ Pride Parade returns to State Street and the Wisconsin Capitol Square, stepping off at 12:00 p.m. and ending with a rally and entertainment.  
[lgbtoutreach.org](http://lgbtoutreach.org)



## JULY

# 6-9

### NATIONAL WOMEN'S MUSIC FESTIVAL

*Marriott Madison West*  
The annual celebration of women in music takes over the west side Marriott once again with performances by musicians, comedians, and the debut of the score of *Babe!*—a new musical about the life of Olympian Babe Didrikson Zaharias. Workshops and networking are also featured.  
[wiaonline.org](http://wiaonline.org)

# 13

### OPEN PRESENTS: LGBTQ+ DISCRIMINATION & THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

*HotelRED*  
Guest speaker Dr. William Hutter presents on ways the LGBTQ+ community experiences discrimination, possibly subsequent mental health issues, and how to minimize workplace discrimination.  
[openmadison.org](http://openmadison.org)

## RAINBOW ROAD FUNDRAISER

*Mendota Lake House*  
In response to the violence and persecution of sexual minorities in Chechnya, LGBTQ+ community members in Dane County have scheduled a fundraiser for Rainbow Railroad, a Canadian human rights project. Hosted by OutReach, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.  
[lgbtoutreach.org](http://lgbtoutreach.org)

# 20

### OPEN'S BREWERY TOUR & NETWORKING

*Wisconsin Brewing Company*  
A beer-centric networking event including craft beer and Sugar River Pizza.  
[openmadison.org](http://openmadison.org)

# 28-30

### WISCONSIN AIDS RIDE

*Southeastern Wisconsin*  
ARCW's annual bike ride raises critical funds for the fight against AIDS in the state. The ride now offers several course options.  
[arcw.org](http://arcw.org)

## AUGUST

# 6

### PRIDE KING & QUEEN CONTEST

*FIVE Nightclub, Madison*  
Performers compete for the right to represent as Madison's King & Queen of Pride in the annual Pride Parade.  
[fivenightclub.com](http://fivenightclub.com)



# 11

(THROUGH DEC 3)

### RASHAAD NEWSOME: ICON

*Museum of Contemporary Art*  
The cultural legacy of voguing and Harlem's queer ballroom scene comes to the fore at this exhibit by New York-based artist Newsome.  
[www.mmoca.org](http://www.mmoca.org)

# 19

### WOOF'S PRIDE BLOCK PARTY

*100 Block of King Street, Madison*  
The annual block party returns with DJ Neon, dancing, performances, food, and socializing outside of Woof's. The \$5.00 suggested donation benefits the Pride Parade.  
[madwoofs.com](http://madwoofs.com)

# 20

### OPEN'S PRE-PRIDE BRUNCH

*Red Elephant Chocolates, Madison*  
The Madison area LGBTQ+ professional group hosts a continental brunch to kick off Pride day 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.  
[openmadison.org](http://openmadison.org)

### SAVE THE DATE

**SEPTEMBER 22**  
Cream City Foundation's Business Equality Luncheon

**OCTOBER 6**  
OutReach Awards Banquet

**OCTOBER 7**  
AIDS Walk/Run Wisconsin



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PHOTOS BY SPENCER MICKA



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READERS' POLL

eye-opening and amazing. My junior year of high school, my dad moved us from northern Illinois to southern Oklahoma, and weirdly enough, the crowd of theater kids and misfits that I fell in with was far more open and accepting (and queer!) there. When another new girl went around asking people point-blank if they were bisexual, at first I just said I was "open" to falling for whomever. By the time I graduated, though, I was identifying as bisexual to my friends. I got more and more public about it throughout college and after. Honestly, as a lifelong masculine-of-center/soft butch presenting human, coming out for me is usually the surprise of being bisexual as opposed to a lesbian, which everyone seems to assume. And though having people think I'm a lesbian is certainly no insult, I've become a lot more dedicated to being out and proud as queer and bisexual in order to help fight bisexual erasure and stigma, which still very much exists.

**RANDY STOFFEL** A coming out to me story: Valentine's Day when I was in second grade. I realized I had just gone through my box of Valentines for a third time looking for the perfect one for a BOY in the class, while everyone else got just the first one I grabbed out of the box. That was when I first realized "I LIKE BOYS." But I knew I had to keep it to myself as it was in the '60s and I was in a Catholic school run my priests and nuns, and I was from a German/Catholic/dairy farmer family. Didn't come out to others until I was 20 and to family when I was 30+.

**DEAN NETT** The night before 5th grade started, I was keyed up, unable to sleep. I couldn't stop thinking about my gym uniform my mom and I had bought earlier that day. It was shorts with a built-in jock strap. The moonlight was streaming in my window, creating a pool of light. I got out of bed, put on the blue shorts and looked at myself in the reflection in the window. I started thinking about how I was going to see my male classmates naked and shower with them. I was not surprised when I looked down and saw my first adult erection. I knew, just knew, that I was going to be in love with a man someday.

**KATHY FLORES** My daughter, Amber, came out to me in the same conversation as I came out to her as I was talking about divorcing her step-father, because I was into someone named Ann (now my spouse). Amber was 15, and I was 37. We both said, "I knew!" and a month later we went to PrideFest together as newly out mother and daughter. ■

JUNE 3 FruitFest, Plan B's LGBTQ Block Party



READER POLL ILLUSTRATION BY RACHAL DUGGAN.



JUNE 12 The Equality March for Unity and Pride on Madison



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## The Children's Advocate

A lifetime of working with and for children of all abilities has taught the Wisconsin Historical Society's **Vaunce Ashby** much, including the importance of bringing your whole self to the table.

**IN 2007, VAUNCE ASHBY** was at a crossroads in her personal and professional life. She was closing out her first year as a school principal, a dream of many lifelong educators. However, that year also brought the death of her mother and managing complications from Lupus, a disease that was starting to affect her kidneys and her body's connective tissues.

"My rheumatologist said, 'You need to take a leave from work. You cannot continue at this rate, or you're going to kill yourself,'" she said.

Ashby also faced resistance from some of her staff as she pushed them to hold high expectations for all kids, no matter their backgrounds. As a Black, lesbian, woman, she also wondered if those same prejudices influenced the way some of her staff responded to her as their school leader.

As she contemplated whether to stay and fight or seek other opportunities, she recalled her departed mother's advice.

"I remember talking to my mom for a long time, and she said, 'Honey, you don't sound like you're happy. If you can't sleep with yourself, no matter what they're talking about, you need to leave that building,'" Ashby recalled.

"I went in and told my staff (I was leaving). I remember standing there and saying, 'You guys are not happy with me, and all I want to do is help you teach kids, all kids, at this school. Rather than spending all your time talking about what you're going to do with me, I'd rather you focus on kids, so I'm going to move out of your way.'"

### LOOKING TO THE PAST TO BUILD A BETTER FUTURE

Although leaving behind her school was a difficult decision, Ashby would spend the next 10 years making a difference for kids across the state of Wisconsin. Currently, Ashby serves as the Director of Education at the Wisconsin Historical Society. In her role, she is responsible

for creating innovative and dynamic experiences to help the museum's visitors, particularly students, authentically connect with Wisconsin's rich heritage.

"For some students (visiting a museum) is their orientation into the history of Wisconsin," she said. "By developing a detailed plan for new museum projects, I have the power to develop and build on exciting exhibits for kids. How can you not be excited being able to do a job like that?"

Ashby's work today is laying the foundation for the Wisconsin Historical Society's future projects, which will better reflect the contributions of people of color and LGBTQ+ people to Wisconsin's history.

"I would like to think that every person of color will come into come into the museum and realize that someone was mindful in trying to ensure that the history of people of color in our state were included in the exhibits," she added.

"That's what I do every day—make sure that our voices are being heard—and I think I'm pretty lucky."

Ashby's work today is laying the foundation for the Wisconsin Historical Society's future projects, which will better reflect the contributions of people of color and LGBTQ+ people to Wisconsin's history.

### TEACHING, AND LEARNING

Ashby has always been an advocate for children, in particular, those with exceptional needs. Growing up, her best friend was a child born with a physical disability. Ashby was fascinated by how well her friend was able to navigate the world, despite her body's limitations.

"Whatever I was doing—knitting, crocheting, cutting paper—she had already figured out how to adapt it," she said. "It got me to thinking about kids who do things differently in general, whether it's learning or a physical thing they have to change for. I was always interested in that."

By high school, Ashby had made up her mind that she wanted to be a special education teacher. "My mother cried," she said with a laugh. "I did really well in math and science, so she was pretty sure I would be a doctor."

As a first-generation college student, Ashby's mother wanted her to pursue a more lucrative career path, but her passion was working with young people.

"At that time, in Chicago, teachers were on strike every other year, so she's like, 'You'll never have a consistent job, you won't be able to take care of yourself,'" she remembered. "My aunt said, 'You need to do what you love. You'll be doing it for the rest of your life, so whatever it is you decide you want to do, make sure it is something you love.'"

Ashby's 38-year career in education has taken her to classrooms throughout her hometown of Chicago and across Wisconsin. Her first job, teaching at a therapeutic day school for children with emotional and behavioral disorders, allowed her to help students develop coping mechanisms that they could take with them beyond the classroom.

"The students were able to be responsible and own their emotions and their responses, which left them feeling somewhat in control. I think we did a fabulous job with the kids we had," she said.

"We also had counseling for parents in the evenings, and we had a bus that would go pick them up. We had a full kitchen, so we would make dinners for the parents. It was a really great therapeutic program."

She learned skills there that profoundly influenced her work moving forward, especially around cultivating relationships with students.

### Expanded support services for IPV victims



SHANNON BARRY, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR  
DOMESTIC ABUSE INTERVENTION SERVICES (DAIS)

DAIS is celebrating 40 years. We are more than just a shelter, providing comprehensive intervention and support services to victims of intimate partner violence (IPV) and their families, as well as innovative primary prevention programming to help address the root causes of IPV. DAIS serves victims of IPV from the LGBTQ community through all of our community-based and shelter services. We're currently planning a new support group for male-identified victims of IPV. We are also working to expand our primary prevention programming into additional middle school sites. Finally, we are expanding further in areas of rural Dane County.

### Improved surgical tech & patient positivity



SUSAN TOTH, M.D.  
MERITER/UNITYPOINT HEALTH

Surgical innovation continues, with an emphasis on smaller port site incisions, with robotic instrumentation assistance, ultimately leading to a quicker recovery. Hospital stays are shorter for major surgeries overall. The best results are seen with patients who are proactive about their health, confident about their surgeon/procedure, and have reached that Zen acceptance of what needs to happen going forward. Too much stress and anxiety leads to poorer outcomes. Once the procedure is completed, it is up to the patient to own the healing process.



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Vaunce, inside the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives at 816 State Street in Madison. Behind her is an 1893 studio portrait of Mrs. William W. "Fannie" Hendricks that appears in the book *Wisconsin Death Trip*, by Michael Lesy.

"I look back on those days, and I learned a lot on how to diffuse a kid's anger and how to physically approach kids when you can tell they're upset. I learned when you need to be stern and when you need to make it part of the conversation," Ashby said.

**PAYING IT FORWARD**

Ashby wanted to provide her students with the same level of patience and support she received from her family growing up. Her Catholic upbringing emphasized the values of love and acceptance. Her family exemplified those values when she came out to them in high school.

"There wasn't a disconnect for me between my faith and my sexual identity," she said. "It was never an issue in my immediate family, even with my grandmother. I think that has led to a different perspective for me going through the world."

In the classroom, Ashby was a bedrock for her LGBTQ+ students, some of whom did not have the support of their families because of their identities.

"There were a number of times I was aware of students being kicked out of their homes late at night during the weekend. I would ensure the student had a warm, safe environment to stay in until a permanent solution could be set up," she said. "It just amazed me how many families did this to their kids. I remember telling my mom, and she was outraged that parents would do that to a child."

She did not keep her identity a secret from her students and often encouraged them to use her, their peers, and programs at their schools, like GSAFE, as resources. For Ashby, it was important not to be silent around identity issues, especially after losing a transgender student to suicide early on in her teaching career.

"I had this rainbow folder in my desk, and the kids who weren't



TOP: Vaunce with her mother, Mary Alice Harper. TOP RIGHT: The future educator in Kindergarten. BOTTOM RIGHT: Vaunce in her senior photo.



comfortable coming to meetings would just come and get the handouts from my desk," she said.

**ADDRESSING DISPARITIES**

District officials noticed how well Ashby was able to connect with her students and encouraged her to think about administrative positions. As she shadowed district leaders, she saw how much their decisions informed what happened on the ground in classrooms.

"I would go to different meetings with (a district administrator) and sit and listen to how she reallocated resources to assist schools in making some changes to kids lives," she said.

"That's the piece that stuck with me. I can touch one student's life, a total of 30 during a school year, but she was able to impact the education of all the students in a school, maybe a district. She could use whatever resources to address key areas of struggle based on students' needs. There is something to be said for that."

Ashby has worked in administration at the school, district, and state level. In her role at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, she co-authored and lobbied the state to pass the Specific Learning Disability rule, which developed guidelines educators must follow before they are allowed to recommend a student for special education services. Ashby believes the SLD rule helps to mitigate bias against students, particularly students of color.

"You see disproportionate numbers of students of color in special education for emotional-behavioral disorders...but if you look at students who are hearing or vision impaired, there is no disproportionality in those areas. These areas of special education involve medical diagnosis with scientific data, 'hard evidence,'" she said.

"It was an effort to update the criteria while requiring focused documentation on the help students receive prior to being evaluated for special education needs," she went on to say. "The hope is it will cut down on the over-representation of African-American, Latino-Hispanic, Native-American and/or economically disadvantaged youth in special education. The hope is this updated rule will help with this by asking for details about interventions that were used with the student."

Ashby is grateful for the opportunities she's had to tangibly improve the educational experience for Wisconsin children. She hopes her work will inspire children and help them discover their futures by taking a look at the past.

"What a way to go out on retirement," she said. ■

**Outdoor Stress Relief**



DARREN BUSH, CHIEF PADDLING EVANGELIST  
RUTABAGA PADDLESPORTS

I'm seeing a lot more people outside these days, walking, cycling, or paddling. I was paddling the Sugar River recently in the rain. Normally I'd expect to be alone, but I saw two other folks enjoying the river as well. I suspect that this is due to the fear-inducing political environment; when people need to be refreshed, they unplug and go outside. Almost everyone I talk to on the river or trail mentions unplugging and recreating.

I'm also seeing an increase in dual-purpose clothing; something that looks fashionable to the outdoor person, but is made of materials that are highly technical. Quick-dry and UV-protective fabrics can be soft and lovely, so you can get out of your kayak and stop at the grocery store without changing.

**Meeting at our intersections**



JORDAN BINGHAM, HEALTH EQUITY COORDINATOR  
PUBLIC HEALTH MADISON & DANE COUNTY

I'm inspired by our expanding understanding of intersectionality. I heard Tarell Alvin McCraney, the playwright behind the movie *Moonlight* speak recently. Something he said stuck with me: "We always meet one another at an intersection. When we focus on one aspect of someone's identity, something is left behind. We become skilled at hiding our hurts and vulnerabilities from one another. How can we be together without our defenses—while also understanding why the defenses are there?"

We must continue finding ways to center the voices of those who have been silenced and to organize across sectors. How can we become the multicultural community we say we envision and value? Each of us can do something in our respective areas of influence, like asking a different question at work, or getting more involved in our kids' schools, or reaching out to expand our social circles.

**Trans and non-binary legislation**



LOREE COOK-DANIELS, POLICY & PROGRAM DIRECTOR  
FORGE, INC.

Wisconsin trans and non-binary people now have hope! On June 1, Reps. Mark Spreitzer and JoCasta Zamarripa, and Sen. Tim Carpenter introduced the Privacy Protection and Gender Identity Anti-Discrimination Act, to update Wisconsin's non-discrimination laws to protect trans and non-binary individuals.

"The best way to predict the future is to create it."

— Abraham Lincoln

Unity Health Insurance creates **Quartz** – a combined effort between Gundersen Health Plan and Unity Health Insurance, Quartz manages, administers and supports innovative health plans for customers in southwestern Wisconsin and beyond. Imagine a future where health plans are as equally committed to creating wellness programs as they are to community health and the best possible customer experience. A time when health plans are designed, supported and managed by people who truly care about making every community they touch not only healthier, but also happier. We believe the future of healthy starts now.

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## QPOC Pride

Reporter **Amber C. Walker** profiles **LGBTQ+ people of color** who are movers and shakers both locally and across Wisconsin.



**BALTAZAR DE ANDA SANTANA**

Baltazar is the director of Orgullo Latinx LGBT+, a Madison organization with a mission to create spaces for Dane County's Latinx LGBT+ community to thrive through education, social justice, and community engagement.

A long-time advocate for the Latinx community, De Anda Santana has worked with the Vera Court Neighborhood Center and

the United Way of Dane County. Orgullo Latinx LGBT+ has made it a priority to increase the visibility of the LGBT+ Latinos through community service and connecting with allies. Orgullo Latinx LGBT+ held a vigil following the Pulse shooting in Orlando last year and organized dozens of Latinos to participate in local LGBT+ Pride parades. "We have put the LGBT+ Latino community on the map in Madison," De Anda Santana said. "That is something that we didn't have before. Right now, the community knows that we exist."

As a gay Latinx man, De Anda Santana feels it is important to be proud of his identity to reduce stigma and stereotypes against LGBT+ people. "We are working hard to normalize LGBT+ (identity) in the Latinx community," he said. "We want people to know

that being gay means that you can be a volunteer, you can be a professional, you can be a leader." **CONNECT:** orgullolatinx.org



**TIFFANY LEE**

Tiffany is the program coordinator at the LGBT Campus Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Lee helps undergraduate students cultivate their leadership by training them

to serve as discussion facilitators. "It is important to facilitate conversations," Lee said. "There is not enough space for folks to come around and talk, and there seems to be a desire for it in the community." Discussion groups center on topics that are important to queer students and encompass their intersectional identities.

Lee is pursuing her Masters degree in African-American Studies and Gender/Women's Studies. She said learning about activists like the women in the Combahee River Collective spurred her to see her identity as a black, queer, women as a source of power. "It directly spoke to my life and the people I loved," she said. "It spoke to how I moved through the world."



**OD KIMANI**

OD is a performer. He's been a cabaret, stage, and film actor. For the past three years, Kimani's primary focus has been burlesque. He remembers seeing his first burlesque performance in 2013 with his fellow performer, Mercury Stardust. He started out assisting Stardust with their shows, "but emceeing turned into guest spots, and that turned into full-on performances," he said.

Kimani said most burlesque performers are self-taught, taking charge of their own costuming, makeup, and choreography. He loves the control of producing an entire show that is solely his creative vision. "I love to create my art, my own way, and execute it the way I want to."

He also enjoys that the burlesque scene in Madison creates space for all types of performers. "I enjoy burlesque as an art. I ap-

KIMANI PHOTO BY MAX WENDT.

preciate it for body positivity and individual expression," he said. "Every performer comes from a different walk of life. There is a variety of ages, genders, and races." **CONNECT:** @od\_kimani on Instagram



**JA'MEL WARE**

Ja'Mel Ware is the founder and chief executive officer of Intellectual Ratchet, a Madison-based lifestyle company. Ware was inspired to start IR to create spaces for diverse audiences to connect and feel comfortable in their communities. "I was tired of traveling to places like Milwaukee and Chicago for an urban experience," Ware said. "I wanted to connect people of different backgrounds and allow people to bring their whole selves."

Since IR's inception in 2015, Ware has hosted events in the Madison and throughout the state. In particular, Ware is proud of his first event, a sold-out screening of the movie, "Straight Outta Compton," partnering with the Wisconsin Union and U.W.-Madison student organizations to bring Golden Globe-nominated actress Issa Rae to Madison, and working with downtown Madison businesses to host the city's first series of night markets.

As a trans person who was born with HIV, Ware said creating IR was cathartic for him because it allows people to focus on what he brings to the community, instead of his lived experience.

"My entire life, the story that the larger community knows about is being this kid with AIDS. When I transitioned, it happened again," he said.

WARE PHOTO BY IAN DEGRAFF. MINERO PHOTO BY DAVID NEVALA.

## Immigrant & Proud

**LAURA P. MINERO** is a Ph.D. student in counseling psychology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Minero immigrated to the United States with her parents at five. Minero said watching her parents work to provide her with a better life influenced her work as an activist. "That really shaped who I am as a person. I value my parent's sacrifices," Minero said. "Experiencing exclusion and marginalization compelled me to think about the other." Minero's identity as a queer, non-binary, undocumented person compels her to advocate on behalf of marginalized people, particularly undocumented queer and trans immigrants.

Minero wants to use her work as a scientist to influence policy to benefit under-served communities. "There is a lot of anti-immigrant and anti-LGBTQ policy that pretty much dictates our lives. People don't really think about the day-to-day impact unless they are living it," Minero said. "Policy impacts mental health. My hope is that, through research, we can enact change. I really see it is a way to promote well-being and policy that is inclusive."

"I didn't want to be fetishized by my identities. I wanted to have space where I can just be. It doesn't matter that I am a Black trans man that lives with AIDS, it's freeing to me. I am able to talk about my identities and not feel shackled by them."

Ware's ultimate vision for IR is to scale the model up, so there are places around the world where intellectual ratchets can build community. "We will draw audiences of tens of thousands and feature their local talent," he said. "In 10 years IR will be a household name." **CONNECT:** facebook.com/JaeMoFamo



**MONTY SCOTT**

Monty Scott is an HIV/AIDS prevention specialist at the AIDS Resource Center of Wisconsin. Scott works in 13 counties across the state and provides testing,

education, counseling, and other resources to community members. Scott makes it a point to meet people where they are, and often visits gay bars, community centers, and schools. He also leverages social media and dating

sites to provide information about testing and preventative methods.

For Scott, it is important to talk openly about sexual health so people can safely enjoy themselves. "HIV and AIDS is still an issue around the world. With it





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# Networking for Good

**CEDRIC JOHNSON** recalls returning to his hometown of Rockford after studying at Knox College: "I looked around and said, 'there is nothing going on.' I thought, 'OK, I'll step up and make something happen.'" Johnson collaborated with friends to create spaces for young people to showcase their art, an opportunity they felt was lacking in their city. "Once I saw what could happen if people step up and do something, I thought, 'ain't no stopping me.'"

Johnson continues to live by that mantra as the Development and Communications Director at Briarpatch Youth Services. Briarpatch provides housing, job training, and programmatic support for runaway, at-risk, and homeless youth and their families in Dane County. Johnson estimates that over 40 percent of the youth Briarpatch serves are LGBTQ. Although his family was very supportive when Johnson came out as a teen, he is aware that experience is not the reality for all LGBTQ youth. "That is a big motivator for me every day," he said.

Before coming to Briarpatch, Johnson worked in development at the Madison Children's Museum. He has also served as the President of OPEN, the Out Professional Engagement Network. Johnson enjoys living in Madison because of all the opportunities the city provides for service. "The work that needs to be done keeps me here. It is a challenge," Johnson said. "I know my skills, and if I am not able to do something, Madison is the type of town where you can coalition-build to do the work."

Working in development, Johnson knows that networking is a powerful tool to initiate change. He makes a point to connect people with opportunities that would be a good fit for them and credits Madison as a great place to grow your personal and professional ties. "I've built such a great network of friends and mentors who have always been open to helping," he said. "What drives me is seeing how one person can leverage their personality and their skills to make a tangible difference."

**CONNECT:** [linkedin.com/in/cedricjohnson](https://www.linkedin.com/in/cedricjohnson)



affecting mostly gay and bisexual men, I feel in my heart that I need to provide this service," he said. "A lot of people don't talk about sex or the benefits and consequences that come with it. If I provide education on high-risk behavior, my community will take proper steps to protect themselves and enjoy sex." **CONNECT:** Monty. Scott@arcw.org



**BRIA BROWN**

Bria Brown is the membership coordinator at Community Shares of Wisconsin. In her work, Brown helps non-profits boost fundrais-

ing and effectively utilize social media to promote their causes. In addition to her work at Community Shares, Brown is also a freelance videographer and online content producer.

Brown's YouTube channel, "Unapologetically Bria Bea," has amassed tens of thousands of views. She started producing videos as a hobby while she was at the College of William and Mary, and uses her talent to promote her brand and in her professional work. "I am really getting a chance to make a living out of it, which is cool," Brown said. "But also flex a muscle and build my skills as much as I can."

Although Brown only been in Madison for about a year, she's already partnered with local entrepreneurs on a variety of projects, including producing a video for the Black Business Expo and the documentary "Throwing Rocks at the Pen." **CONNECT:** @beunapologetic (all platforms)



**GABE JAVIER**

Gabe Javier is the director of the LGBT Campus Center and the interim director of the Multicultural Student Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Javier said his work is "deeply rooted in intersectionality." He strives to create spaces on campus where students can build coalitions and blossom in their identities.

"I like to concentrate my work on creating durable and sustainable communities. Places where people can find each other and find haven spaces and, thereby, be their true and authentic selves,"

he said. "That takes a lot of trust, and trust is built on experience of doing really intentional work and gaining that trust."

Javier started his career at the University of Michigan, where he earned his masters in higher education administration. At Michigan, he was a sexual violence educator with a focus on men. He credits that experience with helping him develop his social justice standpoint. "You can't un-ring a bell or un-crack an egg. Once I started working with people who were doing amazing work around sexual violence prevention and getting men involved, I couldn't not be involved in undoing misogyny and rape culture," he said. "That translated into my own activism with my gay identity and community organizing. It is all related."

In his six years at the U.W.-Madison, he is particularly proud helping to improve health care options for trans-identified students, the opening of the Black

Cultural Center, and developing Crossroads, a partnership between the LGBT Campus Center and the Multicultural Student Center. "We are purposefully and institutionally putting resources out there for intersectionality," Javier said.

**CONNECT:** [lgbt.wisc.edu](https://lgbt.wisc.edu) & [msc.wisc.edu](https://msc.wisc.edu)



**YVETTE PINO**

Initially, Yvette Pino planned to join the United States Army Reserves to supplement her income as a stagehand, but the September 11, 2011 terrorist attacks caused her to reevaluate her decision. "I had a 'what if' moment," she said. "Could I live with myself for the rest of my life if I failed to follow through?"

After completing two tours of duty in Iraq, Pino eventually moved to Madison with her wife and enrolled as an undergraduate in the Art department at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. On top of being a veteran, at 27, she was older than most of her classmates. "I saw students appropriating military subject matter (in their art), but they had no connection to the Army, despite years of (United States) warfare," she said. "The only way people were going to understand one another was to open up these conversations."

Pino created the Veteran Print Project to facilitate conversations between artists and military veterans. She saw the project as a way to allow civilians to better understand the veteran experience, but also provide an outlet for veterans to find support in their communities.

"I wanted to help vets who were isolating themselves com-

municate and learn to tell their stories," Pino said. "We can sometimes put things visually that we can't put into words. I like to use art to tell stories, and every person has a story."

Pino recently partnered with veterans from around the country to launch the Veteran Art Movement. The collective of veterans use art for healing and to challenge society to think about the effects of militarism. **CONNECT:** [veteran-art-movement.net](https://veteran-art-movement.net)



**TODD AVELLAR**

Todd Raymond Avellar is a Fresno, California native and earned his Ph.D. in counseling, clinical, and school psychology from the University of California-Santa Barbara. Avellar came to Madison last year as a post-doctoral resident at the University of Wisconsin.

Avellar emphasizes diversity and social justice in his work, using an approach called Multicultural Feminist Therapy to inform his practice. This focus prioritizes figuring out how to help clients based on their needs and values. "It challenges healthcare providers to think about their inherent power, privilege, and biases," Avellar said. "This style of therapy is inherent to social justice work."

As a first-generation college student, Avellar said he wants to serve as a model for his younger family members to pursue their passions. "I encourage them to follow their dreams and go where they need to go," he said. Avellar enjoys mentoring students and will start a job as an assistant professor at a university in Pennsylvania this fall.



**ELIJAH HOLMES**

Elijah Holmes is a recent graduate of Madison East High School. Holmes began cultivating his standpoint as a leader when his sixth-grade teacher nominated him for the Pre-College Enrichment Opportunity Program for Learning Excellence (PEOPLE,) a program to help ambitious students of color enroll at University of Wisconsin-Madison. "I thought it was a good way to meet new people and prepare for college," Holmes said.

Six years later, Holmes is excited to start his freshman year at U.W.-Madison on a full-tuition scholarship. "I plan to study

psychology and education. I hope to get my medical degree."

During his time at East, Holmes was the co-chair of the Gay Straight Alliance. In that role, he aimed to make his school more inclusive for LGBTQ students. The GSA successfully campaigned for gender-neutral bathrooms and altering the school's health curriculum to better serve the needs of LGBTQ students. He also encouraged GSA participants to learn more about the contributions of LGBTQ people, using some of their meeting time to study history. "I found pride in who I was," Holmes said. "I saw other people who were Black and gay, like me, doing great things."

While in high school, Holmes was involved with GSAFE, a statewide non-profit for LGBTQ students. He participated in GSAFE's Foundations of Leadership class, and was one of four seniors to receive a college scholarship from the organization. **CONNECT:** [linkedin.com/in/elijah-holmes-3b4243141](https://www.linkedin.com/in/elijah-holmes-3b4243141)

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# The Youth Advocate

**ALI MULDROW** is the director of youth programming at GSAFE, a statewide organization with a mission to create inclusive school communities where LGBTQ+ youth can thrive. At GSAFE, Muldrow created and facilitated the New Narrative Project, a program focused on amplifying the voices of incarcerated youth.

Muldrow's commitment to young people compelled her to run for the Madison School Board in 2017. As a product of Madison's public schools, Muldrow sought to take down barriers to success for students of color and LGBTQ+ students. Muldrow won a three-candidate primary election with over 40 percent of the vote. Although Muldrow did not win the general election, her campaign sparked conversation in the Madison community around creating nurturing environments for all of Madison's students.

Muldrow is a founding member of Black Girls are Magic. The group is committed to making sure Black women and children in Madison have places where they feel welcomed through organizing family-friendly gatherings across the city. Last year, the group walked in the Juneteenth parade, organized a trip to the Dane County Farmers' Market on Madison's Capitol Square, and a series of brunches. Muldrow was the inaugural recipient of the Carola Gaines Collaborator of Year award at Wisconsin's Black Women's Leadership Conference in 2016.

**CONNECT:** ali@gsafewi.org



**RONNIE GRACE**

Ronnie Grace is a Milwaukee-based HIV/AIDS prevention activist and advocate. After contracting the virus over 30 years ago, Grace was compelled to act because he wanted to put a face to people living with HIV. "It is not a death sentence. We can have healthy, full lives," Grace said.

It is particularly important for Grace to foster support networks for people in Milwaukee affected by HIV/AIDS. Through his work with Diverse & Resilient, a non-profit focused on LGBTQ+ issues, Grace facilitates Sisters Helping Each Other Battle AIDS (SHEBA), a bi-weekly support group for African-American transwomen.

Grace said 70 percent of people

living with HIV will be over 50 by 2020. He wants to draw attention to the needs of older adults living with HIV/AIDS and do more to support and engage them as they age. "I was 28 when I found out. I never thought I would reach 30, and now I'm 59," Grace said. "I think [getting older] is going to be a new and exciting chapter of my life. I am looking forward to another 30 years of living and thriving." **CONNECT:** rgrace@diverseandresilient.org



**DANA PELLEBON**

Dana Pellebon is the director of Housing at Porchlight Inc., the largest provider of low-cost housing for homeless men, women, and children in Dane County. She's been dedicated to communi-

ty service her entire life, and has a particular interest in issues that impact women. Pellebon was on the Board of Directors for Domestic Abuse Intervention Services and partnered with the YWCA and the Salvation Army to develop Second Chance, a program that helps low-income families transition from homelessness into stable housing.

In addition to her community work, Pellebon is passionate about the arts. She's produced more than 60 plays since 2000. She is also a director, actor, and former "caburlesque" performer. "My drive is to make sure that stories (of marginalized people) are told and represented," she said. "It's huge, in Madison, to be able to have representation."

Pellebon is also a mother to a 12-year-old son with autism; he has followed his mother and cultivated a passion for theater and social justice. "I am a pretty busy lady. My son comes with me to a lot of things," she said. "He should be involved in social justice issues, know how to be in meetings, and protest."

As a bisexual woman, Pellebon is committed to not letting the

opinion of others steal her joy. "My whole stance for all of it has been living openly and honestly and going from there. If people have issues with it, they have issues with it. That's yours, not mine," she said. "It's my journey, my body, my liberation." **CONNECT:** @ragingjourney on Twitter



**KEITH BORDEN**

As a classically trained opera singer, one of the most devastating moments in Keith Borden's life was losing his long-time voice teacher to a heart attack in 1999. "I physically couldn't sing," he said. "I was able to find my voice again through moving my body."

Borden was already a yogi but became more disciplined in his practice as a form of healing.

A few years later, in 2002, he completed his first yoga teacher training, and marketed his yoga offerings under the name reUnion yoga. "Yoga means union. It helped me find a needed reunion with myself," he said. "Yoga is a way to get back to who you are and who you are meant to be, to do the work you need to do."

Borden approaches his yoga practice from a spiritual perspective by "providing space for people to get close to their best and better selves." He teaches classes in Madison and all over the world. Borden has led workshops in the San Francisco Bay area, New York City, Germany, Canada, Spain, and Portugal.

One of his most meaningful teaching experiences was with the Madison East High School basketball team after the officer-involved shooting death of student-athlete Tony Robinson. "I took it as an opportunity to not only share yoga with them, but to share an example of other ways that Black men can present themselves," Borden said. "Representation is key—if you don't see people that look like you, you don't see yourself reflected."

Borden and his husband are also marriage equality activists. They were plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the state of Wisconsin that made it to the United States Supreme Court. In his free time, Borden enjoys reading, biking, traveling, and spending time with his young daughter. **CONNECT:** reunionyoga.com



**ARIEL LEBRON**

Ariel Lebron is a Madison-based burlesque and drag performer. As a gender-fluid person,

Lebron doesn't allow genres to confine or define their work. "There are overlaps in burlesque and drag. So many burlesque performers identify as LGBTQ," Lebron said. "Performers would benefit from collaboration to showcase everyone's ability."

Lebron's burlesque stage name, Melani Khandroma, represents their personality as a fluid sprite, a practical joker who is neither here nor there. Their drag persona, Anthony Savage, commands the stage as one of Madison's only drag kings. Savage recently earned a top-ten spot in the online drag competition, King Me.

As a Puerto Rican person, Lebron wants to increase visibility among Latinx performers in burlesque and drag. "My only goal is to inspire other Latinx performers who are interested or not sure if they can do it because of cultural boundaries, to show them it's possible," they said. **CONNECT:** facebook.com/MelaniKMadison



**JOCASTA ZAMARRIPA**

Politics has always been a passion for JoCasta Zamarripa. As a volunteer for John Kerry's presidential campaign in Milwaukee, Zamarripa discovered that her district had the lowest voter turnout in the Wisconsin. It is also home to the largest Latino population in the state.

Zamarripa decided to run for the 8th district assembly seat to increase civic engagement in her community. "That was the catalyst. I knew this would end up being my life's work," Zamarripa said. "I knew it would help to push back against anti-Latino and anti-immigrant sentiment, and also grow our

influence and power so we would be a productive, successful constituency." In 2010, she became the first Latina ever elected to the Wisconsin State Legislature.

When Zamarripa ran for her second term, she decided to come out as bisexual. Although she was afraid she would lose some support, it was more important for her to bring her entire self to her work as a legislator. "It was really painful spending my whole first term in the closet," she said. "I wanted to be a leader so during my first re-election I decided to run out and open."

Despite an uphill battle as a Democratic representative in a Republican-controlled state legislature, Zamarripa remains steadfast in advocating for policies that impact people of color and LGBTQ+ people. She wants to make sure undocumented people can access driver's licenses and alter antiquated language in state statutes to reflect the rights of same-sex couples.

Zamarripa said she loves

interacting with her constituents and is humbled to serve the people of Wisconsin. "The (Wisconsin) Assembly is 'the people's house.' I'm honored to represent the people on Milwaukee's near south side." **CONNECT:** facebook.com/Rep.Zamarripa



**AKSHAT SHARMA**

Akshat Sharma is a Ph.D. candidate in Medical Microbiology & Immunology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Sharma's work focuses on reconstituting human immune systems in mice to study human diseases, like HIV or cancer. Sharma said he hopes

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## Creating Our Spaces

**JOSHUA MOON JOHNSON** is an author, activist and assistant dean at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Johnson grew up in Mississippi and was raised by Pentecostal ministers. Johnson said he had a happy childhood, but recalls feeling othered and, at times, unsafe in his community. After completing a bachelor's and master's degree at the University of South Alabama and then the University of Alabama, he sought more inclusive spaces to live and pursue his career in higher education. "The more I moved around and got exposed to different social circles and spaces, the more I learned about how my upbringing and family really shaped and impacted me and how I saw myself."

Johnson earned his doctorate in education and LGBT studies from Northern Illinois University. His work centers on the experiences of queer people of color and how they navigate religious identity during college. "Creating inclusive spaces in higher education has been the focus of my career for over a decade," he said.

Johnson served as the director of the LGBT Center and the Women's Center at the University of California-Santa Barbara and supported students of color and queer students in his role with the Semester at Sea, an international study abroad program. "(Semester at Sea) challenged me to look at social justice, oppression, and privilege, from a broader and global lens," Johnson said.

At U.W.-Madison, Johnson helps students cultivate their voices as campus activists. He is particularly proud of supporting students who lobbied the university to open the Black Cultural Center and create Our Wisconsin, an initiative to improve the culture and climate at U.W.-Madison for all students. **CONNECT:** joshuamoonjohnson.com

his research will one day lead to lifesaving procedures for humans, like eliminating tumors and combating viruses like HIV.

"[Science is] so close to figuring out how to eradicate HIV," Sharma said. "That has been a driving force for why I am interested in [this research.]" Sharma has enjoyed his six years in Madison and enjoys the opportunities for personal and professional growth. "Madison is a lively town. Good food, cute boys, and great research." **CONNECT:** linkedin.com/ in/akshatsharma28



**RITA ADAIR**

Rita Adair is a retired social worker. For 30 years, she worked for the Dane County Department

of Human Services and the District Attorney's office. Although she saw value in her work, she felt there was more that could be done to make a difference. "When you work in a system, you are a Band-aid and often don't feel like you are solving the issues," she said.

Growing up, Adair's parents fostered children. She appreciated the life her parents were able to give her and her siblings, and wanted to provide the same comfort and security to others. As a foster parent, Adair cared for more than 23 girls. "With foster care, I knew I was making a difference and changing lives by providing a nurturing and safe home," she said. "A chance to dream."

When Adair came out at 45, she created the online group, "Lez In Color," for lesbians of color around the country to share information, events, and support one another. "Outside of campus, I never saw large numbers of women of color [in Madison]" she said. "Where are the women that look like me? What can we do to come together?"

After she retired, Adair moved to Chicago for six years and

started Adair Entertainment. Her parties attracted women from across the city, offering space for hundreds of women to connect. She recently returned to Madison, and is working to "find her niche back home." Currently, she is working on her first book and hopes to continue to create spaces for women of color in Madison.

**CONNECT:** facebook.com/groups/LezInColor/



**DERECK BARR-PULLIAM**

Dereck Barr-Pulliam is an assistant professor of accounting at the School of Business at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. As an undergraduate, Barr-Pulliam explored a host of majors and decided to enroll in an accounting

class. "I really liked and identified with it. It really made sense for me," he said. "I was encouraged by my professor who said 'you can pretty much do anything in business with an accounting degree.'"

After earning his MBA from the University of Mississippi, Barr-Pulliam worked as an accountant for six years before pursuing his Ph. D. He wanted to teach to show underrepresented students that they have a place in the business world.

"For our students, it's good for them to see people that they can aspire to. The more that they see someone they can identify with, it makes for a better experience for them, especially in the business school," he said. "We are seen as a very exclusive club over here, and majority white. Anyone that can break down those stereotypes, it is helpful not only for the school but the students, too."

Barr-Pulliam seeks to build relationships with students both inside and outside of the business school. "I am very busy, but I am also very visible," he said. "I try to cultivate relationships across the entire student body. It

is incumbent upon the faculty to make the school a more welcome environment."

After he completed his Ph.D. and was looking for a place to teach, it was important for Barr-Pulliam to live and work in a place where his family could feel comfortable and thrive. "I thought, 'Can I be who I am there? Can people know that I have a husband and I not face any backlash?'" he said. "Can my child grow up in this place and not face ridicule? Her having two dads, would that be taboo?" **CONNECT:** bus.wisc.edu/faculty/dereck-barr



**SHELTREESE MCCOY**

As a student at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, Sheltreese McCoy remembers how hesitant she was to come out. She attended LGBTQ student club meetings on campus, but did not see any other students who reflected her identity. After moving to New York and finding love and community, she made it her mission to recreate those spaces from queer students of color on their campuses.

McCoy is a Ph.D. candidate in educational leadership and policy analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Her research focuses on LGBTQ people and higher education. She puts her scholarship to work through the Crossroads Initiative, the country's first university-sponsored program for queer and trans students of color. McCoy founded Crossroads to help queer and trans students access critical services and build community on campus.

"We need to work with students at the intersections," McCoy said.

Some of the cornerstones of the Crossroads Initiative include Rooted, a bi-monthly discussion group for LGBTQ students of color, and QTPOC, an annual resource guide including books, organizations, websites, and articles that center on queer people of color.

"All aspects of the guide focuses on queer and trans people of color," McCoy said. "We were very intentional with how we named the guide so people could feel comfortable (accessing it)."

McCoy is a primary organizer for two national conferences, Creating Change and the Wisconsin Trans and Queer People of Color Summit, which bring students from around the country together to advance the interests of LGBTQ people. **CONNECT:** students.wisc.edu/msc/wp-content/uploads/sites/7/2016/10/QPOC-Crossroads-Resource-Guide.pdf



**VICTOR CRENTSIL**

Victor Crentsil is a technical services representative at Epic Systems. He is responsible for ensuring several hospitals using Epic's software can do so to the best of their ability to improve patient care. Crentsil is also a team-lead and involved in a variety of company-wide initiatives.

Crentsil has built relationships in Madison's LGBTQ+ community through participating in affinity groups, the Madison Minotaurs rugby team, and the First Baptist Church's Chancel Choir. Crentsil said that "visibility is crucial in ensuring that LGBT people, specifically those of color, don't feel isolated in Madison." **CONNECT:** victor.crentsil@gmail.com



**ALNISA ALLGOOD**

Alnisa Allgood describes her work as the "intersection of non-profits, technology, and community capacity building." She is the founder and executive director of Nonprofit Tech, a company that helps nonprofits use technology to work more efficiently. "We help organizations understand their technology needs and where they want to be in the future with their mission and service in mind," she said. "We want technology to be an amplifier for their message." Nonprofit Tech has worked with organizations all over the country, including Olbrich Botanical Gar-

dens and Consumer Action.

Allgood is also the founder and executive director of Collaboration for Good, Inc. a Madison-based company focused on building the capacity of for-profit or not-for-profit community service organizations. Allgood is passionate about this work because she thinks it is important to invest in communities so they can thrive. "I am a really strong believer in social and civic responsibility and the capacity that communities have to be supportive of their populations," she said. "I don't believe you can have a vibrant city or a growing neighborhood if you totally ignore the things that make that space useful and engaging for the individuals that exist in it. A lot of that comes from the social good sector."

Collaboration for Good plans the annual Madison Nonprofit Day Conference, the Social Good Summit, and partners with Forward Fest, Madison's premier tech and entrepreneurship festival.

Allgood's interest in technol-



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## Expresión Artística

**ROLANDO CRUZ** is a multimedia artist. He moved to Madison shortly after he graduated from high school. As an undocumented immigrant and openly gay Latino, he faced immense challenges coming to terms with his sexuality and integrating into a new culture. Eventually, he enrolled in a photography class at Madison College. He used photography to find his voice, in a society that often silences marginalized people.

“As an immigrant, you often find yourself in the shadows and behind the scenes,” he said. “I want to confront this perception and illuminate the value of not only our Latino community, but additionally our gay community.”

As an artist, Cruz uses his work to challenge people to question their assumptions about identity. In a recent photo exhibit, Cruz used a series of self portraits representing different cultures and ethnicities.

“A lot of people didn’t realize that it was the same person in the self portraits. The whole idea was for them to become aware of their unconscious bias,” Cruz said. “I wanted them to ask themselves, ‘what do I feel about this person versus this other person if the only thing that changes is the color of the skin and the outfits they are wearing?’”

Cruz’s work interrogates themes like identity, displacement, and social perceptions. His work has appeared in several locations throughout Madison and Chicago, and is featured in several magazines and recently exhibited at the Overture Center, Justified Art and CelebrARTE, 2016. **CONNECT:** Rolandocruz.com

ogy started in college. At Penn State, she discovered her first computer. “There was kind of no stopping me after that,” she said. As a tech generalist, she is passionate about learning any and all things related to computers and technology that can help the sector. Allgood was the founder and inaugural director of the LGBT Campus Center at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. **CONNECT:** @nonprofit\_tech on Twitter & collab4good.org



**CEDRIC ELLIS**

As the Executive Vice President & Chief Human Resources Officer at CUNA Mutual Group, the leading provider of insurance and financial services to credit unions and their members worldwide, Cedric Ellis sees the importance of

a company’s values reflecting its culture. He wanted to help create a place where people could bring their whole selves to work.

“This is the first time I’ve worked for a company whose purpose I believe in and can rally behind. It’s a unique situation to be in, that’s why I’ve stayed here for 12 years,” Ellis said. “We’ve wrapped our arms around diversity and inclusion as a strategy to create a culture that embraces and leverages diversity, not just as an employer, but in the marketplace. I’ve worked for other companies where I had to hide that I am a part of the LGBT community. Not here. CUNA Mutual Group embraces me for who I am, and we work to embrace all differences, regardless of the dimension of diversity.”

CUNA Mutual Group’s mission to help all people, regardless of their financial status, invest in their futures resonated with Ellis. As one of 11 children, and the only one of his siblings to graduate from college, he is uniquely aware of how poverty can be a barrier to fulfilling your purpose. “I said ‘yes’ to CUNA because the company’s mission aligned with my own personal mission and my struggle, growing up poor,” he

said. “I see CUNA Mutual Group as a place where you can prosper.”

To help CUNA Mutual Group’s employees prosper, Ellis spearheaded the implementation of a company-wide diversity and inclusion program. A part of the program included the creation of employee resource groups, safe spaces for co-workers to connect around their identities. Under his watch, the company also established on-site medical clinics where employees and their families can receive health care.

Ellis makes it a point to share his story with young people. He serves on the Board of Directors for Big Brothers, Big Sisters of Dane County. Ellis said mentorship was an integral part of his success. “Mentorship was a big thing for me as a kid, that is how I pay it forward,” he said. “How can I give kids of color an opportunity to see the world bigger than where they live? That was critical for me, and my mentors helped me navigate my way.”

Ellis said expanding his perspective has opened him up to the rest of the world. Travel is one of his passions. He has visited every continent and approached each experience with respect and humility.

“I’ve had the fortune to see a lot of different cultures. I walk into a new place eyes-wide-open, seeking to learn as much as I can.” **CONNECT:** cedric.ellis@cunamutual.com



**M ADAMS**

M Adams is the co-executive director of Freedom Inc., an organization dedicated to ending violence within and against communities that identify as low-income, gender-nonconforming, women, people of color, youth, and elders.

Adams came to Madison from Milwaukee in 2002 as an undergraduate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Seeing how students of color and queer students were treated on campus helped Adams to cultivate their activist standpoint. “I was able to

ADAMS PHOTO BY ASHLEIGH BING.

have a bird’s-eye view of how the system impacts people of color,” they said.

In addition to their work with Freedom Inc., Adams is a member of The Movement for Black Lives, a national collective of organizers that developed a platform for liberation for Black people following the shooting death of Michael Brown by a police officer in Ferguson, MO. Freedom Inc. also partnered with other local activist organizations that called for justice after the officer-involved shooting death of Tony Robinson in Madison.

Although Adams thinks Madison has a long way to go before it can be a place that is truly welcoming to all people, their vision is clear. “When I think of what Madison can be, it should be a place where queer folks of color can thrive. Where our economic, social, and political needs are all fully met, and we can perform and live well under it,” Adams said. “At the root of it, it is about being able to live our fullest lives.” **CONNECT:** freedom-inc.org



**ALAN MORALES**

Alan Morales is a recent graduate of Madison West High School. Morales was always passionate about political advocacy for queer people of color, but said the death of a close friend compelled them to increase their impact as an activist. “I wanted to be more involved,” they said.

Morales’ is a leader in the Madison West High School Gay-Straight Alliance. The GSA was instrumental in establishing gender-neutral restrooms and a gender-neutral homecoming court.

MORALES PHOTO BY SPENCER MICKA.

Morales is also the student body vice president at West High, the first QPOC elected to the position in the school’s history. For his efforts, Morales was one of four seniors to receive a college scholarship from GSAFE, a Wisconsin-based nonprofit dedicated to creating more inclusive environments for LGBTQ students.

Outside of school, Morales also sits on the Dane County Public Protection and Judiciary Committee. They volunteer with several local and national organizations, including the Human Rights Campaign, and the Democratic Party of Wisconsin. Morales’ dream is to run for United States Senate. They will attend college in Santa Barbara, California this fall. **CONNECT:** @alan\_manuel17 on Instagram



**AMBER SOWARDS**

Amber Sowards is a Madison-based photographer. Sowards sees photography as a way to show the complexity of the human spirit. “My photography is made to show empathy, raw emotion, and intimacy,” they said. “The beauty, in the pain, in the wanting, is what I want to find and capture. I think that LGBTQ community has a direct relationship to that.”

Sowards does not like to place a lot of importance on labels, and sees themselves as a creative spirit on a journey to find their place in the universe. “I know (labels) are important to the world because that is the first thing they see,” they said. “For me, I am just a being, a soul still looking for a place to settle in and find a little bit of peace and self-reflection.” **CONNECT:** ambersowards.com



**BERNIE HOES**

Bernie Hoes is lucky enough to do what he loves every day. As an English Instructor at Madison College, Bernie said education is “in his blood,” and he knew as a child he wanted to be a teacher.

Bernie’s path to the classroom was not a direct one. He dropped out of undergrad, partied, and waited tables before returning to school at 28 to finish his degrees. It’s an experience, Bernie said, that helps him to connect with his students, many of whom are students with various life experiences, and at varying stages of their academic, personal, and

professional lives.

“Here at Madison College, I am blessed to work with young adults, returning adults, veterans. You name it, I have it in my classroom,” he said. “I like it because people are at the point where they are making life decisions. For instance, I tell my younger students ‘the decisions you make now will impact the rest of your life.’”

In his 20 years living in Madison, Bernie has immersed himself in the community. He currently serves as a Community Representative for Community Shares of Wisconsin, and on the Overture Center Community Advisory Board. In the past, he served on the board of directors for the Out Professional Engagement Network and as Board Co-Chair for GSAFE.

Bernie enjoys living in Madison, but said he is aware of the challenges Black, gay men face in making authentic connections in the city. “I am acutely aware of the statistics and experiences highlighted in 2013’s Race to Eq-

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# Belonging, Connecting, Resisting

**Laura Klunder** is a social worker and community organizer. She came to the United States in 1985 and identifies as a bi-national adoptee from Korea. After living in Wisconsin and attending the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Klunder returned to South Korea to do political organizing work with adult adoptees and reconnect with her first mother and siblings. During her time there, she also worked with Adoptee Solidarity Korea, a group that advocates for the rights of single women to raise their children. Klunder also partnered with a Korean NGO to expand the definition of family to include LGBTQ+ single parents and families. In 2015, Klunder's story was featured in the *New York Times Magazine*.

Currently, Klunder works as the program director for Inclusion Education at the U.W.-Madison and oversees the Division of Student Life's "Our Wisconsin" program. The initiative was created in 2016 to make the university more inclusive for all students, including cultural competency training for all undergraduate first-year students. Klunder sees U.W.-Madison as "a place of belonging and a place to resist." She will start her Ph.D. in social welfare this fall. **CONNECT:** [laura.klunder@wisc.edu](mailto:laura.klunder@wisc.edu)



uity Report for African Americans in Madison & Dane County," he said. "I live and witness these experiences in my day-to-day interactions here in Madison." Bernie makes it a point to build social ties in his existing networks and make himself a resource for others.

"As a single, Black gay man, it is not a walk in the park, but I am fortunate enough that I've created a supportive and strong circle of friends," he said. "I like to talk to people and be supportive of younger LGBTQ people, especially those of color. I make it a point to reach out to them to say 'Hi, I see you. And genuinely want to know who you are.'"



**DIEGO CAMPOVERDE**

Diego Campoverde is the Senior Marketing Communications Coordinator (Bilingual) at Quartz Health Solutions. Originally from Ecuador, Campoverde moved to Madison in 2002 after completing his degree in communications

from the University of Azuay. Campoverde worked for Mid-West Family Broadcasting for over a decade. On his radio show, he prioritized the needs of the Latino community, using his time slot to share information about programs and resources that could benefit his listeners. "It is in my nature to be a communicator. That is how I get involved with many organizations across Madison," he said.

Campoverde's interest in the community led him to co-found two organizations, Alianza Latina and Orgullo Latinx LGBT+. Both groups prioritize supporting the LGBTQ+ community in Dane County. As a communications expert, Campoverde is particularly proud of Orgullo Latinx's ability to use social media to reach beyond Madison's borders to create a global community of LGBTQ+ people and allies.

"We are able to provide critical info about the LGBTQ+ community in Madison and all over the world. It is important to be able to communicate with our allies and talk about who we are," he said. "The Latino community still has a lot of misconceptions about LGBTQ folks. We are creating a bridge across (multiple communities) to help them better understand what it means to be LGBTQ+."

Campoverde is involved in

Quartz's diversity and inclusion committee and thinks it is important to be open with his co-workers about the unique needs of the LGBTQ+ community. "It has been quite a journey for me to be openly gay. My involvement with many organizations in Madison that focus on LGBTQ+ Latinx communities has really helped me to become the person I am now," he said.

"I know there are risks involved—there are still—but I feel more free and safe. When I talk in meetings, I talk about my partner and my community. I am very comfortable being who I am in the workplace." **CONNECT:** [facebook.com/orgullolatinxlgbt](https://www.facebook.com/orgullolatinxlgbt)



**GARY COOPER-SPERBER**

Gary Cooper-Sperber is a senior academic advisor at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. He has been a part of the UWM community for over a decade, completing his undergraduate

and graduate education there. Cooper-Sperber was a member of UWM's first class of lavender graduates and received a student award from the LGBT Resource Center for his community service work.

Cooper-Sperber decided to pursue higher education to increase the visibility of LGBTQ+ people of color at universities and to give students a reflection of themselves. "I think it is important to have as much representation of queer people of color as possible in higher education to encourage others in our community to take advantage of it," he said.

As a student advisor, Cooper-Sperber enjoys building relationships with LGBTQ+ students and students of color on campus. He sees education as a powerful tool for marginalized people to use to uplift themselves and serve their communities.

"As a Black, queer, cis male, I think it is important for me to give back to my community as much as possible," he said. "I can connect education to my community by helping students come through (UWM) and work on the inside to ensure institutional policy is more fair and not systemically oppressive towards certain groups." **CONNECT:** [facebook.com/coopergary](https://www.facebook.com/coopergary) & [@GaryCCooper](https://twitter.com/GaryCCooper) on Twitter

KLUNDER PHOTO BY MARK NEVILLE.



**ALIX SHABAZZ**

Alix Shabazz is the CEO of Debra's Love Cooperative, a collective of queer entrepreneurs of color with a mission to build capital to support small businesses. Debra's Love is named for two mother figures in Shabazz's life who nurtured their LGBTQ+ children and provided support and solace for other youth.

"There is this myth that Black people are more homophobic than anyone else and that Black parents don't support queer kids," Shabazz said. "These are two mothers with queer and trans children, and they have been mothers for all of us."

Shabazz's entrepreneurial endeavors include Butiq, an online concept to thrifting and CocoaBean, a handmade beauty company. Shabazz also works at Madison's Tenant Resource Center. In her role, she provides services for Black, queer folks who are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Shabazz served as an organizer at Freedom Inc., but decided to step away to focus on starting her own business and prioritizing self-care. She still considers herself an activist, but is serving the community in a different capacity. "I like not being in the public eye. It's a tough place to be to have every part of you scrutinized," Shabazz said. "A big part of organizing is direct services, and the transition to fully doing direct service has been beneficial to my mental health." Shabazz also helps train other activists as co-coordinator of the Neighborhood Organizer's Institute at Lussier Community Education Center. **CONNECT:** [facebook.com/butiqthrift](https://www.facebook.com/butiqthrift)



**TIFFANY VIRAG**

Tiffany Virag is an orthopedic board-certified physical therapist. She moved to Madison 12 years ago to pursue advanced training in manual physical therapy. Three years ago, she opened her own practice, Madison Physical Therapy and Consulting. Virag started her business to better serve patients who are under-insured or who've experienced automobile and workplace accidents.

"I saw these gaps in health care that no one was really addressing," Virag said. "It could take four to six weeks for people to get appointments. Physical therapy doesn't work if you can't get in for treatment. A lot of clinics don't target (automobile and workplace injury) populations. Additionally, some people could not afford their co-pays or deductibles." Virag also assists patients with return to work testing to help them find new career options after they've suffered a life-changing injury and may not be able to return to their current or former line of work.

Virag is an animal lover and has a side business, Pawsitive Results PT, which focuses on physical therapy for rescue dogs. She felt compelled to act after police raided a puppy mill in Ohio, and she saw the condition of some of the animals.

"One of the dogs was so weak he couldn't lift his head up against gravity. I spent a couple of weeks with the dog, helping him get stronger and have a normal life," she said. "There is a need for this, and rescue groups don't necessarily have the money to pay for it. I wanted to make it a part of my business."

During her free time, Virag enjoys biking. She is a member of the Bombay Bicycle Club and said Madison is a great place for cyclists. "The cycling community caused me to stay; a lot of them have become family over the years," she said. "If you get just outside of Madison on a bike, it is so beautiful." **CONNECT:** [madisonptandconsulting.com](https://www.madisonptandconsulting.com) & [pawsitiveresultspt.com](https://www.pawsitiveresultspt.com)



**COOPER TALBOT**

Cooper Talbot is at her best when she is in the studio. "Music is a big part of my life; there is always that one song that lifts you,"

she said. As a host of "Her Infinite Variety" on WORT, Madison's community radio station, Talbot likes to use her weekly show to bring joy to her listeners. "People have a wonderful time with me sharing my voice and music."

Talbot moved to Madison in 2011 from New Jersey to join the Madison Cougars (now the Madison Blaze), a professional women's football team. After suffering an injury, she was forced to retire prematurely from the game.

Leaving football caused Talbot to evaluate what truly made her happy, and she found her niche in Madison's creative scene. In addition to DJing, Talbot is also passionate about theater. She serves as an executive board member at StageQ, a theater company dedicated to telling the stories of LGBTQ people.

"Working with StageQ really puts me in touch with the LGBTQ community," she said. Talbot has both written and produced plays during her time at StageQ. "There is a sense of togetherness when

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# Serving the Community

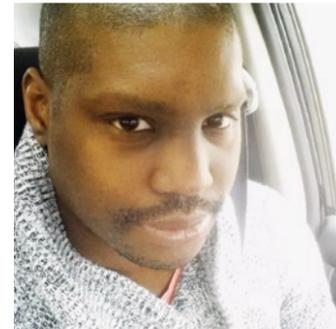
**SYD ROBINSON** is the LGBTQ advocate at the Milwaukee LGBT Community Center. Robinson started his career at the Center as a member of Public Allies, an AmeriCorps service organization. He credits Public Allies for cultivating his interest in activism. "That is how my mind got turned on to being of service to my community. That was the best decision I've made so far," he said.

Robinson worked with the ACLU of Wisconsin as the state's youth organizer. Although he enjoyed his work with the organization, he wanted to be more directly involved with the LGBTQ+ community and decided to return to the Center. "I am a trans person who has been very blessed in the things that I've been able to do and the people that I've been able to work with. I wanted to give back to my own community, especially LGBTQ youth of color," he said. For his work, Robinson received the Gary Hollander Adult Leadership Award from Milwaukee non-profit, Diverse & Resilient.

In addition to his advocacy work, Robinson is an actor and DJ. He recently got involved with a DJ collective in Milwaukee, with a mission to create safe social spaces for marginalized communities. **CONNECT:** [gofundme.com/sydrobbie](http://gofundme.com/sydrobbie)



you are working on a show," she said. "A good show only succeeds with the whole cast." **CONNECT:** [@herinfinitevariety](https://www.facebook.com/herinfinitevariety) on Facebook



**DUANE HERRON**

Duane Herron is the Midwest Regional Coordinator for Great Lakes Hemophilia Foundation. In his role, Herron manages federal grants to monitor 14 hemophilia treatment centers that care for over 5,000 patients.

With almost 20 years of experience in public health, Herron was motivated to enter the field after losing both his biological and adopted mothers to heart disease when they were in their 40s.

"I wish they were still here," he said. "If they had taken better care of themselves, or if the health system was a little more kind to them, despite their lack of resources, they'd probably still be here."

Herron balances his work with his passion for drag performance. Since 1998, Herron has performed across the country as Symphony Alexander Love. For Herron, drag was a way to continue to explore performance and hold on to childhood values. "I was a professional baton twirler as a kid, and also musically inclined," Herron said. "Drag allowed me to perform and be modest. I could cover my body and learn how to entertain at the



same time."

Symphony is Herron's drag name. She has been a finalist at several national drag pageants. Symphony currently holds the title of Miss Wisconsin USofA at Large. Symphony said younger drag performers seek her out as a mentor since she is not only a successful performer but also career oriented. "I wanted to be the drag queen who was also a professional during the day. It allows people to look up to me and respect me for my contributions on and off stage," she said.

Even though she is a veteran performer, Symphony only has three drag children. To be attached to her legacy, it is key that you possess what it takes to be a successful drag performer. "I am a strict mother; to be a true child, you have to possess talent, and you have to be smart," she said. "Drag is a business, if you don't have any business smarts, you are not going to survive. If you don't have any talent, you are not going to get booked." **CONNECT:** [badger2305@gmail.com](mailto:badger2305@gmail.com)



**VICTOR RAYMOND**

Victor Raymond is a sociology professor at Madison College. As a member of the Lakota Sioux tribe, Raymond is two-spirit, which encompasses his identity as a bi-sexual, bi-racial man. He believes that LGBTQ+ people need broader, culturally responsive definitions of identity. "If you look at communities of color and Native culture, you will see that there are different understandings of gender and sexuality that do not fall neatly into the labels that we use," he said. "We ought to be ready to recognize a rainbow of understanding."

Raymond has been a political

activist since college and works to advance causes affecting bisexual people. He served on the board of directors for BiNet USA, a nonprofit that seeks to connect the bisexual community. He was invited to the White House to speak about the needs of bisexual people. He was also a member of the Indigenous People's Task Force. Raymond believes that politics is at the root of education and social change. "You can't be an educator without addressing issues of political importance. I don't think you can build community without looking at politics as an arena for change," he said. "If you are going to make the world a better place, politics is where that work needs to be done."



**ASHLI LYLES**

Ashli Lyles is a rising senior at Madison East High School. Lyles serves on GSAFE's Youth Leadership Board. Lyles considers herself a "general advocate for folks with marginalized identities" and centers their work around consent and self-love.

Witnessing the marginalization of queer people of color compels Lyles to call out injustice. "In most places, queer people of color are often put on the back burner and disregarded when it comes to equality," Lyles said. "Being a QPOC has pushed me to fight for racial justice and LGBTQ+ rights because I see and feel the effects of oppression against these groups firsthand every day."

Lyles is also a photographer and enjoys using their camera to capture beauty in their community. Lyles thinks that photography is a hobby that is accessible for a

variety of people, and it represents their idea that everyone can lead in their own way. "I believe that capturing moments that make you happy is an amazing act of self-care that you can always keep with you," Lyles said. "Anyone can press a button and take picture."



**AMBER C. WALKER**

Amber C. Walker is a Madison-based writer. She unapologetically centers her work around stories from communities that are ignored by mainstream media sources. She has a particular affinity for the narratives of Black womyn and LGBTQ+ folks, which is why she was so excited to partner with *Our Lives* magazine to write its first QPOC Pride List. She hopes that this list will facilitate connections among QPOC folks around our state and celebrate the work we do in service to ourselves and our communities.

Walker attended Oberlin College and double majored in Africana Studies and Gender/Sexuality/Feminist Studies. Walker decided on Oberlin because of its history of providing safe spaces for people of color, womyn and LGBTQ+ folks. Oberlin provided the support she needed to articulate her identity and find community among people who shared similar experiences.

After graduating from Oberlin, Walker moved to Miami, Florida, where she served as an AmeriCorps member and taught an after-school civic engagement program at Miami Northwestern Senior High School. After a year at "The West," Walker was accepted into Teach for America and

joined the staff at the school as an English teacher.

Walker came to Madison after accepting a job at a local health-care IT company and quickly realized money can't buy (enough) happiness. She decided to pursue writing full-time, and after almost a year of the freelance hustle, she accepted a job as the K-12 education reporter for the *Capital Times* in Madison. She is grateful that her work allows her to maintain a

connection to young people and the classroom while developing her craft as a writer. When she does not have a pen in her hand or her head in a book, Walker enjoys weekend jaunts to her hometown of Chicago and live-tweeting her favorite shows. **CONNECT:** [@ACWalker620](https://twitter.com/ACWalker620) on Twitter



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**METHODOLOGY STATEMENT:** The QPOC Pride List was compiled over several months and through various methods, including a call for nominations that went out weekly through the *Our Lives* e-newsletter, social media platforms, and website. We also drew from our own personal connections, people who had previously appeared in or helped out with the magazine, and both personal and professional referrals. Everyone who was nominated was then contacted directly by the reporter for their permission to appear in the list and to obtain an interview (some folks respectfully declined to be included). We recognize that this list is far from exhaustive, but hope that it provides a launching-off point for future, expanded lists and profiles/features within the magazine generally. Many thanks to everyone who helped make this happen.

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# And Yet, We Persist

We're still striving toward equity in health care. **Ngozi S. Nwangwa** surveys Dane County's resources for LGBTQ+ providers, support groups, advocates, and the challenges that remain.

**FOR THOSE IN THE LGBTQ+** population who are fortunate enough to have medical insurance, coverage is only the first step toward having one's health care needs met. When navigating the health care realm, members of our community may encounter anything from a general lack of inclusive providers to microaggressions and outright discrimination. To ensure that we can receive equitable care when visiting medical facilities, there must be in place measures that pave the way toward access to competent health care providers.

In a relatively progressive city like Madison, there is a prevalence of people and organizations who are willing to direct members of the LGBTQ+ community to existing medical resources. Whether it is queer-inclusive provider directories, LGBTQ+-centered health care seminars, or queer friendly associations willing to be supportive throughout the search, many Madison residents can either find the medical resources they need in town, or receive assistance with how to and where else to seek them out.

## NATIONAL RESOURCES

If you do not already have a trusted primary caregiver, there are multiple resources you can utilize to find one who is right for you. One such resource is the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association (GLMA), originally called the American Association of Physicians for Human Rights. The GLMA website has a directory of queer-friendly physicians. To access the directory, find the patient resources link on the homepage and click on "Find a Provider." All are welcome to join the GLMA, including health care professionals, non-health care professionals, and students, with accompanying fees. For those who are able, there are also options for donating varying amounts to help sustain the organization. GLMA's message of inclusion and health care equality emphasizes the importance of education for health care professionals; their website also contains links to publications, as well as information regarding continuing education opportunities for medical practitioners. If you have a great caregiver who is not yet enlisted with GLMA, please encourage them to consider membership; the more resources available for the LGBTQ+ community, the better.



## LACK OF INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

Amanda Moe is an advanced practice Nurse Practitioner with 10 years of experience in her field. She is listed in the GLMA directory as having a patient/client focus of: Lesbians/WSW, Gay Men/MSM, Bisexual Men, Bisexual Women, Transgender-MTF, LGBT Families. Her perspective on the state of health care for the queer community is that of an insider and therefore interesting and insightful. In an interview with me, Amanda stated that the university where she completed her medical education was lacking in the incorporation of LGBTQ+ health care into its curriculum. This is not surprising, as too many universities have the same problem. However, the question is: how can significant curriculum changes be made, and which bodies are equipped to enforce these changes?

The Association of American Medical Colleges, or AAMC, is the organization that administers the MCAT

(Medical College Admissions Test) and is known as a power player in the standards of North American medical education. Daniel Marchalik wrote a piece in *Slate* magazine that highlighted the AAMC's response to the increased need for inclusive and competent care for those who are transgender, gender non-conforming, or born with disorders of sexual development (DSD). This medical educator "how-to" was published with the purpose of updating medical curriculum to include LGBTQ+ care. Though this guide has been used by an increasing number of medical schools in the U.S., there are still many more institutions that are behind on the standard of equity proposed by the guide.

The incidence of inadequate or incomplete medical training for serving the LGBTQ+ population makes continuing education as a practicing caregiver vital to inclusive health care. Amanda Moe is adamant that if care providers are motivated to serve a specific community or demographic in a medical area of interest, there are opportunities to seek out the means to do so. As a testament: Amanda heard of the GLMA and its provider directory while on such a knowledge expanding mission.

"I registered as a care provider of the LGBTQ community because I know there is a huge disparity by way of health care knowledge and the risk factors this community faces," she explained. When asked about the availability of resources for members of the LGBTQ+ community

to receive health care in Madison, Amanda continued, "I would say that there are a good number of resources in Madison for the LGB community. That said, I think there is a lack of resources and practitioners that are prepared to treat transgender patients. I am hoping that this will change and more education opportunities will be provided to practitioners."

## LOCAL RESOURCES

One benefit of Madison inhabitants' proximity to college campuses is the availability of queer community health events put on by ambitious student groups. U.W.-Madison's PRIDE in Health Care is a medical student-run organization whose meetings are posted on their Facebook page and open to all. Their mission is spelled out in their name: Promoting Recognition of Identity, Dignity and Equality in Health Care. PRIDE employs a multi-level approach to LGBTQ+ health care advocacy. The students work to strengthen LGBTQ+ cultural competency in the medical profession and collaborate with other students, health care professionals, and community members to improve the

PRIDE compiled a starter packet for primary care physicians to ensure appropriate LGBTQ+ patient interactions when administering health care.

health care experiences of queer people in Madison. With the help of a grant funded by the Dane County Medical Society, PRIDE compiled a starter packet for primary care physicians (PCPs) to ensure appropriate LGBTQ+ patient interactions when administering health care. Moreover, it contains a comprehensive introduction to the health disparities that the LGBTQ+ community experiences.

This LGBT Friendliness Kit also includes "LGBTQ+ 101" terminology and important questions PCPs should ask LGBTQ+ patients, the answers to which these individuals may otherwise be reluctant to divulge. In addition, Primary Care Physicians can find a list of resources to improve their care of the LGBTQ+ population, broken down as follows: Comprehensive, Transgender Health, Mental Health, Disorders of Sex Development/Intersex, Community and Regional Resources. Included in the Community and Regional Resources section are the GLMA, and Madison's own OutReach Center, both of which have directories in which PCPs and other health care providers can enlist.

## TRANSGENDER HEALTH CARE

As a member of the queer community, I have a personal stake in the establishment and preservation of equality in health care. Regarding medical care, I have experienced discrimination as a cis-gender woman, as a black person, and as a lesbian. However, my struggles have not lent any knowledge or insight into the ways in which the trans community has had to tread through a health care system that largely shuts them out. Therefore, it is essential that I and others within and outside the queer community work hard to remain informed on trans health issues, to become better advocates.

In Madison, there are trans-centered events that are open to anyone who wishes to learn more about trans health care issues, on both the local and national level. I attended one such event, titled "Transgender Health Care in Today's Political Climate," sponsored by the LGBT Senior Alliance, in conjunction with OutReach LGBT Community Center and the Madison Senior Center. One of the speakers was Jay Botsford, the Program Coordinator at the Wisconsin Trans Health Coalition (WTHC) and Transgender Youth Resource Network (TYRN) of Wisconsin. For all the advances in civil rights protections that represent

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## Self-Esteem or Self-Compassion?



ALEXANDER EISMAN, PSYCHOTHERAPIST  
ATLAS COUNSELING, LLC

While self-esteem is a primary ingredient in mental health, it doesn't address healing from times our self-esteem has been damaged. Many of us in the LGBTQ community have experienced challenge, rejection, or discrimination—and that's where self-compassion comes in. It allows us to extend a sense of compassion to ourselves when experiencing inadequacy, shame, or low self-worth. Self-compassion is effective in increasing a positive sense of self. It lays the groundwork for the healing, acceptance, and resilience that leads to a sustainable, positive sense of self.

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victories for the LBG population, there are still holes in legislation and stalls in social acceptance that continue to leave room for the lawful discrimination of members of the trans community.

While addressing a room of senior citizens and other attendees, Jay stressed that triumphs in health care, like the provisions put in place for transition care insurance coverage, are under attack with the impending repeal of the ACA. Moreover, based on the track record of this administration, Jay also voiced the universal concern that another hallmark

A so-called trans affirming provider, formerly of the Milwaukee area, referred to testosterone as "poison" when discussing the specifics of hormone treatment with a trans patient.

of the Affordable Care Act would not survive the healthcare overhaul. Specifically, Jay was referring to Subsection 1557, which paved the way for prohibiting the discrimination of individuals in healthcare based on gender identity and gender expression, an expansion of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, among other federal civil rights laws.

Amanda and Jay both advocated for the improvement of professional health curriculums to include comprehensive LGBQ+ (especially trans) healthcare education. Jay also spoke on an upcoming development in the access of safe and affirming health care for the local trans community. Not to say that there are no such resources available for trans individuals and health care providers looking to broaden their trans health care knowledge. FORGE, a Milwaukee-based organization that focuses on violence prevention and treatment for the trans com-

munity, has a directory of trans-friendly physicians in Wisconsin and Illinois. Public Health Madison and Dane County's (PHMDC) website lists a directory of providers who serve the lesbian, bisexual, and transgender community; however, you must register with the Wisconsin Well Woman Program office before contacting a care provider.

The problem, as Jay explained, is less the absence of such resources and more the lack of inclusivity: a so-called trans affirming provider, formerly of the Milwaukee area, referred to testosterone as "poison" when discussing the specifics of hormone treatment with a trans patient. The erasure of certain identities, like bisexuality, asexuality, polyamory practice and HIV-positive status, is also a problem on its own, often exacerbated if an individual also identifies as transgender.

The Madison Area Transgender Association (MATA) has set out to create a trans health care database to combat against these very exclusions. The providers will include doctors, nurses, alternative health, mental health, substance abuse treatment specialists and other non-discriminating, trans affirming care givers. The goal, as Jay mentioned, is to ensure that as many trans individuals as possible have access to a caregiver within 50 miles of their home, or about less than an hour drive.

**REACH OUT AND KEEP FIGHTING**

One of the best local resources for information, health and support services and advocacy opportunities is OutReach LGBT Community Center. OutReach also publishes its own directory of establishments, organizations, providers and services that are queer-friendly. Within the directory are multiple entries for health care related needs, including Pride in Health Care, Public Health Madison and Dane County, Journey Mental Health Center, the South Madison Health and Family Center and countless others. OutReach also partners with many organi-

zations, like MATA, to help sponsor talks like the recent "Transgender Health Care in Today's Political Climate." Most recently, program director Angie Rehling announced a partnership between OutReach and the Dane County founding chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) to provide a support group for those members of the LGBTQ+ community suffering from mental illness. More information can be found on OutReach's Facebook page.

Whether you are a member of the queer community or an affirming ally, there are many opportunities for you to advocate for the LGBTQ+ people in your life. And if you don't have any, go out and find some! Any of the organizations listed (and countless others) in this article can serve as a starting place for building community and informing your way towards standing up for social justice. Health care is a human right that far too many members of the queer community find themselves without; unfortunately, equality does not come easy and therefore we must all fight with and for one another. Attend social events and informative seminars! Contact your representatives and attend town halls to demand answers to these health disparities! Go on your own fact-finding missions at work, in public places, and at school and ask about their policies regarding insurance coverage for the LGBTQ+ population, and any other legislation affecting the life of queer people and queer families. If we all share in this fight together, our chances of winning are better than if we go it alone. Be well and stay vigilant. ■



**NGOZI S. NWANGWA**, known to most as Shirley, will be starting a Master's in Journalism at NYU this fall, with a concentration in literary reportage. Shirley is passionate about social justice, specifically issues that involve intersectional identity, mental health, and LGBTQ life. You can find her on Facebook and on Twitter, IG or tumblr @lovellin.

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**DAVID LACOCQUE**  
DAVID LACOCQUE, PSY.D.

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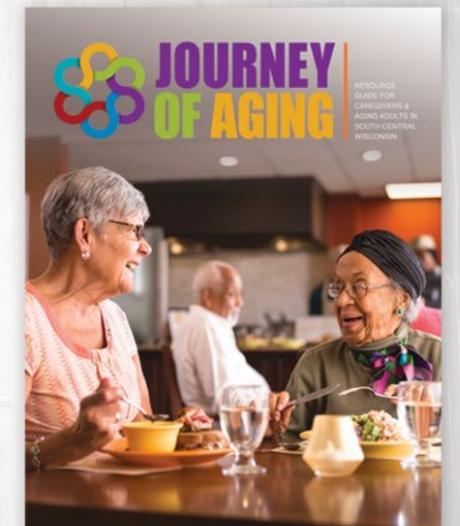
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# A Pink Plaque Tour of the Madison Area

In honor of our 10th anniversary, we asked historian **Dick Wagner** to update and expand the excellent **LGBTQ+ Madison historical walking tour** originally put together for our March 2010 issue. Included are some of the often-hidden gems of the city's vibrant LGBTQ+ past, including bars, homes, parks, and more.

## ON THE WALKING ROUTE

### 1 ST. FRANCES HOUSE (EPISCOPAL CENTER)

1011 University Avenue → Site of Madison's first formal gay organizations the Madison Alliance for Homosexual Equality (MAHE) and the Gay Sisters. It was a home for Integrity-Dignity, the local ecumenical Christian group, which has lasted 40 years and now uses St. Dunstan's Episcopal Church.

### 2 CAMPUS NEWMAN CENTER

723 State Street → The building next to St. Paul's was the site of the first Gay AA meetings in 1978, which subsequently moved to St. Francis House, the University Methodist Center, and Luther Memorial, and now is at First Congregational.

### 3 UW LAW SCHOOL

975 Bascom Hill → The gay law school student group spearheaded the drive for Madison's pioneering gay rights law in the early 1970s. The School's early annual conferences on women and the law was inclusive of lesbian topics and speakers. When the state bill repealing sodomy prohibitions was at hearing, students testified they were the only organized criminals in the law school.

### 4 UNION THEATER

800 Langdon Street → Home to the Haresfoot theatrical group in which cross-dressing men played the women's parts with a "pony" of chorines. In 1948, there was a quiet university investigation of the many gay men participating and being drawn to the group.

### 5 MEMORIAL UNION

The Madison Alliance for Homosexual Equality set up card tables for information on gay liberation here. When campus police tried to shut it down, the Wisconsin Students Association gave the group protection. The first Madison Pride event was MAHE Day in 1970 on May Day, the first of the month. The Rathskeller and Terrace were always cruisey places.

### 6 U.W. ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

650 North Lake Street → The Association was the first in the Big Ten

to have an LGBT alumni council. For many years the association president has been Paula Bonner, a proud member of the community.

### 7 JIM MCFARLAND & RICK VILLASEÑOR APARTMENT

227 Langdon Street → This gay couple were activists: McFarland an early out Alderman sponsored Alternative Families ordinances and was also a Republican. Villaseñor was an anti-ROTC activist on campus.

### 8 THORNTON WILDER'S BIRTHPLACE

140 Langdon Street → This gay writer, best known for his play *Our Town* and the 1972 Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey*, was born in Madison in 1897 and spent his early years here in the city until age nine.

### 9 GAY CENTER BEGINNINGS

10 Langdon Street → This building housed several countercultural institutions including the first shared offices of the Gay Center during the early 1970s.

### 10 RICARDO GONZALEZ HOUSE

504 Wisconsin Avenue → The apartments were home to many gay men, including Ricardo Gonzalez, who as alderman for the Fourth District, was the first out Latino official in the nation.

### 11 MOON TREE THERAPY

401 Wisconsin Avenue → Lesbian and gay supportive counseling has been offered here for decades. Will Handy, one of the counselors, was a founder of the Madison AIDS Support Network.

### 12 CLARENBACH HOUSE

123 East Gilman Street → In 1977, this was the home of Jim Yeadon, the first openly gay elected official in Wisconsin and only the fourth in the nation. In the early 1980s state representative David Clarenbach lived in the house while securing passage of the state's gay rights law, the first such law in the country. Later other lesbian and gay officials would reside in the house, including County Board Supervisors Lynn Haanen and Earl Bricker. Bricker lived here while serving as a gay liaison for Governor Anthony Earl.

**13 FAG MANOR** 133 East Gilman Street → This historic Mansion Hill building housed a powerful group of gay activists who were among the early contributors to the Gay Renaissance, the newsletter of the Gay Center in the 1970s.

**14 GAY SOCIAL CENTER** 301 North Hamilton Street → Above the current Pinkus McBride, the early gay center had offices on the second floor, and the space was used for some of the first gay dances in town. This was an important social space for gatherings in the community.

### 15 FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

203 Wisconsin Avenue → One of the strong inclusive churches, these Methodists have welcomed LGBT folks for many years. The Perfect Harmony Gay Men's Chorus, a gay male singing group, often performs here.

### 16 CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL AUDITORIUM

200 Block Wisconsin Avenue → This was the site of early women's music concerts. The much-appreciated lesbian Cris Williamson played here.

### 17 THE SOAP OPERA

319 State Street → This was one of the prominent gay-owned businesses that contributed to the vitality of downtown shopping. Longtime owners and power couple Chuck Bauer and Chuck Beckwith, also both artists, were known to boogie at the town's annual Frostiball, the high-society soiree.

### 18 COMMUNITY PHARMACY

341 State Street → Originally founded as the WSA Pharmacy, this co-op, outside the world of commercialized drugstores, was a pioneer in sexual health information and has had many LGBT staff. Out Chief Pharmacist Richard Kilmer carries on the tradition today.

### 19 A ROOM OF ONE'S OWN

307 West Johnson Street → Borrowing a title from bisexual author Virginia Woolf on the personal liberty needed by women to write, the store has always been a good source for LGBT books. At the Wisconsin Book Festival, LGBT authors are frequently featured here.



Madison's out elected officials with "Gay Liberation" circa 1989, left to right: Dane County Board Chair Richard Wagner, Madison Alder Jim McFarland, Dane County Supervisor Earl Bricker, Madison Alder Ricardo Gonzalez, Dane County Supervisor Kathleen Nichols, Dane County Supervisor Tammy Baldwin.



**20 LYSISTRATA BAR** Outdoor café space of 319 West Gorham Street → This much-mourned womyn's space was a popular bar, restaurant, and community space. An unfortunate fire took it away. The name derived from the Greek play where women seek to shape their own destinies and withhold sex from men in the interests of peace.

**21 GAY CENTER OFFICE** 550 State Street → Joining the real institutions in town, the Gay Center opened offices on this main thoroughfare on the second floor above Oriental Specialties.

**22 FOUR STAR VIDEO HEAVEN** 315 North Henry Street → David Smith, its early owner, specialized in making sure LGBT titles were available including international LGBT titles. Writer Dan Savage began his career as part of the friendly staff.

**23 FEDERAL COURTHOUSE** 120 North Henry Street → Federal District Judge Barbara Crabb made the ruling (assisted by the research of her gay law clerk) to allow marriage equality in Wisconsin. The building is named for Rep. Bob Kastenmeier who was an early sponsor of federal gay rights proposals.

**24 MALL BOOKS** 231 State Street → Was a popular destination for viewing sex videos.

**25 CIVIC CENTER (NOW OVERTURE CENTER)** 211 State Street → The performing arts center brought many gay artists like Rudolph Nureyev to town. Local productions of plays like *The Wiz* would feature Chuck Matthews, a gay African American, as the cowardly lion. Matthews served Dane County as affirmative action officer. A gay man was murdered in the cruising area behind the center. For many years on New Year's Eve, the Pink Party was held here using multiple floors for an upscale LGBT event. The Overture member companies have developed LGBT followings, some using affinity groups like "Out at the Opera."

**26 THE PIRATE SHIP** 201 State Street → This extravagantly decorated bar with a ship's rigging and mast inside was a popular gay spot. After closing, the parking lot was a cruise area. The Madison police reportedly took license plate numbers of folks' cars in the parking lot.

**27 THE STATE CAPITOL** Here in 1982, Wisconsin became the first state in the nation to pass a gay rights law prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. Originally

sponsored by Assemblyman Lloyd Barbee, an African American from Milwaukee, the measure was successfully championed by Representative David Clarenbach. Barbee also sponsored one of the first gay marriage laws in the nation with a bill introduced in the 1971 session. The state legislature nurtured the political careers of U. S. Congressmen Steve Gunderson (R-Osseo) and Mark Pocan (D-Madison) and Wisconsin's U. S. Senator Tammy Baldwin. This is the only state to elect three out persons to Congress. Governor Anthony Earl appointed Ron McCrea to be his press secretary in 1982 which the Milwaukee Sentinel trumpeted with the headline, "Avowed Homosexual." Earl also created the first-in-the-nation Governor's Council on Lesbian and Gay Issues in 1983. The building hosted the nation's Fifth Conference of LGBT officials in 1989. In May 1989 GALVANIZE organized the biggest Pride march to date on the Capitol Grounds. Many Pride events followed.

**27 THE CAPITOL SQUARE** The eight-block square with its pattern of circumference circulation has a history of gay cruising from World War II up into the 1970s. The presence of hotels with single gentleman travelers contributed to the milieu. The Lorraine Hotel bellhops were known to be part of a gay sexual network in the 1930s. The Belmont Hotel (now the YWCA) had its coffee shop listed in the gay guides of the 1960s. The long-running, multi-day AIDS bike ride in southern Wisconsin ended near the Capitol Square for many years.

**28 SENATOR TAMMY BALDWIN'S OFFICE** 30 West Mifflin Street, Suite 700 → The Madison office of the nation's first out U.S. Senator.

**29 THE BARTELL THEATRE** 113 E. Mifflin Street → Home to the LGBTQ+ StageQ and other theatrical groups which have presented quite a number of gay plays and performances over several decades, including Queer Shorts.

**30 FROMAGINATION** 12 South Carroll Street → This great cheese emporium with top-flight selections is among our gay-owned businesses. Take-outs include a selection of sandwiches plus wonderful cheeses that can be shipped.

**31 SHAMROCK BAR** 117 West Main Street → This popular and comfortable gay bar does a good brunch business and has existed seemingly forever on a block with a long history of gay bars, including Going My Way (aka the Gong Show). The Gong Show had three floors, a

women's bar on the lower level, a men's bar on the street level, and a top floor with disco dancing when it was really popular.

**32 DANE COUNTY COURTHOUSE** George Northrup, a gay man, was an early judge who helped devise AIDS policies for courts. Out LGBT judges Shelley Gaylord, Ellen Berz, and Rhonda Lanford have kept the tradition of inclusive justice going. These and other judges performed same-sex marriages when Dane County Clerk Scott McDonell began issuing marriage licenses on a Friday evening in June 2014, after a federal court ruling permitted them in Wisconsin.

**33 BALISLE FAMILY LAW** 131 W. Wilson Street, Suite 802 → Attorney Linda Balisle is a past president of the American Academy of Matrimonial Lawyers Wisconsin Chapter and helped many LGBT folks sort out new family situations. She served as president of Madison's OPEN, the city's Out Professional Engagement Network.

**34 CITY/COUNTY BUILDING** 210 Martin Luther King Jr. Boulevard → The city was among the early adopters of a non-discrimination ordinance based on sexual orientation in 1975, pushed by Mayor Paul Soglin and Equal Opportunities Commission Director Rev. James Wright. The ordinance survived the Anita Bryant-era attacks, due in part to the defense mounted by the United. Dane County adopted a like ordinance in 1980. James Yeadon, the gay member of the city's Equal Opportunities Commission, was appointed alderman in 1976 and elected to a full term in the spring of 1977 before San Francisco elected Harvey Milk in the fall of the same year. At times, 10% of the city council and county board have been out officials including, at present, longtime Alder Mike Verveer and County Supervisor Chuck Erickson. The building was the site of Domestic Partners registering their families decades before marriage equality arrived in the state.

**35 CONGRESSMAN MARK POCAN'S OFFICE** 10 East Doty Street, Suite 405 → The first out member of Congress elected to follow an out predecessor has his office here.

**36 FESS HOTEL** 123 East Doty Street → The first-ever gay community dinner-dance sponsored by the New Harvest Foundation was held in the renovated restaurant. The foundation was launched with an event at the old Civic Center hosted by Mayor Joe Sensenbrenner.

**37 WOOF'S BAR** 114 King Street → This gay bar, popular with bears and cubs, hosts an annual pride block party on King Street with community organizations staffing many booths.

**38 RUBIN'S** 317 East Wilson Street → This home décor store had several well-known gay staff members including Michael Schloemer. Some were flamboyant like J. J. Johnson, a presence unto himself. Sometimes other gay persons in town would be asked, "Surely you know J. J."

**39 CARDINAL BAR** 418 Wilson Street → Opened by Ricardo Gonzales initially as a gay bar, it was quickly popular with many progressive constituencies. One of the popular acts appearing at the bar was lesbian jazz singer Lynette.

**40 CHERI'S BACK EAST** 508 East Wilson Street → In the late 1980s this lesbian bar hosted pool tournaments where women and men could chalk up their cue sticks. It urged customers to celebrate Valentine's Day with your sweetheart.

**41 MANEUVERS BAR** 524 East Wilson Street → This men's bar was popular on a street once known for the dive nature of its bars.

**42 BOATHOUSE BEHIND MACHINERY ROW** The Dane County Lakes Patrol located here. The gay "Admiral" of the Sheriff's Office based operations here and at several other locations.

**43 AIDS RESOURCE CENTER OF WISCONSIN (ARCW)** 600 Williamson Street → Long the home of the Madison AIDS Network (now part of ARCW) this complex held other LGBT offices and businesses including Dan's Travel and, for many decades, OutReach.

**44-50 700 BLOCK OF JENIFER STREET** 711 Jenifer → In the 1920s a resident amassed a collection of physical culture magazines with nude and nearly nude men in artistic poses. 735 Jenifer → In the 1970s several fiber artists lived on the block and had an informal Stitch and Bitch Club. Otto Thieme, who resided at 735, made erotica lace in fine patterns depicting homosexual acts. 739 Jenifer → In the 1940s, '50s, and '60s this was the home of Keith McCutcheon and Joe Koberstein, the center for a very active gay salon and social circle. Keith published poems in the '40s that, in veiled language, talked of gay love. From the 1980s it was the home of gay County Board Chairperson Dick Wagner. It was there that the New Harvest Foundation was created through six months of discussions in '84. The first in the Big Ten U.W.-Madison LGBT Alumni group held receptions here for gay speakers when they appeared on campus.

741 Jenifer → Nationally known Women's Studies professor Jean Boydston resided here with her partner Joy Newmann. Both were also artists with lakefront studios.

754 Jenifer → Some of the first big gay house party fundraisers were held here, including an Alice B. Toklas Birthday Party for the United and A Night in Key West for the Gay Center. Celebrated maven Dan Curd, a longtime block resident, designed the parties and so many others. Mary Alice Mowry, a key director of the Madison AIDS Network, resided here. Other gay tenants sponsored nude cookie bakes.

807 Jenifer → Longtime gay historic preservationist Gary Tipler made his home here. He encouraged a network of gay boys to foster saving older homes.

809 Spaight → This lakefront home was restored and renovated by lesbians, contributing to the Eastside revival.

**51 B.B. CLARKE BEACH** 800 block of Spaight Street → This cruisey gayborhood beach also was the site of activism by the "ladies tops off club." Before becoming well-lighted, the beach was notorious for the splashing of late night, after bar, gay skinny-dipping.

**52 PLAN B** 924 Williamson Street → Opened in 2009, this popular dance bar also sponsors Fruit Fest, an LGBTQ community celebration that fits in with Eastside LGBT traditions.

**53 LEGACY HOUSE** 620 South Brearly Street → Wives Tamara Packard and Rene Herber are now the owners of the house at South Brearly Street and Lake Monona. The prior owners, Bill and Connie Thompson, had hosted many fundraisers and political activities for gay candidates representing the Eastside. Now continuing its influence for fabulous fundraisers, Packard and Herber host events for many community and progressive causes, including the campaigns of Senator Tammy Baldwin and Congressman Mark Pocan.

**54 ORTON PARK** Corner of Few and Spaight Streets → This corner was home to George Segal's Gay Liberation statues. Designed for Sheridan Square in New York, various controversies prevented it from being placed there, so a temporary home was found in Madison after the Madison Art Center had it on loan. Today a plaque and bench commemorate the installation, which has since been moved to Christopher Park in New York City.

ON THE MAP, OFF THE ROUTE

**55 A WOMAN'S TOUCH** 302 South Livingston Street → This retail shop (owned and operated by



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Ellen Barnard and Dr. Myrtle Wilhite) specializes in products and education for healthy sexuality in a non-pornographic atmosphere. The items and information are well-reviewed and sourced.

**56 APPLE ISLAND** 849 East Washington Avenue → Opened in 1989 and operating for four years, this women's performance space saw many lively acts during its heyday.

**57 FAIR WISCONSIN OFFICES** 203 South Paterson Street → The statewide lobbying organization for the LGBT Community. Lately the organization has been particularly active in helping local communities develop inclusive policies and fighting back against punitive transgender legislative efforts.

**58 WILLY STREET CO-OP** 1221 Williamson Street → From its inception, the Co-op has been a gay-friendly community institution and source for gay press. Perhaps the trademark purple aubergine was a giveaway. Many lesbians were active in a number of cooperatives around town and especially in the food area like the North Farm Coop distribution network.

**59 TED PIERCE HOUSE** 1442 Williamson Street → Theodore Pierce was named after President "T.R." Roosevelt, who was in the White House when he was born. A gay African American, Pierce resided here for almost all of the 20th Century. Described best by the French term "boulvardier," he was a font of knowledge on the early gay community from the 1930s on and often used classical allusions in his speech.

**60 FYFE'S BAR AND RESTAURANT** 1334 East Washington Avenue → The restored ambience of this building attracted many gay historic preservationists in town, and the bar was popular with the lesbian community.

**61 HOUSE AT 454 SIDNEY STREET** Home to Rep. David Clarenbach during much of his legislative career, out gay Rep. Tim Carpenter from Milwaukee would stay here when the legislature was in session, making LGBT caucus meetings easy to convene at the breakfast table. Later the home to the lesbian power couple Margaret McMurray, active in NOW, and Denise Matyka of many community institutions.

**62 THE WASHINGTON HOTEL** 636 West Washington Avenue → The complex, run by the Scheel family (Rod and Greg), housed many venues including the New Bar dance club and the

basement bar, Rod's, with a leather ambience. Rod's was an underwear-free zone and two snips down each side could relieve an offender with the garment added to the collection hanging from the ceiling pipes. The Barber's Closet was cozy and popular with lesbians. Women's night at the New Bar was Tuesday. The complex was destroyed by fire February 18, 1996.

**63 WORT STUDIOS** 118 Doty Street → WORT Community Radio (which began broadcasting in 1975) was important in 1982 in helping organize supportive calls for the gay rights bill that depended on Gov. Lee Sherman Dreyfus's signature when rightwing radio was urging calls against his signing. Thanks to Arlene Zaucha and Sue Goldwomon for *Her Turn*, a long-running women's news feature program, and *Her Infinite Variety* a long-running music program by, for, and about womyn.

OFF THE MAP: MADISON EAST

**EAST TOWNE CINEMA** A sit-in protest against the movie *Windows*, released in 1980 with a derogatory lesbian portrayal, resulted in 20 arrests of community protesters including Kathleen Nichols at this cinema. Charges were later dismissed.

**TRUAX FIELD** South of the older terminal area off Hwy 51 → During World War II a study was done of homosexual airmen stationed at this military base who were in a psych ward after their homosexuality was revealed. Their stories showed they went to town and cruised the Capitol Square. They rejected the sickness diagnosis the military was trying to impose on them. Four claimed they were members of an organized Madison gay group well before Stonewall.

**OUTREACH LGBT COMMUNITY CENTER** 2701 International Lane, Suite 101 → Outreach seeks to create a community where the presence of LGBT people is welcomed and celebrated, where intolerance is challenged and defeated. Outreach is the successor organization to the Gay and Lesbian Center and the Madison Community United both from the 1970s. Their offices were formerly on Williamson Street.

**CLUB 3054** 3054 East Washington Avenue → The club was a fun-loving bar with a touch of the raunchy (butt prints on the ceiling in the basement). Located near an adult bookstore, rumors of gay prostitution were in the air. They accepted a city suspension of their drink license as a

penalty to clean up the place.

**HAWTHORNE SCHOOL** 3344 Concord Avenue → An educational exhibit on gay issues in the classroom became a controversy as it was brought into the school. After community testimony and support from gay parents and teachers, the exhibit was eventually supported by the Madison School Board.

**GAY VIDEO CLUB** One of the community's longest running institutions since the 1970s. Held in a private home in the Carpenter Ridgeway area, its XXX rated films have proved an enduring attraction.

**RODNEY SCHEEL HOUSE** 2815 Hawk Street → An independent living community of 23 affordable housing units for people living with HIV/AIDS. It was named for Rodney Scheel who organized many pride events in town, supported early AIDS education, and himself passed away in 1990 from the disease.

**OLBRICH PARK SOFTBALL DIAMONDS** This and the Demetral Field diamonds are remembered as frequently hosting the lesbian softball teams around town.

**THE BARRYMORE THEATER** 2090 Atwood Avenue → This was home for the multi-year Lesbian Variety Show from 1987 to 2001, which played to sold-out audiences.

**DYKE HEIGHTS** East of the Yahara River and near Atwood Avenue → This popular lesbian neighborhood draws many lesbian residents and community friendly businesses and has some LGBTQ welcoming churches.

**TOMBOY GIRL** 2334 Atwood at Ohio → One of many lesbian owned/operated businesses, in this case by Tret Furé, the business sold branded clothing and other accessories.

**BURROWS PARK** Off Sherman Avenue → This piece of the City of Madison is surrounded by Maple Bluff and the Town of Madison so was, for a long time, neglected somewhat by Madison police patrols. It was known as a cruising area.

**TAPIT/NEW WORKS STUDIOS** 1957 Winnebago Street in Schenk Corners → Donna Peckett and her partner Danielle Dresden made their artistic home here, where they continue to produce many plays with LGBT themes, including a tribute to a gay brother who died of AIDS.

**FREEDOM HOUSE** 1925 Winnebago Street in Schenk's Corners → Some of the community's first lesbian dances were held at Freedom House.

OFF THE MAP: MADISON CENTRAL

**BRITTINGHAM PARK** The park was the site for a couple of decades for the MAGIC Picnic — the community's big Pride celebration which started in the 1970s. Fun events included the water-balloon toss and the cross-dressing high heel race.

**BACK DOOR BAR** On Park Street by the viaduct → This was the first gay-owned bar in Madison opened by Rodney Scheel. A welcoming mural intoned the line, "Dorothy I don't think we're in Kansas anymore." Gay guides described it as one of the friendliest bars anywhere. There was Dyke Night when women were especially welcomed.

**PITCHER'S PUB** 323 West Beltline Hwy → The "pitch" or field below the bar was where gay- and lesbian-inclusive men's and women's rugby teams played. Much partying and singing occurred in the pub.

**GSAFE** 122 E. Olin Avenue → Supporting the many Gay-Straight and Gender-Sexuality Alliances in schools around Wisconsin, the organization develops the leadership of LGBT students. The aim is to deepen racial, gender, trans, and social justice.

OFF THE MAP: MADISON WEST

**UNIVERSITY YWCA/YMCA** 306 North Brooks Street → The building was home to early lesbian inclusive publications like the Scarlet Letter in 1971 and the early Lesbian Switch Board and Lesbian Connection. Its Main Course restaurant was particularly popular with lesbian vegetarians. The building later hosted the United. Today StageQ uses part of the building for supporting queer theater.

**209 N. BROOKS STREET** Planning meetings for Women's Studies drawing on faculty, staff, students, and community members occurred here. Dubbed Alice in the Academy by some, it was inclusive and had an early popular class on Lesbian Culture. Later there would be a certificate program for LGBT studies. Women's Studies offices would move to Ingraham Hall (old Commerce) and then to Sterling Hall, both associated with radically changing the campus.

**1514 ADAMS STREET** In 1948, this house of two gay men was raided by police as the center of a gay ring. Twelve persons faced morals counts.

Tagged as a "den" for lewd activities, the house was described as lavishly decorated. A number of U.W. students swept up in the raid were expelled and other morals convictions resulted for "obscene materials" found in the home.

**BOYS ON THE BAY NEIGHBORHOOD** South Shore Drive → Many gay men have located their homes on Monona Bay including Rodney Scheel and his partner Dr. Warren Olson.

**DR. LIZ KARLAN'S HOUSE** Off Monroe Street → Karlan, known for her work on behalf of a woman's right to choose, was the target of protestors, some of whom picketed her own house. She also supported women's music with Leaping Lizards Productions.

**SAM'S BAR** 1206 Regent Street → This bar and dance club, though opened in the 1980s (well past Stonewall), harkened back to older days with having to go around to the back to find the entrance.

**FIVE NIGHTCLUB (FORMERLY CLUB 5)** 5 Applegate Court → This bar and nightclub, operating since 1998, stages many drag and variety shows. When threatened with closing in 2015 a community effort raised funds to keep it going.

**MADISON GAY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION** 725 Forward Drive → The early years' games were played here at the Madison Ice Arena.

**MARRIOTT WEST** The National Women's Music Festival found a home here after migrating from Illinois and Indiana. The 42nd four-day festival will be celebrated this year.

**DR. RUTH BLEIER'S HOUSE** On Thorstrand Road → Bleier was a pioneer academic at U.W. in urging understanding of sexual orientation as both biological and culturally influenced. Many community gatherings occurred in her home as well. The all-women band (mostly lesbian) Something Special, which performed at Lysistrata, practiced here; Bleier was a drummer and Mary Strickland was a guitarist with the band.

AREAS OF INTEREST: SOUTHERN WISCONSIN

**COOKSVILLE** Rock County → Ralph Warner, Wisconsin's first "out" man, opened his historic House Next Door to visitors and lady journalists. Handed down in the gay community for a couple of generations, this two-story brick house on the commons, and Warner's non-normative life of cooking, gardening, entertaining, housekeeping, and pansy pillows,

were featured during the 1920s and 1930s in several national publications like *The Ladies Home Journal*.

**MINERAL POINT** Iowa County → Bob Neal and Edgar Hellum bought a Cornish cottage for \$10 in the 1930s and restored it as Pendarvis House. Described as "youthful" and "artistic" young men in the code of the day, they bought several other houses and restored them as well. Hospitality was their main business, offering teas and Cornish meals. Duncan Hines, food critic of the day, recommended it. They benefited from help by Will Gundry of a prominent town family, a patron, who correspondence shows him to be a gay forerunner of the local boy Bob Neal. Hellum from Stoughton had helped Warner in Cooksville, showing the type of social networks gays could build in the interwar years. The Gundry Mansion where Will conducted musicales is open for tours as well as the State Historical Society's Pendarvis House.

**D.O.E. FARM** Near Norwalk → Daughters of the Earth Farm founded in the 1970s in the rural countryside was a project of the Wisconsin Womyn's Land Coop for a female-only space of 80 acres that was popular with lesbians from around the state. Some of the organizing meetings in Madison were held at the Wil-Mar Center on the Eastside. A slightly less than flattering portrayal of a visit pops up in Jeff Kirsch's novel, *God's Little Isthmus*.

**RURAL DYKES ASSOCIATION** Since the 1970s various farms in southern Wisconsin have hosted the RDA, including countless potlucks.

**BLUE RIVER** Village in Grant County on the Wisconsin River → The Rural Southwest Wisconsin Gay and Lesbian Alliance was based here and published its networking *Pioneers* newsletter.

**MILWAUKEE** On Lake Michigan → In 1908 Milwaukee already had a reputation as one of the eight homosexual capitals of America. As Beer City, its gay nightlife had a profligate number of gay and lesbian bars and taverns, with the Royal Hotel bar being known in the 1930s through the 1960s. Home of major sports teams, gay sports were strong in the city, hosting many national gay sports groups. In the tradition of The Fonz, gay bowling was also big. ■



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

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## Dementia Care Update

Wisconsin's budget will include funding for dementia care specialists, as reported by **Caroline Werner**.

**AS A VOLUNTEER** with Wisconsin AARP's "Red Shirt" contingent, I attended the Joint Finance Committee's meeting at the state capitol on Thursday, May 25. We sat in silence as the committee members made comments back and forth related to the 2017-19 budget.

Twelve Republican legislators and four Democratic legislators sit on this committee. Each side presented omnibus motions to items. Prior to the meeting, AARP provided us with copies of the state budget summary items listed in issue papers prepared by the Legislative Fiscal Bureau (LFB). At the meeting, we received copies of the omnibus motions prepared by both sides related to the Health Services—Medicaid Services, Foodshare, and Mental Health, Public Health, and other programs.

National projections from the Alzheimer's Association estimate Wisconsin's growth rate for individuals with Alzheimer's and related dementias to be 18.2% over the next 10 years, and doubling by 2040.

We were at the meeting to specifically support the request to continue funding for 19 current Dementia Care Specialist (DCS) positions through June 30, 2018 and to fund 24 dementia care specialist positions, on an ongoing basis, beginning July 1, 2018. Shortly before 8 p.m., the committee voted to fund this request, as well as salary increases for caregivers.

Prior to this event, I attended a public hearing on April 3 in Platteville. I spoke to my concerns regarding people (especially seniors) who rely on Social Security Insurance (SSI) and Medicaid for health care services. I asked the Finance Committee to fully fund or restore funding to all programs serving the increased needs of this state population that has nowhere else to turn for critical support and care.

I liked the information that was provided to legislators through the LFB budget summary to help them understand how the federal and state portions of the SSI program function. This document also explained dementia and that "National projections from the Alzheimer's Association estimate Wisconsin's growth rate for individuals with Alzheimer's and related dementias to be 18.2% over the next 10 years,

and doubling by 2040." The role of the DCSs in the Aging and Disability Resource Centers (ADRC) in county offices was also explained.

I sat near Mickey Beil, a legislative lobbyist of the Dane County Executive's Office who works with the Dane County Area Agency on Aging, and also with Jennifer Fischer, the Executive Director of Dane County's ADRC office. Ms. Beil told me 7,000 people who are diagnosed with dementia or Alzheimer's in Dane County are served by one DCS in the ADRC office in Madison.

Because I am now a caregiver for elders with dementia or Alzheimer's and their families, I see first-hand the critical need to support them with the services provided by the DCSs as well as for salary increases for caregivers through agencies or who are family members.

If you would like to volunteer to support Dane County elders, you have two options: 1) Join AARP and contact the Wisconsin office in Madison: Helen Marks Dicks, 608-286-6337, and/or 2) participate in an annual advocacy training sponsored by the Dane County Elderly Advocacy Network (EAN). Contact Esther Olson at emolson2@wisc.edu.

Although elder issues are not LGBTQ-specific, we can add our voice with others on similar concerns as we age. Because LGBTQ seniors tend to be more isolated and lower-income, it's imperative that they also have access to services that are well funded. Someday YOU will be a senior and may need support. What better way to learn about the issues and make an impact toward your wellbeing?

Recently the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging expressed concern that demographic questions about sexual orientation and gender identity were removed from the annual survey of OAA consumers and asked for input on this issue and the larger survey. The deadline for input has passed; but if you're involved, you'll have a venue to assist agencies to serve us competently in the future. ■



**CAROLINE WERNER** is a social worker with case management experience for elders in Dane County. She is a former LGBT Senior Advocate through OutReach LGBT Community Center. Mickey Beil also contributed to this article.

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## Trauma and Healing

**Diverse & Resilient's** Prevention Program Manager explains the whys and hows of integrating holistic practices in behavioral health services and HIV prevention initiatives.

**BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES**, such as counseling and evidence-based curriculums, provide opportunities for LGBTQ people to learn and practice coping mechanisms in response to stigma and other health disparities. For gay, bisexual, same-gender loving men of color, and trans-identified persons, these services are critical to addressing the compounded experience of anti-gay stigma and trauma associated with structural racism. Now, a new direction in behavioral health integrates these services with holistic health practices.

Holistic health practices address the entire person—physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual. Practices like meditation, yoga, and deep breathing, can impact underlying emotional wellness needs that may be linked to a physical condition or risky behaviors.

Diverse & Resilient's SHEBA (Sisters Helping Each other Battle AIDS) program for

Many individuals who seek services in behavioral health settings have histories of trauma, but they often don't recognize the significant effects of trauma in their lives.

Black Trans Women is embracing these holistic health practices. Bi-weekly meetings of the group's 25+ members would often erupt into arguing and fighting. Staff began introducing breathing techniques to lower stress and short mindfulness meditations to bring an awareness of the group's impact on each other. The emotional climate of the meetings shifted dramatically and have resulted in more productive meetings. SHEBA members began to request more ways to incorporate holistic methods and have shared that the practices make them feel a kind of safety they don't feel anywhere else.

For SHEBA members at D&R, these holistic practices are often addressing the trauma many of our clients are managing, consciously or unconsciously. Many individuals who seek services in behavioral health settings have histories of trauma, but they often don't recognize the significant effects of trauma in their lives; either they don't draw connections between their trauma histories and their presenting problems, or they avoid the topic all together.

Behavioral health services are beginning to consider these life-long experiences and their effects on clients through a practice known as Trauma Informed Care [TIC]. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration defines TIC as an organizational structure and treatment framework that involves understanding, recognizing and responding to the effects of all types of trauma, including those that are experienced directly, from witnessing an event, feeling threatened, or hearing about an event that affects someone they know.

According to the Administration, "Trauma was once considered an abnormal experience. However, the first national Comorbidity Study established how prevalent traumas were in the lives of the general population of the United States. In the study, 61 percent of men and 51 percent of women reported experiencing at least one trauma in their lifetime, with witnessing a trauma being involved in a natural disaster, and/or experiencing a life-threatening accident ranking as the most common. In the National Epidemiologic Survey on Alcohol and Related Conditions, 71.6 percent of the sample reported witnessing trauma, 30.7 percent experienced a trauma that resulted in injury, and 17.3 percent experienced psychological trauma."

D&R's prevention staff is often holding space for clients with high survival needs. The recounting of their difficult life circumstances oftentimes results in secondary trauma among D&R staff. Integrating holistic health practices such as meditation and breathing techniques to ease emotional distress among staff have been central to maintaining our efficiency and flow of services for the community we serve.

As the need for sensitive and compassionate behavioral health services for LGBTQ communities becomes more necessary in a challenging political climate, it is our hope that integrative holistic approaches become more normalized among a broad scope of organizations addressing behavioral health. ■



**BETHAMIE WYATT** is a Milwaukee native with an extensive background in community health education for diverse populations. She is thrilled to bring this experience to Diverse & Resilient as its Prevention Program Manager.

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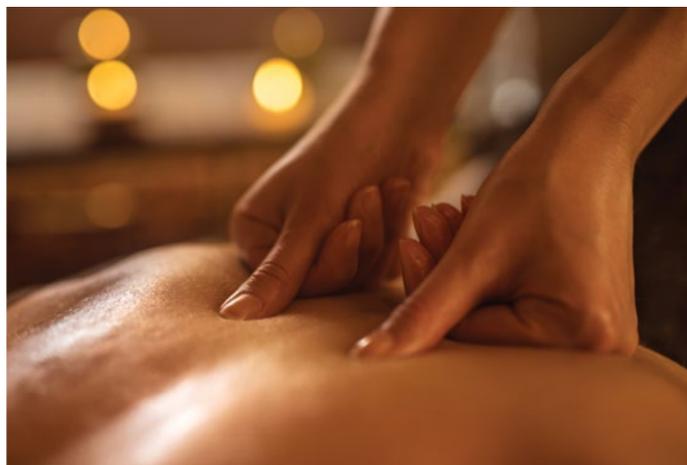
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# Our Bodies, Our Selves

**Marcelle Richards** explores and explains the emerging healing practice of erotic embodiment, also called bodywork, and access to pleasure for all people beyond physical or mental barriers.

**NON-BINARY QUEERS** are creating some exciting ripples in a radical, holistic healing practice called erotic embodiment (also known as sacred somatics). Erotic embodiment encompasses a spectrum of practitioners: sacred intimates, sexological bodyworkers, and beyond the scope of this piece, surrogate partners, too. Their modalities are differentiated by the boundaries that shape the level of touch and engagement with clients to help them therapeutically explore, develop, and heal their erotic selves, and by extension, connection to others (which may also include navigating relationship structures, including polyamory and non-monogamy.) Practitioners also help clients move through barriers, such as trauma or physical limitations and pain, and increase access to pleasure, which can be healing in itself.

Madison is home to one of the only certified sexological bodyworkers in the Midwest (and to our knowledge, the only one in Wisconsin), Sasha Lasdon, a Madison-based somatic sex educator, intimacy coach, and certified sexological bodyworker. Their business, Integrated Eros, is open to people of all sexualities and genders, though by virtue of Lasdon's own identity, training, and personal erotic embodiment experiences, they inherently practice with a queer lens. Lasdon teaches workshops at A Woman's Touch and co-facilitates courses with Miriam Hall of Herspiral Contemplative Arts. Lasdon's work is informed by 14 years in massage therapy and 15 years in dance and movement.



Gender is where Sexsmith says Body Trust has been able to “pave a lot of movement” to explore non-binary expressions of touch and relation, and even non-binary tantra.

In the Midwest, sexological bodywork seemed to culturally make the most sense for Lasdon. In sexological bodywork, touch is unidirectional (practitioner to client), the practitioner remains clothed, and gloves are used if contact is made with genitals or mucous membranes. It's touch with the purpose of education. Lasdon describes sexological bodywork as “a pathway for an individual to get to explore their own sexuality through guided, hands-on work.”

### COMMUNITY INFLUENCE

One of Lasdon's gateways into erotic embodiment work was Sinclair Sexsmith, who may already be familiar to some as the erotica author behind Sugarbutch Chronicles and a series of “View from the Top” articles on Autostraddle.com. They are also a sex educator, sacred intimate, and one of four members of Body Trust, a Bay Area-based “sacred somatic collaborative dedicated to the body as a laboratory for transformation” with a mission that includes radical inclusivity.

Erotic embodiment is “a radical, sexual

expression and a radical way to engage with our bodies, with our lives, with sex, with intimacy, with spirit,” says Sexsmith, whose work as a sacred intimate may involve two-way touch, deep explorations in intimacy, and other parameters that can be negotiated between practitioner and client.

“Really, the goal is a very intimate relationship that includes sexuality, it includes erotics, it can include BDSM...desire, sometimes kink, sensations, power dynamics, all of those things — anything that could happen. Like emotional closeness. And it's practicing those things...it can be totally transfor-

mative for people's relationships because it's a practice,” they said. The other piece is the incorporation of the sacred.

“I think where the sacred comes in is that the practitioner has a sacred practice to keep their body and their senses attuned to themselves, to the world, to the greater energetic, spiritual context, whatever we want to call that,” Sexsmith said, which is also informed by tantric principals and “foundation stones.”

Amy Butcher, Lizz Randall, and Alex Jade are the other three members of Body Trust; their work includes workshops, virtual events, Pleasure Lab podcasts, and newly developed publications to be released in 2017: an illustrated coloring book, Wonder Body (by Butcher and Jade), and a literary journal of somatics, Erotix (edited by Sexsmith). Many of these formats are accessible across distance, though Sexsmith does plug the irreplaceable value in doing in-person work with others in workshops, too, for the reason that the erotic self is developed in relation with other people.

### NON-BINARY PATHMAKERS

Non-binary queer folks practicing erotic embodiment are helping this healing art crack open by virtue of their very existence. Erotic practices (such as tantra, which heavily informs erotic embodiment) still often reinforce gender binaries (including in women's-only or men's-only spaces),

which can leave gaps for people who float somewhere in between and beyond gender binaries.

Gender is where Sexsmith says Body Trust (all of whom are non-binary to some degree) has been able to “pave a lot of movement” to explore non-binary expressions of touch and relation, and even non-binary tantra. “Radical inclusivity” in their mission means recognizing the ways in which difference must be accounted for too: body positivity (all shapes, sizes, and abilities), class (create affordable options while being sustainable as a business); and race (the four members of Body Trust are white, but they had many conversations and consults about how to continue to be radically inclusive in regard to race, including “throwing their weight” behind events led by QPOC).



Gains are also being made in the ways that these concepts are articulated and passed on.

### PLAYFUL PLEASURE

“As an erotica writer, diving into the body and into the energy of the body has been adding depth to my sex scenes—or so I hope!” Sexsmith said. “Often, the body-based people who pursue somatics don't go as in-depth with written or spoken language, so sometimes it's very hard to articulate what happens in the energetic processes. I've been working deeply with my friends and colleagues and mentors to try to encourage more articulation about this work.”

Play and games are also a big influence in how Lasdon shapes their work, which can also help to create approachable and safe spaces for people to confront that which is difficult, painful, or scary. The thing about cultivating pleasure is that it increases one's ability to mitigate pain.

“From the dance world there's a thread of thought that I practice with a lot: entering the sea of sensation without drowning in it,” Lasdon says.

Lasdon is also looking ahead to create local queer erotic spaces in the community and would welcome being an anchor point



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for others interested in the same (and that goes for creating non-sexual touch spaces, such as cuddle parties).

“Marriage isn't the only goal for all of us. So bringing it back to our own erotic truth can be really important,” Lasdon said.

The broader significance moves beyond the individual and the body; these practices can help people be more at home within themselves in a world that isn't always kind, especially in the shifting socio-political climate these days.

“We desperately need these things in the world right now,” Lasdon said. “And so working with sexuality is one of the places of beauty that we can expand, that we can expand the places where it is beautiful and also other realms of touch that can help us create connection, create community, foster a deepening sense of ourselves, deal with the difficulties of being human, find relief from the hard parts of being human.” ■

An extended version of this article is available at [ourlivesmadison.com](http://ourlivesmadison.com).

For workshops, events, and additional pathways to pleasure, visit [integratederos.com](http://integratederos.com), [bodytrustcircle.com](http://bodytrustcircle.com), [sugarbutch.net](http://sugarbutch.net).



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## Neighborhood Eats

A new breakfast spot on the city's near northside continues a neighborhood's revitalization with good, affordable fare in a welcoming environment.

"UNPRETENTIOUS" is a word that keeps coming up in my conversation with Cari Scott and Will Tracy about Ogden's North Street Diner, their new breakfast and brunch restaurant at 560 North Street in Madison (kitty-corner from the Tip Top Tavern).

Will describes his menu as unpretentious in contrast to many of the restaurants in Madison. He says he wants to make good, simple food. I can vouch for good, but don't let Will fool you; while his menu is full of standards, he has tricks up his sleeve as well. His quiche is not only quiche, but baked in a muffin pan so that customers receive an entire mini quiche with a double crust instead of a simple slice of a larger pie. His mac and cheese pancake is weird and unexpected, in the best possible way (think of a blueberry pancake, but with baked mac and cheese instead of blueberries—it is savory, sweet, spicy, squishy, delightful). He also grills and serves sliced meatloaf as a breakfast side (try it, you won't be disappointed). This is all part of a style of cooking that Will calls "down and dirty, less fancy, but with a fancy element." It is about making food fun and accessible without being—wait for it—pretentious.

While giving me a tour, Will pointed out the contents of his walk-in cooler, and that the overwhelming majority are raw ingredients, with almost nothing coming pre-packaged or pre-made.

Cari has deep roots in the Eken Park neighborhood. She grew up there and recalls fondly that it was a "proud blue collar neighborhood" where you could smell ham in the air year-round due to proximity to the Oscar Mayer plant. Her grandfather used to work in the same building that now houses the Ogden's North Street Diner, back when it was a grocery store. She admitted that several years ago when she moved back, she felt like the neighborhood had been neglected, but now describes it as a neighborhood on the upswing. "Young families are moving in; every generation lives here now," she says. Cari points to the renovated Tip Top Tavern across the street and to rising home prices as evidence. "I live in this neighborhood, and I like being able to walk to work," Will concurs. "I have the best commute in town."

The diner itself is classically comfortable, painted in aqua tones, with clean white tile back splashes and sturdy wooden tables hand-crafted by Will's father. While giving me a tour, Will pointed out the contents of his walk-in cooler, and that the overwhelming majority are raw ingredients, with almost nothing coming pre-packaged or pre-made. While the diner is small (Cari would say cozy) they don't have any plans for expansion.

"We have patio seating, but I want the place to be manageable, and I already work too many hours as it is," Will tells me. It is clear that people matter more than acclaim to these two. Cari says that they don't need to make a lot of money, that they would rather pay



their employees well. Will assures me that he does not want to be a Madison celebrity, that he just wants to make good food and live a good life. Even the mascot of the diner is the couple's dog, Ogden, who can occasionally be seen welcoming the folks who are waiting in line on the weekends.

"Madison talks a good talk about diversity, but we want to walk that talk. This is a diverse neighborhood, and we want everyone to feel comfortable here," Cari says.

If you are looking for honest, good food in a comfortable

environment, made by a guy who loves what he does, you would be hard pressed to find something less pretentious and more delicious than Ogden's North Street Diner. ■



**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](http://VivienneAndersen.com).

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# The Good Fight

Kenosha high school student and GSAFE scholarship winner **Ashton Whitaker** reflects on the challenges and triumphs of becoming authentic.

**I'M A 17-YEAR-OLD** transgender man from Kenosha. If someone had asked me just two or more years ago, I would have denied any and all trans\* identification. I am glad to be living authentically now.

What many of my closeted peers ask me is, how does one live authentically? One of the biggest factors is acceptance, and another is self-love. People can accept themselves, but cannot reach any goals without love and faith in what they already have. This journey of acceptance so far has been taxing and relentless, but it has been rewarding overall.

### NOT THE WRONG BODY

I personally disagree with the notion of being born in the wrong body. My body developed in my mother's womb and was birthed by her. However, there is a definite difference from my body and how my brain is wired to feel. At one point in my life, I absolutely loathed my appearance and devalued my body. I hated it for not being "normal"—but where is the fun in being normal? This body allows me to breathe and function. My body gives me the opportunity to experience life in its most unadulterated and beautiful forms. When people see or think of me, they think of this body that holds every thought and personality trait of mine. Although I accepted this body and my identity, I still struggle with the self-love aspect, as any human being usually does.

Overall, the journey of acceptance of who people love or how they present themselves can be burdensome and take quite the emotional toll because the society many of us live in tells us that we should not exist or that we are



Photo by Spencer Micka.

not natural. But the LGBT+ community is a testament to the power people have, both on an individual level and as a community. Pioneers of the community have accepted and loved themselves and lived as their authentic selves, whether the society in which they lived was prepared for that or not.

### COMING OUT AS TRANS\*

Living as transgender in a primarily conservative town was incredibly difficult: no one talked about being trans\* or what it even was, so it felt like I was the only one, just trembling in the corner of a suffocating closet, waiting to get out of town. Throughout the course of my freshman year of high school, I could no longer conceal my identity without feeling the weight on my shoulders that spread throughout my body and held me down. I was terrified of anyone knowing my transgender status for the fear of my family finding out or being harassed by people in my town.

### THE KENOSHA BATHROOM COURT VICTORY

By the following year, I had socially transitioned, gaining confidence in telling my family. Ultimately, I feel as though I lost many

of them. Many of them do not respect me, or whom I accepted myself to be, and they ceased to make contact with me. On top of the familial issues buzzing around in my head, I became involved in a highly visible court case regarding bathroom usage at my school. What started as an innocent inquiry from a past teacher quickly escalated; I started battling my school administration, which turned into a battle with district administration and resulted in winning my case at the Seventh Circuit.

### RESILIENCE AND COURAGE

Despite the ongoing court case, I was received with love and kindness by numerous friends and teachers, especially from my drama club. I know that no matter what I decide to wear or what my name is that I will always be unconditionally loved and cherished. Through the support of my friends, who coincidentally are all LGBT+ allies, I gained fortitude and resilience with my identity. I was supported and picked up when I fell down. Stepping forward and no longer lying to myself about my identity was probably the best thing I could have done for both my health and my happiness.

It can take such incredible courage to come out and be true to you, but again, the end result is so utterly worth it, and sometimes courage takes more than just yourself. Having a support group, big or small, comprised of people who actively hold you up, makes the struggle of coming out so much easier. I am so thankful for my friends who firmly stood by my side through the beginning of my transition and reassured me when I wanted to give in to societal pressure. Never give in to what does not make you happy! I feel like I have spent so much time going back and forth on who I truly am because I felt it would be easier to tap out and never look back, and my support group picked me up when I fell to those low points. Surround yourself with people who will equally love and respect you, and things can only go up from there.

The lessons I have learned on my journey empower me, and I will be continuing my political activism in Madison, but also in Milwaukee. I am a junior ambassador for a non-profit organization, Courage MKE, that assists and supports homeless LGBT+ youth in and around the Milwaukee area. You cannot improve the future for younger generations if no effort is invested in that future; I want to ensure a more welcoming, safe, and inclusive future for other kids who felt like I did for so long. As a treasured director of mine once said, "Where love is deep, much can be accomplished." ■



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