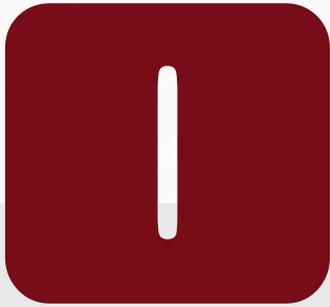


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Madison's LGBT&XYZ Magazine

September
October
2017



Natalie Hinckley

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RAVEL | BARBER | DVOŘÁK

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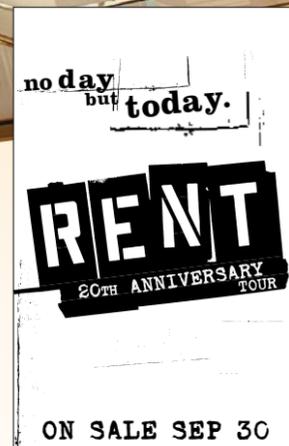
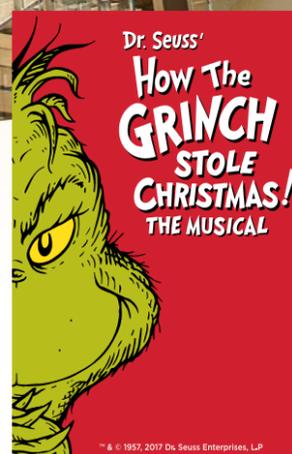
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Sept. / Oct. 2017, Volume 11, Issue 2
Life in the Middle Publishing, LLC
Patrick Farabaugh & Joseph Patane,
Publishers. PO Box 1202, Madison, WI 53703

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“I have the nerve to walk my own way, however hard, in my search for reality, rather than climb upon the rattling wagon of wishful illusions.”
- Zora Neale Hurston

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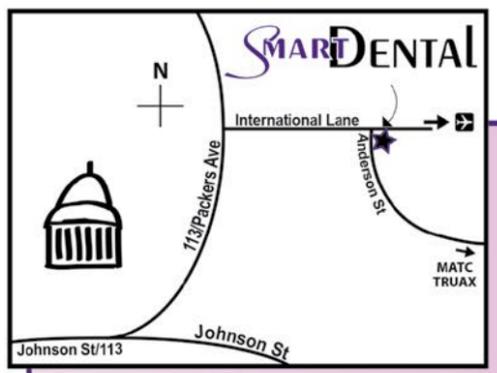


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EDITOR'S NOTE EMILY MILLS

BE THE HELPERS

IT HAS BEEN A DIFFICULT MONTH. Charlottesville shone a harsh light on the still-pervasive racist attitudes and systems in our country. Neo-Nazis, KKK members, and other white supremacists showed up with weapons and torches, shouting racist, anti-Semitic, and homophobic chants. They threatened and attacked peaceful demonstrators, like diverse clergy who came to town to show solidarity against hate. A young woman by the name of Heather Heyer was killed when a car driven by a white supremacist rammed a peaceful counter-march. Dozens were injured.

Watching footage and listening to first-hand accounts from that weekend has been utterly gut-wrenching. Still, I've had to stop myself from falling into the trap of thinking that any of this comes as a surprise. I have to push back against the notion that "this is not us."

Sadly, shamefully, this is us. Perhaps the silver lining of the horrific events of that weekend will be the final and total unmasking of the white supremacist ideas upon which our country is built. Many like to think that America is better than that. Ignore the Nazis, they're just a small fringe group and not worth our time or concern, the thinking goes. Nazis and KKK members may well be the most obvious and outrageous of the racists, but they're hardly the only ones. It's too easy to write them off. But like a highly contagious disease, we absolutely must do everything in our power to stamp out their presence and potential influence at the first sign of infection.

No person of color I know has been surprised by any of this. When RedState columnist Susan Wright wrote to ask, "Is There Anyone Who Could Have Predicted Where We Are Today?" a Black woman on Twitter simply responded, "95% of Black women voters for \$400, Alex."

Indeed, the overwhelming majority of Black women took Trump at his word about who he was and what he represented, especially as he not only refused to repudiate endorsements from white supremacist leaders, but actively courted them and encouraged violence against protesters.

I've often felt overwhelmed with dismay, tempted to give in to hopelessness by all of this. Then I turn and, as Mr. Rogers once urged, I look for the helpers. All the people who turned out in Charlottesville to fight back against hate, stand in solidarity with people of color and LGBTQ people and immigrants, literally putting their bodies on the line to protect against the violence. All the people doing this work nationwide, despite the terror, year in and year out.

Right here in our community, and represented in these pages: artists, musicians, historians, activists, lawyers, business owners, advocates, and more. All of you who go out and do the good, necessary work to build up instead of tear down—and all while being your full, authentic selves. I draw hope and inspiration from you. We must continue the work. There is no other option. ■



CONTRIBUTORS



ALEXANDER EINSMAN, MS LMFT is a licensed psychotherapist with Atlas Counseling, located in Downtown Madison. He specializes in working with adolescents, adults, intimate relationships, and the LGBTQ community.

RACHAL DUGGAN, RADillustrates, is an illustrator in the Midwest. Her clients include the *Chicago Reader*, the *Pitchfork Review*, *Newcity* and *Tom Tom Magazine*. She also teaches illustration workshops; most notably Portrait Illustration. Rachal's work has been exhibited internationally and she regularly collaborates with other illustrators and artists.

MORGAN SCROBEL works as a project assistant with the U.W. Carbone Cancer Center and the WI Comprehensive Cancer Control Program. In the role, she produces communication and outreach resources to support the department's mission. A recent graduate of the U.W., Morgan begins work on her Master's degree in fall, at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.

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OBITUARY



CHERI MAPLES, age 64, passed away on July 27 from complications related to her recovery from a traumatic bicycle accident in September 2016.

From her bio with the Center for Mindfulness and Justice (which she co-founded): Cheri was a dharma teacher, keynote speaker, organizational consultant, and trainer. In 2008 she was ordained a dharma teacher by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, her long-time spiritual teacher.

For 25 years prior Cheri worked in the criminal justice system, as an Assistant Attorney General in the Wisconsin Department of Justice, head of Probation and Parole for the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, and as a police officer with the City of Madison Police Department, earning the rank of Captain of Personnel and Training.

Cheri was a community organizer, working in neighborhood centers, deferred prosecution programs, and domestic abuse support services. She first worked for Dane County Advocates for Battered Women (now known as DAIS), and in 1981 as the first Director of the Wisconsin Coalition Against Domestic Violence (now End Domestic Abuse Wisconsin).

As Past President of the Dane County Timebank, Cheri was instrumental in creating its justice projects—the Youth Court, which is based on a prevention and restorative justice model; and the Prison Project, a prison education and reintegration initiative supported by community groups.

She incorporated all of those experiences into her mindfulness practice. Cheri's interest in criminal justice professionals came from learning that peace in one's own heart is a prerequisite to providing true justice and compassion to others. Her initial focus was on translating the language and practice of mindfulness into an understandable framework for criminal justice professionals. Cheri's work evolved to include other helping professionals—healthcare workers, teachers, and employees of social service agencies—who must also manage the emotional effects of their work, while maintaining an open heart and healthy boundaries.

Those wishing to honor Cheri's memory may make donations to the Thich Nhat Hanh Foundation (thichnhathanhfoundation.org), and to three Madison-based organizations doing work about which Cheri was passionate: The Dane County Time Bank, (danecountytimebank.org), Freedom, Inc. (freedom-inc.org), and the Wisconsin Transgender Health Coalition (witranshealth.wordpress.com). ■

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MCF Awards \$55,000 to Launch Makerspaces in 13 Community Centers

AS PART OF ITS 75TH Anniversary Year of Giving, Madison Community Foundation awarded \$55,000 to Madison Public Library to launch a major initiative to provide unique learning experiences for youth who attend Madison-area neighborhood and community centers.

Called Beyond the Bubbler, the grant will expand Madison Public Library's makerspace program, The Bubbler, to 13 area community centers. One of the Bubbler's signature offerings are maker kits and experiences that allow participants to create objects using a variety of different materials—from arts to electronics. The Bubbler staff will work with youth and instructors at each community center to learn about the maker kits and choose what materials and projects they would like to adopt.

In addition to maker kits, the grant will support professional

development and training resources, as well as the connections and funds to hire guest artists to lead maker programs. The first Beyond the Bubbler program launched this summer at Bayview International Center for Arts and Education, also known as the Bayview Community Center. Additional sites and programming will begin in 2018.

"Beyond the Bubbler expands our magnificent public library offerings to a wider, more diverse audience while building on STEM and other educational programs also funded by MCF at local community centers," says MCF president Bob Sorge. "Makerspaces encourage creativity, build confidence, and help prepare our youth for Madison's burgeoning entrepreneurial economy."

In celebration of 75 years supporting the greater Madison area, 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.

To consider donating, or to follow monthly grant announcements, visit madisongives.org or find #MCFYearofGiving. ■



PHOTOS BY SPENCER MICKA.

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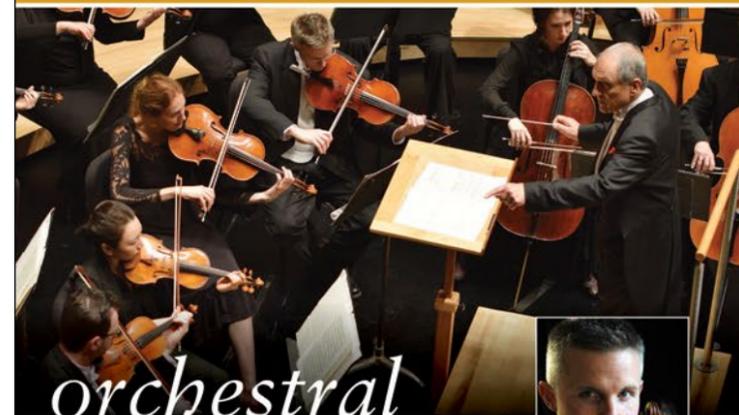
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Dana Rowe

Most folks under 35 who grew up queer in Madison know of “Teens Like Us” at Briarpatch Youth Services. In the late ‘90s there was another youth group called JABONGGIT/HIT Squad. That’s mostly an initialism but the whole name doesn’t make much sense, either. Basically, it was a peer education-focused theater group covering topics like healthy relationships, dealing with bullying, safe sex practices, and negotiating condom use. It has now faded into obscurity (you can’t even Google it) but my involvement opened the door to joining another organization that is still active: Proud Theater.

My family life growing up was not ideal, to say the least. At Proud there were adult role models with long-term partners and hopeful attitudes. I don’t think I was a particularly good actor but on Saturday mornings I was always welcomed and fed anyway. The network of connections I built caught me numerous times when my biological family let me down. I can only speculate what my life would have been like otherwise, but I really don’t think I would have made it.

Above all other things, Proud was somewhere safe to be my authentic self and set my own narrative about who I was. The stories we tell audiences through this medium often change hearts and minds, but the result of changing the story you tell yourself about yourself can be even more transformative. It has been 17 years now, and Proud Theater has continued to positively impact the lives it touches.

I served as an adult mentor for the 2016–2017 school year, and it was an experience beyond words. It is mostly small group and one-to-one work but, compounded over time, the reach of this organization in our community is broad. In Proud the model is queer-focused, but it can be applied to any group where people are navigating issues of diversity. We are currently preparing to do a workshop for adopted youth to help them set their narratives about who they are the same way the group did for me.



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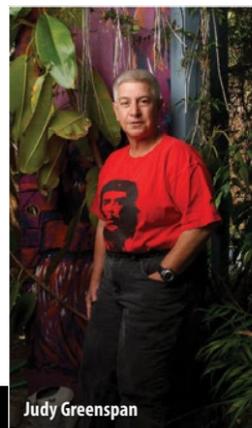


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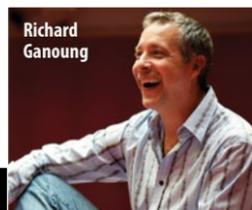
Tammy Baldwin



Judy Greenspan



Barbara McKinney



Richard Ganoung



Tim Lom



Nicole Bresnick

Falling for Madison

In honor of our **10th anniversary celebration** we take a look at autumnal issues past, and the stories, people, and changes that have marked the last decade of the LGBTQ community here in Madison, the state, and beyond.

SEPTEMBER MARKS THE TURNING of the seasons from the warm, languid summer months to the hustle and bustle of autumn. Students return for the beginning of classes, and the arts and music calendar becomes a veritable smorgasbord of diverse options. To that end, we've made this issue our Arts & Entertainment-themed vehicle for many years now, and have had the pleasure of featuring a wide array of colorful folks who make our cultural scene all the more vibrant. It's enough to make us fall in love with the city a little more with every equinox.

2007



IN OUR FIRST fall issue we featured a Q&A with then-WKOW news anchor Mitch Weber on his experience as a very dedicated rider and fundraiser for the Wisconsin ACT Ride. His musings on its "transformational" and community-building aspects remain true for the event to this day for many of those involved. Barbara McKinney, mother of the late news anchor Mike McKinney, wrote a related narrative about how her son's AIDS-related death led her to get involved with the ride.

We featured a particularly poignant piece by Paula Orton, who used the piece as a letter to her late mother, who struggled to

accept her daughter as a lesbian. It was a painful reminder of how short life really is, and how important it is to feel truly seen and understood by our family and loved ones. Also of note, Susana Torres talked about a group she'd formed called Women Who Want to Dance, which was dedicated to providing a social space for lesbians, particularly of color, with dance instruction in everything from salsa to country.



Ilana Friedman

2008

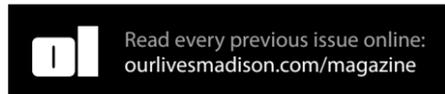


FORMER ARTISTIC director and producer (and *Our Lives* contributor) Tara Ayers graced the cover with her narrative about how the intersection of theater and activism she found in StageQ

helped to give her a home in Madison (she has since moved on to the West Coast).

We took a look at Michael Bemis' distinctive collection of gay poetry, and why he decided to gift it to the U.W. Special Collections Library. To date, it is quite possibly the world's most definitive collection of its kind.

The issue also featured our (so far) only sit-down interview with Tammy Baldwin, who was then running for her sixth term as a Wisconsin congressional delegate and had recently helped found the LGBT Equality Caucus. Tammy will be up for reelection as a Senator this fall, and remains the first and only openly gay Senator in the U.S.



Read every previous issue online: ourlivesmadison.com/magazine

ROBERTO AMECCIA, MELODY H. HANSON, JESS HORN, PAUL BAKER PRINDLE.

2009



WE GOT A LOOK inside a day in the life of local drag performer Joel Dufrin, aka Josie Lynn, who told a moving story about the joy of doing drag and the importance of being able to use it to support great causes, like fighting the same kind of cancer that his grandmother had. It was in this issue that we first introduced the new Executive Director of Fair Wisconsin, Katie Belanger. Katie would go on to head the organization for six years, helping win the fight for marriage equality.

Q&A with Jane Boyd, OutReach's Susan Green Woman of the Year, Jane Boyd, spoke with us about her role in forming Lizards, a social group for older lesbians and one of the longest-running groups of its kind. We were also happy to include a compelling narrative from Tyler Driscoll and Michele Burton-Driscoll on the particulars of trans parenting, and how it's always love that makes a family.

2010



LONGTIME contributor and local arts organizing powerhouse Karin Wolf wrote our cover story, and the photo shoot was one of our most fantastical, shot at a converted gothic church in Lake Mills

and styled by Bonnie Raimey. Sue Gold-woman interviewed Judy Greenspan about the Madison Gay Sisters, possibly the first group to set Madison's lesbian movement in motion back in 1971.

There was lots of good theater news in the issue, too, with Richard Ganoung writing about the formation of Forward Theater Co. in the wake of the collapse of the Madison



Christopher Wilford as Trina Lynn.

JESS HORN.



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Rep earlier that year. Meanwhile, Donna Peckett and Danielle Dresden were celebrating the 25th anniversary of their TAPIT/newworks Ensemble, which continues to produce diverse, original content to this day.

2011



ONE OF OUR RARE trio covers featured local creative superstars Angela Richardson, Alison Jones Chaim, and David Wells. Angela spoke about how finding her creative process helped

to define her, Alison discussed the work of being the then-head of the Wisconsin Book Festival, and David reflected on his time as the Executive Director of the sadly now defunct artist retreat/residence at Edenfred.

We headed far north to Superior to meet Rosemary Doyle, GSAFE's Educator of the Year, for a look at the front lines of LGBTQ work in schools outside of the usual liberal

enclaves. Summer Laird wrote a workplace piece with advice and steps to take to do LGBTQ advocacy within businesses, with an important core message of "don't wait; do it yourself." Therapist Sue Gill wrote on relationships, identifying the triangular theory of love: intimacy, passion, and commitment. Chocolaterian owner Leanne Cordisco introduced readers to Christine's Gourmet Toffee, her initial culinary endeavor that landed her creations in that year's Emmy celebrity swag bags.

2012



MOVER AND SHAKER

Ja'Mel Ware took the cover of that year's issue, pre-transition, and wrote an intimate account of life with HIV, poverty, unimaginable loss, and a fierce dedication to education and empowerment. The photos that accompanied the piece were also the first time we had the

pleasure of working with the immensely talented Lois Bielefeld. Ja'Mel has since gone on to found and run the POC networking and social group, Intellectual Ratchet, which holds a variety of events all across the city.

Christopher Wilford talked about becoming his drag alter ego, Trina, and how doing drag was the anti-hero that helped him with issues of bullying and depression, not wanting to be gay, as well as escaping alcohol and drugs, and finding rebirth and purpose.

2013

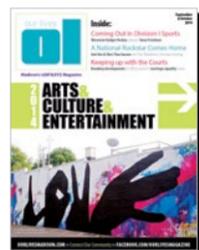


WE WERE THRILLED

to feature Yvette Pino on the cover, with a specific focus on her Veteran Print Project, which aimed to give vets a way to express themselves, on their own terms, as a method of healing. Rev. Eldonna Hazen became the first female and first openly gay senior minister to be installed at First Congregational Church. Arthur Durkee talked about being commissioned to write an original score for the Perfect Harmony Men's Chorus, "Heartlands," about growing up gay in a small town, and how the project helped him cope with recovery from illness. Radio personality Aaron Carreño (then Aaron Rogers) recounted the challenges and pressure of coming out on Z-104 and his journey through the world of mainstream radio.

On a bittersweet note, we said farewell to Intersections contributor and U.W. professor Karma Chávez, who wrote her final piece for us on the importance of recognizing and including multiple identities and realities in the fight for true, comprehensive equality.

2014

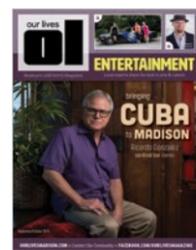


PLAN B'S COLORFUL

new LOVE mural glammed up the cover, and inside Tina Gassen (aka Tina She of Goddess and She) wrote about the role music played in her life. In a still all-too rare instance of finding an out athlete at the varsity college level, then-goalie for the Badgers Ilana Friedman wrote about her drive to found a You Can Play chapter at the U.W. We featured Maggie Gosselar and her art, and have been excited to see her continued growth (and contributions to our magazine). She's now a fixture at Colt's Timeless Tattoos in Madison.

Nicole Bresnick, the transgender woman behind the annual Teen Pride Arts event at Overture, wrote a deeply personal narrative about her struggles with doing hard time, dealing with transphobia, and seeking ways to build a more positive future for herself and young transgender people.

2015



LONGTIME MADISON

political and night-life figure Ricardo Gonzales, highlighted by Ian DeGraff's incredible photos, gave us a glimpse inside his childhood in Cuba, running for office as a rare out latino, opening the Cardinal Bar, and readying for a well-deserved retirement. We were also pleased to feature photographer Amber Sowards, in a piece written by Arthur Durkee. Amber went on to create the "Captured" series, highlighting the faces and stories of Dane County's incarcerated youth.

In the wake of a turbulent but ultimately successful bid to save a much-loved institution, we featured FIVE Nightclub owner Dave Eick and all that went into the fundraising campaign that kept the club open. U.W.'s director of the Jazz Studies program, Johannes Wallmann, described how he came to love the genre, and how he's pushing to make it more LGBTQ-inclusive. Johannes, it should be noted, was one half of one of the named plaintiff couples in the ACLU's suit that eventually won marriage equality in Wisconsin (with husband Keith Borden).

On a bittersweet note, we said farewell to Intersections contributor and U.W. professor Karma Chávez, who wrote her final piece for us on the importance of recognizing and including multiple identities and realities in the fight for true, comprehensive equality.

2016



THE MOVING,

introspective thoughts and experiences of UW Press Executive Editor Raphael Kadushin held our cover feature slot, and we took a look at two major transgender rights lawsuits in the courts: Kenosha teen Ash Whitaker has since won his bid to ensure access to school facilities that match his gender identity, and Shannon Andrews, who was suing the U.W.

for refusing to cover gender reassignment medical care. Shannon has since joined Alina Boyden, a U.W. graduate student, in a suit filed on their behalf by the ACLU in April of this year that is still pending.

After landing a new job at Diverse & Resilient, Kathy Flores wrote an insightful retrospective on leaving her position as Appleton's director of diversity and inclusion, and the freedom her new role provides to engage more fully in LGBTQ activism. We ended the issue on a somber but necessary note, with a Future Leaders column—or rather, poem—by Emme Goldman, who grappled with the grief and fear associated with the murders of her fellow transgender sisters across the country.

2017



AFTER FEATURING

Natalie Hinckley with her band Venus in Furs for our 2015 A&E issue, we're over the moon to now have a full cover story about this one-woman powerhouse. Natalie started and has built her own independent video production company, played in one of

Madison's favorite bands, got married, and had a kid—among other things—and tells us all about the struggles and triumphs that have marked the way so far.

The issue also includes a look inside the mind of one of Milwaukee's most promising up-and-coming musical performers, Lex Allen, who's poised to break nationally. Meanwhile, we also have the heartwarming story of Brian Bigler, who decided to stay in his hometown of Mt. Horeb to help create and foster an incredible new history museum, among other contributions. We also have a fascinating response by two health professionals to an anonymous piece in our last issue about sex "addiction," and a timely Issues column by Alex Einsman with advice for dealing with family and loved ones when political and social ideologies differ.

There's a whole lot more, too, and it's always educational and fascinating to look back to see where some of the issues and people addressed here evolved from over time. One thing is certain: LGBTQ+ people have always been and continue to be vital forces to be reckoned with when it comes to the arts. Indeed, creative expression is a crucial way for us to nurture and express our authentic selves and experiences. ■

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“I’m very disappointed and surprised that the leader of our military would say that transgender military personnel were not capable of defending this country, something they’ve been doing since the 1700s.”

- Retired Col. Sheri Swokowski (pictured)



Serving Authentically

In the wake of Trump’s call to ban transgender troops from serving openly, the fate of those already out and enlisted remains in limbo.

THE LAST FEW MONTHS have felt especially turbulent and dispiriting when it comes to our national climate generally, but especially when it comes to LGBTQ and civil rights. In July, President Donald Trump posted a series of messages to Twitter suddenly proclaiming a reversal of the Obama-era lifting of the ban on openly transgender military personnel. The statement, which apparently even took the Joint Chiefs of Staff off guard, only became an official directive with a memo issued in mid-August, and the Pentagon says it is working with the White House to figure out the path forward—or backward.

The order to lift the ban on openly transgender people serving in the U.S. military came after a long fight and strong advocacy by both retired

armed forces professionals and civilian rights organizations. DeForest resident and U.S. Army retired **Col. Sheri Swokowski** was one of the major movers and shakers who helped win that initial victory, and wrote in our September 2015 issue about her work on the issue, her long journey to coming out, and her delight after Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter declared the end of the ban and the formation of the working group that would study the policy and readiness implications of welcoming transgender persons.

Research by the Rand Corporation, as commissioned by the military, estimated that the number of transgender individuals currently serving on active duty at between 1,320 and 6,600 out of a total of about 1.3 million service CONTINUED NEXT PAGE

OPEN FOR BREAKFAST

SEPTEMBER 13

THE LGBTQ PROFESSIONAL IN THE TRUMP ERA

Learn about the current political climate in the Trump Era, what is happening on the federal, state and local level, and how that impacts LGBTQ professionals. Joining us will be Jason Rae, executive director of Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce.



Jason Rae
Executive Director,
Wisconsin LGBT
Chamber of Commerce

7:30am
Registration &
Networking
8-9:00am
Keynote Speaker
& Breakfast



PHOTOGRAPHY ART EXHIBIT AND NETWORKING

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members (advocacy groups put the number at 7,000 on active duty and 11,000 total across all military services and components). It also indicated that the costs associated with covering necessary health care for transgender troops could range between \$2.4 million and \$8.4 million, representing an approximate 0.13-percent increase in the overall budget.

Ignoring that, Trump pushed harder for a ban, claiming that he was doing the military "a great favor" by making the decision. It's widely assumed that Trump used the declaration in the hopes of winning votes for the \$790 billion defense and security spending package scheduled for a vote that week, among other thorny political issues dogging him.

Speaking to the Wisconsin State Journal in the aftermath of Trump's announcement, Swokowski expressed her dismay. "I'm very disappointed and surprised that the leader of our military would say that transgender military personnel were not capable of defending this country, something they've been doing since the 1700s," she said.

A retired Navy SEAL Team 6 hero who is transgender had a message for President Donald Trump, too. "Let's meet face to face and you tell me I'm not worthy," Kristin Beck, a 20-year veteran of the Navy SEALs, said.

Since then, the status of transgender troops remains in limbo. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis hinted that the Pentagon may propose its own changes to President Trump's plan. The August memo from the White House issues a policy allowing Mattis to consider a service member's ability to deploy when deciding whether to kick them out of the military. It also directs the Pentagon to deny admittance to transgender individuals and to stop spending on medical treatment regimens for those currently serving.

The short memo gives Mattis six months to prepare to fully implement the new ban. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "Mattis under the new policy is expected to consider 'deployability'—the ability to serve in a war zone, participate in exercises or live for months on a ship—as the primary legal means to decide whether to separate service members from the military."

Meanwhile, OutServe-SLDN, an LGBTQ military advocacy group, said it is preparing court challenges. "We are committed to transgender service members," the group said in a statement. "We are going to fight for them as hard as they are fighting for the country, and we're going to start by taking the fight to Donald Trump in the Federal Court." ■



LGBTQ Organizations Update
News | Awards | Staff & Board Changes
Calls to Action | Events
Reported by **Emily Mills**

NEWS

Important notes about area LGBTQ groups

CREAM CITY FOUNDATION Following an extensive community partner convening process and needs assessment project, Cream City Foundation announced a new, strategic grant-making process. The Foundation's work will address the economic, health, safety, and equity needs that "prevent LGBTQ+ communities from achieving the dream of full inclusion and acceptance." They have developed three elevated priorities to guide fundraising, convening, and grant-making efforts: Equity, Health, and Prosperity.

The Foundation invites nonprofit and government organizations in the 10-county southeastern Wisconsin area to consider submitting a response to their current RFP that will award more than \$100,000 in funding in September 2017. Follow this link for more details and the online application form <http://creamcityfoundation.org/grants/>. For questions regarding the RFP, please email grants@creamcityfoundation.org.

GSAGE The 17th annual Leadership Training Institute was held on the University of Milwaukee campus in late July. The camp brought together 40 high school trans and queer youth for four days of learning and community build-



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

Founder of US Proud indicted for money laundering, identity theft



NEWS BROKE IN EARLY AUGUST that **Shonn Northam**, founder of US Proud, had been indicted on charges of wire fraud, money laundering, and identity theft after a whistleblower went to the authorities.

US Proud is the drag pageant organization that has held several events around Wisconsin and nationally since its inception in 2013. **Symphony Alexander-Love**, a frequent pageant performer and drag personality from Madison, noticed inconsistencies in how Northam was representing himself and the purpose of the pageants and reported the activity to authorities.

Not only had Northam been misrepresenting the organization's alleged charitable giving, he was also using the identities of pageant participants to help in a money laundering scheme at his day job at Spectrum Brands.

Northam is accused of having stolen \$281,000 in company funds through a series of fraudulent warranty claims.

The U.S. Attorney's Office said Northam faces up to 20 years in prison on each of the six mail fraud, five wire fraud and five money-laundering counts. He also faces a mandatory minimum two years in prison on each of the eight identity theft charges, which would be served consecutively to any other sentence he receives.

ing. This year's theme, "Self-Reflection," challenged campers to examine their intersectional identities while learning to be strong trans and racial-justice advocates.

Staff members **Ali Muldrow** and **Sawyer Johnson** recently joined colleague **Brian J** as newly trained

Welcoming Schools Facilitators. Welcoming Schools, a program of HRC Foundation, is the nation's premier professional development program dedicated to creating respectful and supportive professional development programs aimed at creating respectful and supportive ele-



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mentary schools by embracing family diversity, creating LGBTQ and gender-inclusive schools, preventing bias-based bullying, and supporting transgender and non-binary students.

The group also recently led two training-of-trainers sessions for Beloit and Green Bay school district educators and staff. Participants were taught how to present and facilitate a series of professional development modules that highlight best practices for supporting and including transgender and nonbinary students. The modules were developed by GSAFE as part of their Gender Inclusive Schools Project with the support of the Wisconsin Partnership Program.

MADISON GAY HOCKEY ASSOCIATION MGHA is excited for their first round of games on November 5 at Hartmeyer Ice Arena. Games are free and open to the public. They will be holding their annual Blades Against AIDS event later on in the season, where the public can skate, watch games, and contribute to the fundraising efforts. If you would like more information about the organization, including scheduling for Blades Against AIDS or how to join the 2018-2019 season, please see their website at madisongay-hockey.org.

ORGULLO LATINX LGBT+ OF DANE COUNTY In July, Baltazar De Anda Santana (Director) rode his bike for 24 hours in support of local immigrant and refugee communities. He also participated in the AIDS Ride for all three days in support of immigrants and refugees affected by HIV/AIDS.

AWARDS / RECOGNITION / GRANTS

Special thanks for those who do good.

ARCW The Scott M. Cutlip Award is the highest honor available to fundraising professionals in Southeast Wisconsin. It is my pleasure to announce that Dan Mueller, Vice President and Chief Development Officer at ARCW is the 2017, Scott M. Cutlip Award winner. Dan's illustrious fundraising career at ARCW has led to more than \$30 million being raised for the fight against AIDS. The resources have helped ensure that the needs of people living with HIV/AIDS are consistently met, and countless lives are saved through prevention services.

ORGULLO LATINX LGBT+ OF DANE COUNTY

Christian Alejandro Real Merino, Orgullo's Coordinator of Outreach, received the Emerging Leader Award by UNIDOS on July 28. Karen Perez-Wilson, a volunteer with the group, received a LUCES scholarship on July 21. Congratulations to both!

STAFF / BOARD CHANGES

Who's moving on or moving into org leadership

BRIARPATCH YOUTH SERVICES The Teens Like Us program (TLU) has added two new group facilitators, **Tianna Linebarger** and **James Van Abel**, as well as a new Program Coordinator, **Robin Sereno**. Tianna also serves as the Program Assistant for U.W.-Madison's Open House Gender Learning Community. She is finishing her studies in Community and Nonprofit Leadership and Gender and Women's Studies, with a certificate in LGBT Studies here at U.W.-Madison. James, a former TLU participant and Street Outreach/Transitional Living Program staff member, came to Briarpatch last year from U.W.-Green Bay where he attend college and worked at Golden House as a domestic violence victim advocate.

Additionally, **Robin Sereno** has been promoted to Associate Program Director overseeing Briarpatch's Runaway and Homeless Youth Programs (Street Outreach, Transitional Living, Youth Shelter, Crisis Line, Volunteer Services,

Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce Endorses New Health Insurance Program

THE LGBT CHAMBER of Commerce signed an agreement to endorse a progressive new health insurance program administered through Medova Healthcare Group called Lifestyle Health Plans. This new, level-funded, health insurance program was introduced into Wisconsin in 2015 and boasts 16, ACA compliant plan designs, now available to companies with 5-500 employees looking for a less costly way to deliver health insurance to their workforce.

Lifestyle Health Plans is a proprietary medical benefits platform that was developed by Medova Healthcare Group in 2006 with the intention of addressing what they see as one of the root causes of escalating healthcare costs; employee health behaviors. These hybrid benefit options look and feel similar to the programs that unions and large companies have available to them, and provide these businesses with predictable, controllable, and sustainable health insurance rates.

"The last three medical renewals in Wisconsin have averaged just under 2.4% this year, employees are spending less on healthcare through the negotiated discounts with these programs," says Chris Martin of Benefit Awareness.

"Lifestyle Health Plans has already dramatically lowered health insurance premiums for employers by bundling wellness incentives, amongst a number of other cost saving elements, into their insurance platforms. This approach to group medical funding has radically shifted the end cost of group health insurance for consumers," says Martin, who worked with Tomlinson and the Chamber to finalize the agreement on behalf of Medova Healthcare Group.

Those wishing to learn more can visit benefitawareness.com/lgbt-wi.

Jason Rae, executive director of the Chamber, believes that joining "is a great way for businesses to showcase their commitment to diversity and inclusion" in the workplace.

As local businesses embrace LGBT policies, Rae says, "Membership to the chamber has grown, so the opportunity to offer something like this healthcare platform is definitely a top priority."

Any business can get a medical quote through the LGBT Chamber prior to being a member, but if the they decide to enroll in the program they will need to join the Chamber, too. ■

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Out state reps push Equality Agenda of pro-LGBTQ legislation

REPS. JOCASTA ZAMARRIPA and **Mark Spreitzer**, and **Sen. Tim Carpenter** worked to create a draft of legislation to address everything from cleaning up state law with regard to marriage equality, to protections for transgender and gender non-conforming individuals, to outlawing harmful "conversion" therapy.



AB417 would update state statutes and recognize the legality of same-sex marriage and the rights that accompany it. Same-sex couples who wish to adopt or give birth to a child of their own in particular would benefit from an update to statutes related to marriage and parentage.

Another bill, AB68, would eliminate the constitutional restriction on same-sex marriage that still exists in Wisconsin state law. When marriage equality became federal law after the Supreme Court ruling, it made such state laws null and void. However, if the high court's ruling would ever be overturned or even chipped away at, state law could revert to the ban on equality.

Further, Wisconsin still doesn't guarantee protection against discrimination in employment, housing, public accommodations, education, insurance coverage, jury duty, and the receipt of mental health or vocational rehabilitation services for transgender and gender-nonconforming people. AB418 would change that, and make it illegal to discriminate on the basis of someone's gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation.

Nine states and the District of Columbia, as well as several cities, have laws explicitly banning the harmful and medically debunked practice of so-called "conversion" therapy for LGBTQ minors. Reps. Zamarripa and Spreitzer, and Sen. Carpenter, are joined by **Rep. Amanda Stuck** and **Sen. Fred Risser** in introducing AB349/SB261, which would add Wisconsin to states to outlaw the practice.

The Equality Agenda package also included official recognition of June as Pride Month in 2017, as well as for the Transgender Day of Remembrance on November 20 of this year.

So far, all of the proposed legislation is languishing in committees, and Spreitzer admits it's unlikely the Republican-controlled Legislature will agree to bring them to a floor any time soon. Still, both he and Rep. Zamarripa stressed the importance of having equality legislation drafted and ready to go as soon as the political climate changes. It also offers an important sign of support to the LGBTQ community, and a clear indication of where various other legislators stand on the issues.

So far, the only Republican co-sponsor of is **Rep. Todd Novak** (R-Dodgeville), who has signed on to support the conversion therapy ban.

"Some state legislators still endorse bigoted ideologies," Spreitzer and Zamarripa's statement goes on. "The pragmatic legislative initiatives we put forth to bring equality to Wisconsin were all dismissed because the Republican majority chooses to ignore the best interests of LGBT Wisconsinites."

"As out, proud, openly-LGBT elected Democrats, we cannot stress enough the importance of celebrating our diversity as a state and nation by advancing for treatment and liberty to all...Let us work to combat homophobia and help our fellow LGBT Wisconsinites live safe, happy, and authentic lives." ■



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and Parent Support Programs). For a number of years, Robin has worked in direct Street Outreach, Parent Support and most recently as the Program Coordinator for the Transitional Living Program within the agency.

DIVERSE & RESILIENT D&R welcomes **Matthew Lewis** as the 414ALL Condom Campaign coordinator. A Milwaukee native and recent U.W. grad, Matthew is thrilled to be back in his hometown doing public health work with young people.

D&R also welcomes new board members **Dr. Angelique Harris** and **Tom Guay**. Dr Harris is director of the Center for Gender and Sexualities Studies at Marquette. Mr. Guay is a vice president at Northwestern Mutual and executive sponsor for Northwestern Mutual's LGBTA Employee Resource Group.

LATINO CHAMBER OF COMMERCE **Jessica Cavazos** has been named the President and CEO of the Latino Chamber of Commerce of Dane County effective immediately. She had been Executive Director since September 2016. The title has been changed to reflect the organization structure of the many corporations and businesses the Chamber will interface and partner with over the coming year.

"When meeting with members and community leaders, this will facilitate our work as peers in promoting the Dane County economy and the role Latino businesses play within that growing economy," said Jessica Cavazos.

The Latino Chamber of Commerce's members in conjunction with its board of directors voted to change the leadership structure to facilitate its partnerships with Dane County's business community. Former President **Mayra Medrano**, will now be the Board Chair. **Juan José López**, formerly Vice President, is now the Vice Chair, and **Jessica Cavazos** will now be the President and CEO. The board of directors is comprised of 11 professionals and business owners in the community.

PERFECT HARMONY MEN'S CHORUS **Kevin Hage** has been hired as Artistic Director. Kevin had served as Interim Artistic Director for the chorus over the past year; he is a music teacher in the Madison Metropolitan School District, and is experienced at and has a passion for conducting Tenor/Baritone/Bass choruses. The PHMC membership elected a new board member, **Patrick McGuigan**, and the PHMC Board elected the following officers at the July meeting: President: **Franzo Law II**; Vice President: **Charlie Squires**; Secretary: **Marge Sutinen**; Treasurer: **Mark Oldenburg**. The Board and singers thank outgoing board members **Chris Ballar-Mientus**, **Janet Pugh**, and **Dan Jendrzejewski** for their dedication and services. Chris introduced Chorus Connection management software, Janet had chaired the Fundraising/Development Committee, and

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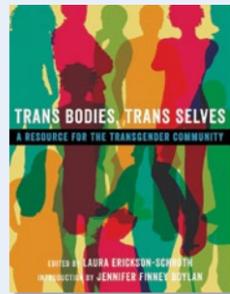


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Providing educational and supportive resources to transgender inmates: A note from LGBT Books to Prisoners



TRANSGENDER PEOPLE are incarcerated at higher rates than the general population: A 2011 report found that nearly one in six transgender people have been incarcerated. Among Black transgender people, 47% have been incarcerated.

Nearly a thousand transgender people have written to LGBT Books to Prisoners asking for books and educational resources that affirm their gender identities.

One resource that has proved incredibly helpful has been *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves*. It is a resource guide that covers health, legal issues, cultural and social questions, history, theory, and more. It provides up-to-date information with each chapter written by a different trans or genderqueer author. It incorporates the voices of everyday trans people throughout the book.

Jedidiah, a trans woman in prison who received this guide, wrote to tell us how much she enjoyed the book: "Thank you! With one book *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves* you just helped at least three people: me, Krissy and Cheli. So you know that book is staying here with Krissy (she going to fully transition) and I'll buy one when I leave... I plan on helping my family of LGBTQ."

Given how useful this book is to the trans community in prison, we've worked with the team at *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves* to get more copies to incarcerated community members. This spring, they raised funds to send us 50 more copies. Those who have received the book have explained how much of a life-line this has been. As Taylor writes to us: "My life has been a big struggle, I've

overcome many things and I've always found reading and learning soothing, it helps me cope. It's so nice that there's people out there to support not only our community, but our community in prison. So thank you."

A few prisons have rejected the book. The Missouri Department of Corrections sent us a censorship notification banning the book because it "contains inappropriate sexual behaviors, sexually explicit materials and pictures." We appealed, explaining that the content that the DOC objected to was from an educational section on safer sex, which stresses the importance of consent as well as methods for contraception and preventing STIs. The section in question was part of a chapter on transgender health topics, and has won awards from GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality. The decision to censor the book was upheld.

Despite this setback, we're glad that many more copies have made it to their recipients.

It is important for trans communities to come together as one, supporting each other in a shared resistance to oppression and providing emotional support to trans friends and family who are struggling. LGBT Books to Prisoners aims to connect with the most isolated and vulnerable, and *Trans Bodies, Trans Selves* has proved a wonderful resource. ■

Dan had chaired the Music Performance Committee in addition to serving as Vice President.

OPEN Please welcome new board members, **Abby Churchill** and **Sarah Akawa**. Abby is an associate attorney with Koritzinsky & Karls, LLC and works part-time for Lincoln Financial Advisors. Sarah currently co-organizes the Queer Pressure parties, which aim to carve out safer and more inclusive spaces for LGBTQ+ people and people of color in Madison.

Board member **Justin Williams** has joined the external committee, which helps plan the various networking and social events hosted by the organization throughout the year.

UW LGBT CAMPUS CENTER **Gabe Javier** has accepted a job as the new Director of the Multicultural Center at the U.W. and will step down as Director of the LGBT Campus Center. Gabe has served in the position since 2011. Two of other professional staff members, **Tiffany Lee** and **Sheltreese McCoy**, are also moving on from their work with the Center.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Plan ahead to join in

CREAM CITY FOUNDATION The Milwaukee-based organization will hold its 9th annual

Business Equality Luncheon on Friday, **September 22** from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Pfister Hotel. The keynote speaker at the event will be U.S. Army retired Col. Sheri Swokowski, currently the highest-ranking, out transgender veteran in the country. To Sponsor or purchase tickets visit: 2017BusinessLunch.fasttransact.net.

FREEDOM, INC On **September 16** the group will be holding its annual Health Day celebration at Reindahl Park (1818 Portage Road). They invite everyone to join them for a 5K Run/Walk/Stroll, dance battle, sports tournament (with volleyball, basketball, and chess), and a community BBQ. Contact them at bgomez@freedom-inc.org or 608-416-5337 for more info.

GSAFE Get ready to get scary! The 2nd Annual Trick or Trot Walk/Run will take place in downtown Madison on Sunday, **October 15**. The family-friendly event will feature face-painting and games, the option to dress up like a cat, pumpkin, or witch, as well as trick-or-treat stations along the 5k route. Visit gsafeui.org/5k for more info.

OPEN **September 13**, join OPEN for an informational workshop, "The LGBTQ Professional in the Trump Era," and on **October 19** mark your calendars for a special art exhibit and networking event, details TBA. ■



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First, Do No Harm

Dr. Kathy Oriel strikes out on her own in order to provide quality and compassionate medical care, particularly for those too often left out of the system.

I FEEL SO FORTUNATE to be a physician. Individuals trust me to share their stories, their struggles, and joys. That trust remains in my heart and inevitably changes me for the better. I am awed by human resiliency.

Some in medicine would say that holding people's stories "in my heart" is unprofessional—that physicians need to maintain distance and objectivity. Twice in my career others have questioned my professionalism. These are the two instances I am most proud of.

In February of 2011, I was at a leadership retreat, surrounded by the cherry woodwork of UW's Fluno Center. One of my medical partners and I walked to the capitol square over lunch and stood in awe as thousands marched to support public unions. My fellow family physician and I were distracted the rest of the afternoon: history seemed to be in the making mere blocks away.

As physicians on the north side of Madison, we knew well how unions protected injured workers. We wanted to do something, so we hatched a half-baked plan overnight via Facebook. Our loosely formed "Badger Doctors" group held a protest clinic the next day, seeing hundreds of patients and writing work excuses for some. We fashioned ourselves as just a few family docs making a personal and political statement, but our poorly coordinated message was lost in the chaos that followed. National media showed the same horrid clip of me on Fox and CNN. Physicians who were identified suffered substantial wage loss and temporary removal from leadership positions.

Had I known that frigid February morning was to be my 15 minutes of fame, I certainly would have chosen my hat and sunglasses more carefully. Despite the significant consequences, I still am glad we stood up for those more vulnerable.

TARGETED FOR FIGHTING STIGMA

More recently, a healthcare administrator led an investigation focusing on me because of my teaching regarding the care of transgender patients. The controversy arose regarding the diagnoses physicians use to describe the medical issues addressed at each visit. In the area of gender medicine, many of the descriptive codes are medically inaccurate or unnecessarily pejorative. This bias is further complicated by active legal battles regarding whether health insurance covers medically necessary treatment for gender dysphoria.

The administrator uniformly disagreed with physicians who have expertise in transgender medicine when we described the complexities involved in this practice. Her letter admonished: "We believe [Dr. Ori-el's] intent was to ensure [her] services would be covered by insurance so patients would not have to pay out-of-pocket for those services."

There are strict regulations requiring accuracy in this process or physicians can be accused of fraud. Over the years I've developed a spiel for any patient who asks me to alter diagnoses that are in their records. I so regularly explain this that many of my patients will find it familiar: "I worked hard for this license, and I cannot do anything that might place it at risk."

In retrospect, it's hard to know how much of my decision to resign after 22 years was personal burnout or a need for a new adventure. Still, as I recall these events, I retain significant righteous indignation about the way an administrator was allowed to accelerate an adversarial process regarding a group of people who are tremendously medically underserved rather than engage physician experts in a collaborative process. My trans patients were held to different standards as compared to my cisgender patients. I had to resign: First, do no harm.

BACK TO THE MISSION

Because of this career shift, I've been rummaging through old files as I update credentials. I ran across my application to medical school that began, "I want to do something important, something that matters, something that makes a difference." I've read over a thousand medical student applications as a teacher of family medicine. Suffice it to say my clichéd but authentic essay ranks substantially below mean.

Though the language is uninspiring, I remain connected to the intent and the emotion of the statement I wrote as a 23-year-old. I also ran across a crumpled article clipped from the traditionally conservative American Medical Association's newspaper from the late 1990s. When I was president of the Gay and Lesbian Medical Association, I was quoted alongside an equally earnest photo: "People clearly feel more safe than they did a generation ago to be identified as a gay or lesbian physician... Without a doubt, I owe a debt to the people who paved the way for me to be able to say, 'Hi, I'm a lesbian and I'm your doctor.'" I cringe a little and wonder if I really said that. I'd like to think not. It's not like I walk into an exam room and announce, "Hi, I'm doctor Kathy Oriel and I'm a lesbian." Then again, I don't really need to.

I retain significant righteous indignation about the way an administrator was allowed to accelerate an adversarial process regarding a group of people who are tremendously medically underserved rather than engage physician experts in a collaborative process.

Of course, as a family physician, I love caring for people of any age, race, background, gender, or orientation. As a physician, when I enter that exam room, it's about what the individual in front of me needs—not about my identity or viewpoints. I remember fondly so many moments of being with people, and a few stand out because I was able to contribute, in whatever small way, to the lives of those within my community.

WHO I SERVE

Joan (not her real name) established care in her late 60s. After decades of knowing she was transgender, she was finally ready to start hormones and transition. Until then, she lived in fear of her adult children disowning her or that she might lose her job. Not even six months after starting estrogen, she was diagnosed with a devastating stomach cancer. Her partner patiently educated every individual who walked into the room regarding her correct name and gender. I worked with the hospital to properly denote her name, and encouraged providers to write notes that didn't start with, "this 67-year-old biologic male" or "this 67-year-old transsexual female."

She enrolled in hospice, and was soon homebound. During a visit Joan told me, "I've accepted myself and this cancer. I was born the wrong sex and the only thing I want is to die the right one." Trans people who had no cash to spare donated funds for a legal name change. Hospice arranged for a judge to legally change her name and gender marker without her needing to appear in court. Joan's partner called on a Friday afternoon to let me know all was well and Joan's name was now legal and her gender was legally female. Two days later, Joan died peacefully at home, her last wish fulfilled.

PROGRESS AND THE WORK AHEAD

I've been fortunate enough to see love literally make a family many a time. A few years ago I sat in the hospital room of a woman as she labored to give birth, her supportive partner at her side. It was one of the

most beautiful births I've attended. The resident doctor accompanying me came to Madison because he wanted to be an advocate for LGBTQ patients. After the birth, I asked the gynecologist on call to assist. As I looked around the room, I noticed that everyone in the room was gay: all three physicians, the nurse, and the parents. It didn't seem that long ago that I learned how to perform inseminations because the infertility specialist in town refused to inseminate lesbians. Luckily, he has long since retired. That moment with the new parents and child was a moment that for me marked progress. I noticed how routine a two-mom birth had become and that healthcare professionals are able to care openly.

I believe that often things align exactly how they are meant to. Earlier this year, I was burned out and cynical about most of what the medical industrial complex aimed to do. I needed time to recharge and contemplate next steps. I've decided to work for myself, starting a small solo practice called—for lack of a more creative name—Oriel Medicine. Nurse Melisa and I will be working out of a small office. We'll use an electronic health record, but patients will actively decide what information will be available to whom.

Though I'm sure specifics of my new practice will morph over time, I still plan on being a family doctor. I will provide primary care for newborns through centenarians. I will continue to provide services people in our community value: insemination, confidential STI testing, PreP, and of course, transgender care. I'll continue to provide support for those wanting to stay clean and sober, including Suboxone®. I hope I never let a day go by without remembering what an honor it is to carry the title of "my doctor." I know—pretty clichéd and sappy, but that's how I roll.

Depending on insurance coverage, all are welcome at Oriel Medicine, whether or not they identify with any of our LGBTQ+ letters.

To obtain specifics about Oriel Medicine's hours, enroll as a patient, and get more information regarding insurance coverage, consult the website: orielmedicine.com or follow Oriel Medicine on Facebook. ■

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DANE ARTS

The Dane County Cultural Affairs annual art calendar continues to celebrate Dane County with original works created by local artists. This is a wonderful gift that is perfect for family and friends! 2018 Dane Arts Calendars will be available for purchase after October 15, 2017. Contact the Dane County Cultural Affairs Office at (608) 266-5915, danearts@countyofdane.com, or stop by to visit in person (210 MLK Jr. Blvd. Room #421 Madison, WI)



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Soothsayer

Karin Wolf dives into the lush and provocative world of Rashaad Newsome's *ICON* exhibit, now at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art.

IT TOOK WEEKS of carrying around MMoCA's marketing materials for Rashaad Newsome's *ICON* (August 11–December 3, 2017) before I dared to attempt articulating why I think his work is so prescient for us here and now.

It is America in the fall of 2017. Times are tense. Fear is rampant. Emotions are elevated. Phobias are being fed. Many of us can feel the volatility caused by intolerance that has long festered under the surface of our country's collective, thick skull. The soul of our nation stands at a crossroads wherein people with the greatest political influence fail to see it as their patriotic duty to ensure the safety of minorities, while displaying a blatant disrespect for equality.

Given the socio-historical context, it is a good omen that *ICON* is in town, and brings us a modicum of hope. The videos included in this exhibition highlights voguing, a dance form that emerged from the queer African American dance scene in the 1980s and continues to evolve today and shares a story of empowerment.

The ruby red lip-gloss and diamond-white rhinestones on the cov-

Newsome presents powerful, self-expressed black bodies, brown bodies, female bodies, queer bodies, and trans bodies. Newsome presents us with bodies who love their bodies, who move freely in themselves, and who enjoy their sexuality.

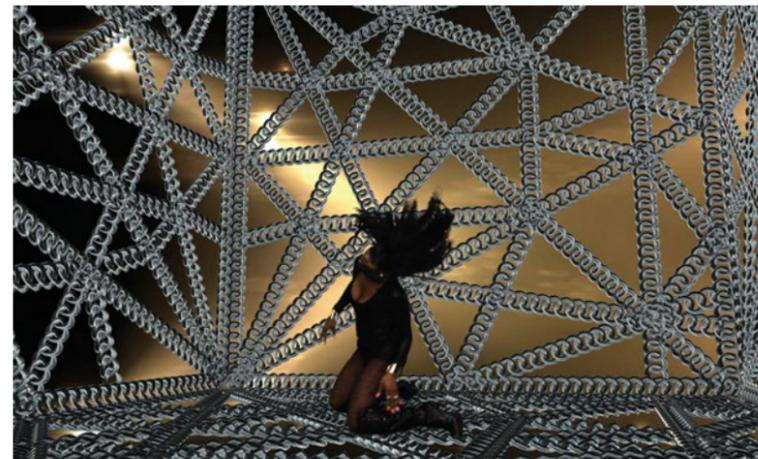
er of the exhibition announcement, alluring symbols of sensuality and power, drew me in like a moth to a flame. I stared at the mouth from "Stop Playing in my Face" waiting for those lips to utter the magic words that might save us all from this mad, mad world.

Once, when I almost lost the worn invitation in an already digested Sunday *New York Times*, it peeked out from between the pages and my eyes, still blurry from tears after what I had read, stared into what reminds me of a sequin-and-feather Mardi Gras eye mask, the bejeweled visage of one of Newsome's oracle-like creations.

In that moment, I realized the profound impact the artist's hometown had on him as a person and an artist. To many, New Orleans is a kingdom unto itself that employs fanfare to mark everything from birth to death with survival in between. Newsome, who not only grew up there but also went to school at Tulane, does not skimp when it comes to pomp and ceremony. In fact, he is somewhat of a queer, Hip-Hop herald. Thus, the more his musical compositions



KARIN WOLF is the Arts Program Administrator for the City of Madison Department of Planning and Community and Economic Development and the Madison Arts Commission. She manages the City's public art program, arts grants, and helps facilitate community cultural planning. She has a M.S. in Curriculum and Instruction and undergraduate degrees in History, History of Cultures, and Afro-American History.



sound the trumpets and his kaleidoscopic collages come to life, the more he calls us to attention.

When I eventually saw "Stop playing in my Face" in its full video glory, the soothsayer did start to speak and, unsurprisingly, she had a lot to say. She speaks in the sampled tongues of trans women, and feminists such as bell hooks and Judith Butler and other such deities of postmodern theory. She speaks in what the artist has called a "black" or "sassy" vernacular. The piece presents embodiment with high praise, and particularly esteems bodies that have traditionally been condemned by the dominant culture. Newsome presents powerful, self-expressed black bodies, brown bodies, female bodies, queer bodies, and trans bodies. Newsome presents us with bodies who love their bodies, who move freely in themselves, and who enjoy their sexuality. With profound power, his work conveys the agency possessed by seemingly unprotected bodies and warns ill-doers to back off and beware.



In his video, *ICON*, a central figure emerges from the bejeweled center of a circular dome or brooch-like form, and that centerpiece seems to be floating through a sky filled with six-pointed stars. As in most of Newsome's collages, layers of reclaimed sounds, movements, symbols, and images are repeated and re-contextualized within a constructed environment that demonstrates the artist's prowess in using technology's unique tools for conveying ideas. Newsome is known to experiment with the media in a way that creates objects out of movement and animates the static form, making him a force in the art world, and so, too, by the laws of physics.

Viewers have choices in how they experience *ICON*: they can dig in and derive the narrative, or they can allow themselves to be mesmerized by the sparkly pageantry and geometrical patterns. Either way, Newsome's work will influence the way they think about power and culture. If it results in moving the needle of prejudice toward justice, many of us will rejoice in ecstatic revelry when he succeeds. ■



Rashaad Newsome, *Stop Playing in My Face!* (video still), 2016. Single-channel video with sound, 4:02 minutes. Courtesy of the artist and De Buck Gallery, NY.

Rashaad Newsome: *ICON*

On view August 12–December 3



227 State Street, Madison • MMoCA.org • Museum admission is free



Chele Isaac, *the understory* (video still), 2017. Seven-channel video with sound. Courtesy of the artist.

Chele Isaac: *the understory*

On view September 1–November 12
MMoCA Opening September 22 • 6–9 PM
Event admission \$10



For Love and a Story

Telling her truth to a room full of strangers turned out to be the recipe for finding a new community and a whole lot of love for

Vivienne Andersen.

ONCE YOU WIN A MOTH StorySLAM competition, you start getting email from the executive producers at the MOTH in New York. Almost invariably they will sign their email, “MOTH Love.” At first blush it might seem cutesy or inappropriate. It is not. MOTH Love is a particular species, and it is intoxicating, addictive, and very real.

Every storyteller who has ever summoned the courage to tell her story at one of their events has experienced some part of it. While every local story slam takes on its own local flavor, they are all infused with MOTH Love—from the moment a storyteller’s name is called, the audience goes wild with applause. Even when a story is horrible (none of them are) the audience goes wild again at the end as if they have just heard the most rapturous tale from their lover. Adulation and appreciation for people’s stories is at the core of MOTH Love, but that is not the end of it.

MORE THAN A CONTEST

The MOTH is a live storytelling competition. There is a podcast and a weekly show on NPR, but the heart of the MOTH are the live StorySLAM events where regular people put

their names in a hat, and if they get called, they get to tell a true, five-minute story, without notes, about themselves. And then they are judged. The winners from those events are invited to a GrandSLAM event where they again compete. It is exhilarating in so many ways. For those wanting to take part, or just watch, the Madison MOTH takes place on the second Monday of the month at the High Noon Saloon. (Contact Jen Rubin at jenr@themoth.org for more info.)

The MOTH says it is about stories, and it is, but it’s also more than that. The MOTH is about truth, and authenticity, and vulnerability. Every storyteller has to stand on a stage, alone, and tell a true story about themselves to a room full of often drunken strangers. It is daunting. And every storyteller has to make a decision about how they tell their story. The stories that usually do best are those where storytellers share their failings, their weaknesses, the things they find most shameful and have tried to keep hidden.

I’ll happily tell you about my foibles—I hate saying nice things about myself. It’s horrible for me professionally, but great for me at the MOTH.

My experience with the MOTH ostensibly started when I drove to Milwaukee and told my coming out story. To my shock, I won that event. That qualified me to tell a story at the GrandSLAM, in which I told a story about struggling with childhood dysphoria and a suicide attempt. To my surprise again, I won. The amount of MOTH Love one receives at a StorySLAM is significant. The amount one receives at a GrandSLAM is palpable.

FINDING A VOICE

Storytelling for me goes back much further than my experiences with The MOTH. When I was a young girl, I wanted to be a writer. I entered writing competitions, and went to young writers conferences. As happens to many male-identified-at-birth people, I was told to focus on something I could do as a productive career to support a family. Writing, I was told, was not that thing. Around the same time, I was diagnosed with a learning disorder, dysgraphia, which is a difficulty in writing. In my case, it presented as atrocious handwriting and spelling to match. It was bad enough that my high school guidance counselor would later tell me that I was “not college material.”

The practical job I decided on was serving as a Lutheran pastor. I still have trouble explaining why. During that period of my life, I learned



THE BIG SHOW

When I arrived at the venue, covered in sweat, I was amazed by the way the space (a cavernous, three-story-tall former bank lobby) had been transformed into an enchanted forest. It wasn’t until after our mic check that the reality of where I was struck me, and the anxiety kicked in. While there was an open bar, I was careful not to

make use of it until after my time on stage. While we waited to start, we were able to meet The MOTH founder and staffers, and we joked with the emcee and honorees for the evening.

While it is daunting to tell a story to a crowd of 150 strangers, it is even more daunting to tell an abbreviated version of that story to a room full of 500 industry insiders and celebrities. Still, the amount of MOTH Love that precipitated as a result? It was overwhelming. After I told my one-minute story, I spent the next four hours having strangers and celebrities come up to me and thank me, telling me how magnificent I am. Even for a woman who hates to say anything nice about herself, who is skilled at deflecting praise, it was impossible to not be swept away by the torrent of MOTH Love. It was unlike anything I had ever experienced. It was like being dipped in pure love and joy. ■

that preaching—the best preaching, at least—is really just finding a new, fresh way to tell the same story, week after week. My tenure in the church came to a screeching stop when I came out as a transsexual woman. It was a job I was good at, but it was devoid of love. Recently, I was invited to the MOTH Ball, the annual fundraiser for the organization. The top eight storytellers from the previous year are invited to tell a one-minute summation of their GrandSLAM story. The eight of us, talented storytellers all, were asked to arrive early for a sound check, and because there is a lot of bippity-bopity-boo that is involved in donning an outfit for a “Midsummer Night’s Dream”-themed party, I found myself running late—which found me, a trans woman, running down the street in Manhattan, in ballgown, flower wreath, and heels—trying to flag a cab.

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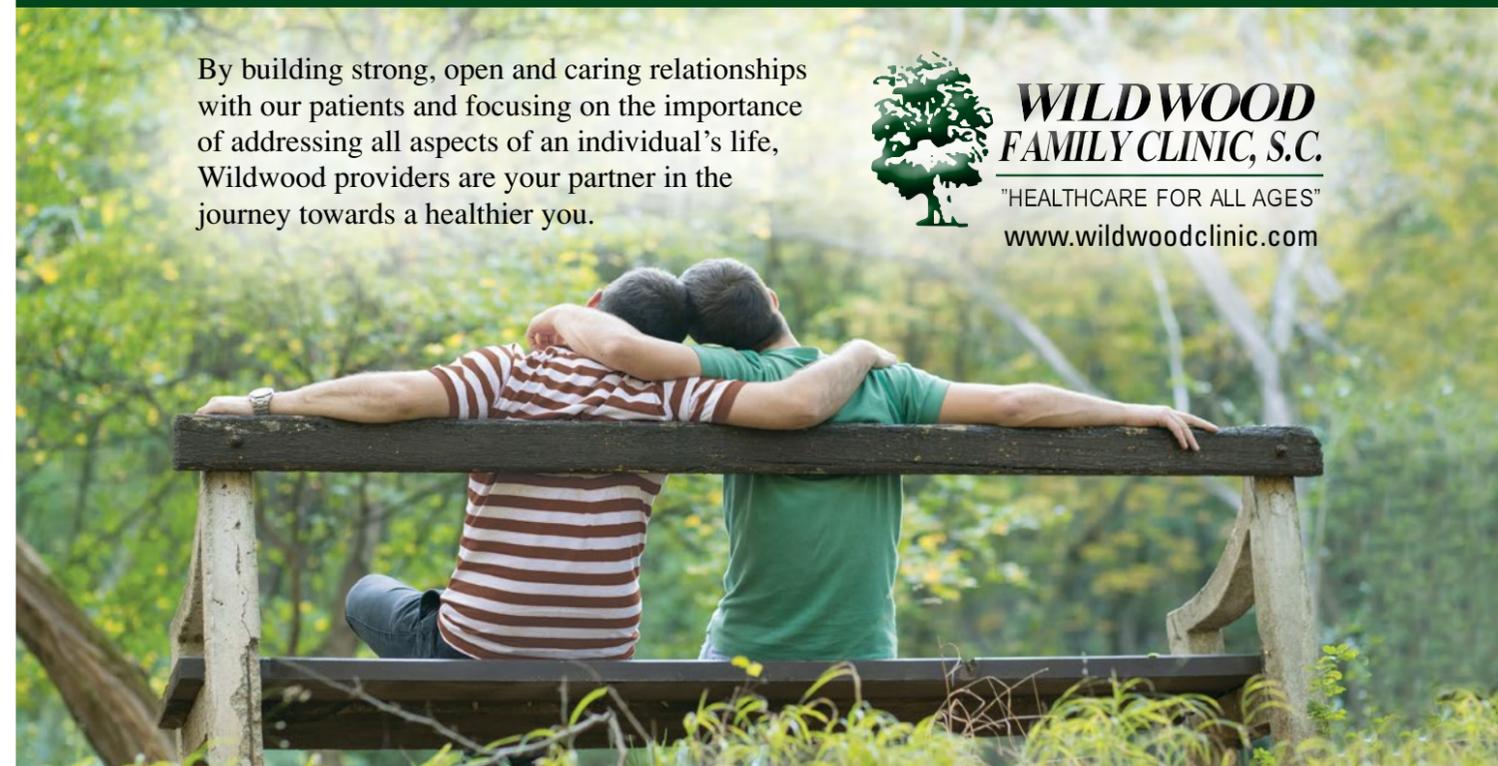
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Land Lover

Jacob Bach founded **Good Land Guides** as a way to share his love of the outdoors, and his native state, with others—and to advocate for good stewardship of that land.

WHO ARE YOU, AND WHAT IS YOUR BACKGROUND?

Growing up on the south side of Milwaukee, I constantly found myself outside. In my teens, I earned my Eagle Scout award. Balancing my love of the outdoors and entertaining people, I went to work as a camp counselor as well as an improv coach. While working on an acting degree, I found the call of the wilderness just too great and focused my time on traveling the United States. After extensive travel, I realized I was truly fascinated with my home state and the diverse people that live in Wisconsin. In 2016, I visited every state park. While on a camping trip along the Menominee River with my uncle, my father (and maybe a bottle of moonshine), the idea for Good Land Guides was born.

My training includes WFA (Wilderness First Aid) Certification, NOLS Backpacking and Leadership training, Boy Scout of America Youth Protection Training, and serving as an Assistant Scoutmaster and Outing Coordinator. I've picked up a few communication skills from 10+ years of improv and team building at ComedySportz, too.

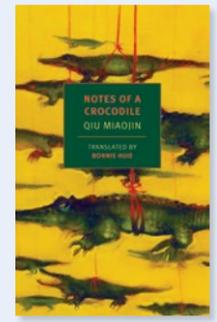
WHAT IS GOOD LAND GUIDES?

Adventures can range from camping weekends in the back county of the great Northwoods to tours of breweries and creameries in towns and cities filled with their own, unique personalities. Each adventure will have a limited amount of spots available and prices vary between each one.

Good Land Guides also provides personal adventures for private groups, scout troops, schools, family getaways, and business team trips. Inquiries, requests, and bookings can be made by emailing goodlandguides@gmail.com.

LGBTQ Reading List

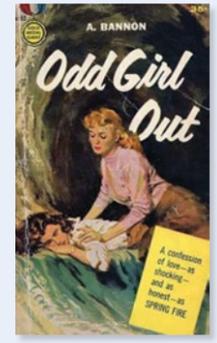
By Madison librarians **Tyler Furo** and **Beth McIntyre**. Visit linkcat.info to request these titles with your library card.



The End of Eddy, by Édouard Louis. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2017.
A phenom in Louis's native France, this bildungsroman's authentic depiction of poverty and abuse has drawn comparisons to current Go Big Read *Hillbilly Elegy*. An uncompromising and essential addition to the gay lit canon.

Logical Family by Armistead Maupin. HarperCollins, 2017.
A long-awaited memoir by a beloved novelist, this book chronicles Maupin's winding journey from the conservative south to San Francisco, and how he found family along the way.

My Cat Yugoslavia, by Pajtim Statovci. Pantheon, 2017.
Stop me if you've heard this one before: A twenty-something Muslim immigrant walks into a Finnish gay bar and promptly falls in love with an anthropomorphic feline homophobe. Inspired and righteously unhinged.



Notes of a Crocodile, by Qiu Miaojin. NYRB Classics, 2017.
Freshly translated into English, this experimental cult classic from 1990s Taiwan, written shortly before Qiu's suicide at age 26, covers a cast of young queer people overrun by melancholy and unrequited love.

Odd Girl Out, by Ann Bannon. Gold Medal Books, 1957.
Pulp-fiction pioneer Bannon turns 85 this September. By slyly exploiting the disreputable albeit popular genre's freedom of content, she wrote sympathetic and complex lesbians into the mainstream. LGBTQ lit is forever in her debt.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO MAKE THE JUMP IN CAREERS TO START THE GOOD LAND GUIDES? WHAT PURPOSE DO YOU FEEL IT SERVES IN YOUR OWN LIFE, AND WHAT DO YOU HOPE IT PROVIDES FOR THE COMMUNITY?

I was an actor most of my life. I spent all of my childhood and the early adult life on stage. In 2014, however, my dad had a heart attack, for which I was the first responder. My dad survived, but it opened my eyes to living every day as best as you can. In 2016, I set the goal to see every state park in Wisconsin (completed in eight months). After seeing 7,000+ miles of the state, I decided that I wanted to share my love with others and thus Good Land Guides began.

I think growing up gay had something to do with holding me back until this point. You don't see many (if any) LGBTQ+ icons in the outdoor world. There is a huge part of me that wants that to change. I want to provide visibility in the outdoor world for queer people.

WHAT ARE YOUR FUTURE PLANS FOR THIS? WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU SEE, OR WHAT OPPORTUNITIES DO YOU HOPE IT CREATES?

Our public lands are under attack. Not just in Wisconsin, but all over the country. I can't stand by and see the thing I love most about this state fall apart. My goal within the next two years is to organize the Wisconsin Outdoor Summit which would be a four-day weekend bringing all of the nonprofits, retailers, icons, guiding companies, and specialty companies in the Wisconsin outdoor industry together. It would act as a platform to talk, advocate, showcase, and show to our elected officials that our lands are important.

WHERE CAN PEOPLE GO TO FIND OUT MORE/GET INVOLVED?

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For more LGBTQ-specific events, see our Organization Events on page 25.

SEPTEMBER

24

MARGARET CHO
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Groundbreaking comedian and LGBTQ icon Margaret Cho returns to Madison as part of her "Fresh Off the Bloat" tour for an evening of insightful stand-up comedy that tackles everything from body image to sexuality to race and politics, all with a biting edge.
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15-17

ORCHESTRAL BRILLIANCE
Overture Center

Madison Symphony Orchestra presents the opening concert of their season, featuring works by Bach, Stokowski, Mendelssohn, and Berlioz.
madisonsymphony.org

16

HEALTH DAY CELEBRATION
Reindahl Park

Freedom, Inc. hosts this celebration and community

education event, featuring a 5k run/walk/stroll, dance battles, sports tournament, and a community BBQ.
freedom-inc.org

19

DENISE DUBOIS AUTHOR EVENT
A Room of One's Own

The local feminist bookstore welcomes Denise Chanterelle DuBois for a reading and book-signing from her memoir, *Self-Made Woman*, which chronicles DuBois' childhood in a working-class Polish family from Milwaukee, and growing up in a gritty, 1960s neighborhood with

no understanding of gender nonconformity, and struggles thereafter with everything from addiction to prison time—and finally, finding and remaking herself.
roomofonesown.com

5-21

TYPHOID MARY & PATIENT ZERO
TAPIT/newworks Ensemble Theater

A new place at the intersection of public health and personal freedom, TAPIT presents its newest work for two weeks.
tapitnewworks.org

6

U.W. ALUMNI PARK OPENING
Memorial Union

After some delay and much anticipation, the new U.W. Alumni Park opens to the public to coincide with Gallery Night. The park, with more than 50 museum-like exhibits woven through gardens, plus a visitor center, is believed to be the first Alumni Park of its kind in the country.
alumnipark.com

OCTOBER

7

AIDS WALK WISCONSIN
Milwaukee Lakeshore

A fun-filled, fully supported event, AIDS Walk Wisconsin & 5K Run has raised more than \$12.5 Million for the fight against AIDS since 1990, and is annually the largest HIV fundraiser in the state.
aidswalkwis.org

TANYA TAGAQ
Wisconsin Union Theater

The award winning Inuk throat singer brings her "Retribution" project to Madison, with a focus on drawing attention to the still-unsolved murders and disappearances of thousands of indigenous women, the pillaging of the earth and the decimation of Inuit culture. She will be accompanied by a local choir.
union.wisc.edu

11

NATIONAL COMING OUT DAY BREAKFAST
The Madison Club

The Wisconsin LGBT Chamber of Commerce hosts a breakfast and networking, plus a keynote address from actress, musician, writer, and storytelling Rachel Crowl, who moved from Appleton to Los Angeles to pursue her work and recently starred in the movie *And Then There Was Eve*.
wislgbtchamber.org

14

PERFECT HARMONY MEN'S CHORUS FALL FUNDRAISER
Bunky's Cafe

The long-running musical outfit hosts its annual fall fundraiser, with music, food, and more.
perfectharmonychorus.org

15

GSAFE'S TRICK OR TROT
Downtown Madison

Get ready to get scary! The annual, family-friendly event will feature face-painting and games, the option to dress up like a cat, pumpkin, or witch, as well as trick-or-treat stations along the 5k route.
gsafevi.org/5k

19

OPEN ART EXHIBIT & NETWORKING EVENT
Winnabago Studios

Enjoy an evening networking with OPEN at one of Madison's finest art studios. Eric Baillies is opening his studio for an evening of wine, cheese boards from Fromagination, and a demonstration of tintype art.
openmadison.org

GAY MEN'S CHORUS OF LA PRESENTS "IT GETS BETTER"
Young Auditorium, U.W.-Whitewater

The powerful new tour makes a stop in Whitewater with a week of educational workshops culminating in a moving musical theater performance. The stage show brings to life real-life stories from lesbian, gay, transgender, genderqueer and straight allies from across America and infuses them with dynamic musical numbers. Tickets are free with a RSVP.
youngauditorium.com

20-22

FROM THE NEW WORLD
Overture Center

Madison Symphony Orchestra welcomes guest pianist Olga Kern for a refreshing take on an American classic, with Ravel's "Mother Goose Suite," Samuel Barber's "Piano Concerto," and Dvořák's Symphony No. 9, *From the New World*.
madisonsymphony.org

NOVEMBER

3-5

MADISON OPERA'S CARMEN
Overture Center

From its scandalous 1875 premiere in Paris to its current position as one of the most popular operas in the world, *Carmen* has enthralled generation after generation. Bizet's masterpiece blends passion, seduction, jealousy, dance, and even a little law-breaking, all set to one of the most famous scores ever composed.
madisonopera.org

SAVE THE DATE

NOVEMBER 19 Felicia Melton Smyth Holiday Gift Drive



WHAT'S NEXT?

2017-2018 Season



11/2-11/19 2017



1/18-2/4 2018



4/5-4/22 2018

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music & lyrics by William Finn
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tori Amos
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 26

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AMERICAN PROMISE TOUR
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Punk Inuk
throat singer
Oct. 7, 2017



BASSEM YOUSSEF
Exiled Egyptian
comedian & satirist
Nov. 9, 2017

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MADISON OPERA

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Carmen



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OVERTURE HALL

The Abduction from the Seraglio



BY W.A. MOZART
FEB 9 & 11, 2018
CAPITOL THEATER



Florencia en el Amazonas



BY DANIEL CATÁN
APR 27 & 29, 2018
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New Harvest Foundation continues to support and fund LGBT projects and programs in South Central Wisconsin. However, the work we do cannot be done without the financial support of our donors.

First, we'd like to thank all those who have given and continue give to NHF. We encourage and ask for your enduring support.

As the tone of the national conversation shifts, it is clear the importance of groups like New Harvest and the role they play in their local communities. Our mission is even more vital now than ever before so we ask those who have not given to consider giving to New Harvest's mission in supporting the LGBT communities of south central Wisconsin.

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cover



A New Lens

Faced with family trauma, self-doubt, and plenty of uncertainty, local business owner **Natalie Hinckley** has found a way to chart her own authentic course through video production, music, and love.

MY WIFE IS GOING INTO LABOR. Two weeks early. In a scramble, I'm doing my best to clear my schedule; packing up our hospital bags, postponing shoots, briefing forgiving clients, and covering shoots I'm scheduled to direct. I email every single professional contact that our planned open house is about to be postponed—my wife is going into early labor and our child is about to be born. I'm joined in the hospital by my mother, sister, and my wife's family—all beaming with anticipation.

Rewind 10 years. I was four years out of college and just getting myself established. Upon graduating, I started my business on the side. It was 2007, some big jobs were heading my way, and I was ready to make the leap. No looking back. I quit my job, ready to produce video full time. It was challenging to navigate the world of self-employment, but I was making it work. My degrees in art and business helped me with my goals and while I always knew I would eventually run my own business, I hadn't planned for it happening so quickly. But the timing was right.

My work filming bands lead to interesting jobs, like directing the Madison Area Music Awards, live streaming at SXSW, and producing a feature-length rockumentary for Crustacean Records. It caught the attention of Madison's local roller derby league and we became their in-house production team. This early work with derby would lead to hundreds of derby games to come, traveling nationwide to provide video for tournaments. Later, editing work for international retailer Lands' End would kickstart my now well-established career as a director within the industry.

ROLLERCOASTER

Thrilling events were happening in my personal life, too. I always wanted to be in a band, so I took up bass guitar, ready to explore the Madison music scene. Playing in musical projects would give me the experience and groundwork for my own project, a surf-punk band eventually known as Venus in Furs. It was also at this time (my mid-20s) that I left the boyfriends behind and started dating women.

Then 2009 turned out to be a terrible year. We unexpectedly lost my father and it devastated my family. My dad was the kind of guy that always had a project underway: Fixing a fence, changing the Jeep's oil, planning our family vacation. He was a person constantly in motion, a trait I've inherited (that and the brilliant idea to keep an industrial-size bottle of Frank's Hot Sauce in the fridge at all times. It goes with everything!). He helped me get my business started. Together, we calculated my first hourly rates, considered insurance options, and laid the bookkeeping groundwork for year-end taxes. I looked to him for advice and direction. My dad was the rock of our family, and now gone, we were left stunned and shaken.

I am a modern day activist simply by being myself.
Really, we all are. Through this activism, we are
empowered to be exactly who we should be: Ourselves.

I had developed a pretty steady relationship with my girlfriend by this time. The loss urged me to be more open and honest with my remaining family. I hoped we would know each other better moving forward. I felt that I could not wholeheartedly support the rest of my family without being open about myself.

It didn't work out quite as smoothly as I had planned. In fact, the news was poorly received. Too much uncertainty for my family left little tolerance for unexpected revelations. As if things couldn't get worse, my relationship with my girlfriend was crumbling. I felt I had nothing.

With all of the upheavals, day-to-day functioning became incredibly difficult. It was a deep challenge to move my business forward, or even find meaning in daily life. At a time when seemingly everything was coming together, things were ripping apart, and I found myself flailing. Although I realized my experience wasn't unique (and that my family was suffering as well), just doing the bare minimum of following up on commitments felt, at times, nearly impossible.

Fearing further rejection, I avoided coming out to anyone else. Even when friends asked about my girlfriend I flat-out denied the relationship. The idea of being out professionally wasn't even a consideration. My guards were down, I was emotionally bruised, and I simply could not weather yet another blow. Instead, I buried it.

SEEKING SOLACE, MAKING CHANGE

My refuge was in playing music with the bands. We wrote songs, we partied, we put on crazy shows. It was a great escape, but it came with a cost. Late shows and practices found me with plenty of excuses to push my emotions aside. Staying out at bars late (even on weeknights), only

TIPS & TRENDS

From Broadway to the big screen



TIM SAUERS
VP OF PROGRAMMING & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
OVERTURE CENTER

Broadway musicals on the big screen are making musicals accessible to everyone. More Broadway shows are being filmed during their NYC run and later being shown in movie theaters across the country. Most notable is Disney's hit *Newsies*. It did so well that it's getting a second airing. Big screen films of Broadway shows *Les Miserables*, *Into the Woods* and *Chicago* have even turned producers heads to make more movie musicals for the cinema. There are currently eight musicals in development for films, including the mega-hits *Wicked*, *Cats*, and *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*.

Biographies overtaking the memoir



RAPHAEL KADUSHIN
EXECUTIVE EDITOR, UW PRESS

Memoirs are reaching a tipping point, if only because there are so many now and everyone is essentially performing, and branding, their own life story on social media. I'm increasingly drawn to biographies. Our best-selling book right now, *Money, Murder, and Dominick Dunne: A Life in Several Acts* by Robert Hofler, is doing well because it is a beautifully told, thoroughly researched life story that suggests how Dunne's trajectory intersected with so many key moments in the culture, from the OJ trial to Hollywood. Our upcoming UW Press fall list also represents the increasingly eclectic nature of LGBTQ publishing. Just



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TIPS & TRENDS

out is our memoir, *Self-Made Woman*, which tells the story of Denise Chanterelle DuBois's transformation from a boy born into a working-class Polish American Milwaukee family into a fully evolved woman. Kenny Fries's *In the Province of the Gods*, though, suggests the kind of memoir I tend to look for. Partly it is Fries' personal memoir of his life in Japan as a disabled gay man but the book explores larger issues as well—the different ways eastern and western cultures view sexuality and disability. Plus it ends on a romantic high note. *Off Season*, by Amy Hoffman, is a wonderful comic romantic novel set in Provincetown that is a flat-out fun read, and the test of whether a LGBTQ author and protagonist can really find mainstream readers. That's always our goal.

Pop-up events for great use of space & energy



TRENT MILLER
HEAD BUBBLERARIAN, THE BUBBLER AT MADISON PUBLIC LIBRARY

I've always been interested in how artists respond to specific spaces or materials in making new work, and I'm really excited to see more large-scale, pop-up contemporary art events happening in Madison. Several months ago, I helped to organize the MUNICIPAL event in the soon-to-be-renovated Madison Municipal Building and, more recently, a similar exhibition called FORGE was held in the Madison Brass Works building. And the MAKESHIFT festival in Olbrich Park promises to become an annual undertaking. I think there is really good artistic energy and collaboration happening right now in Madison, and I'm hopeful that this will just lead to more of these kinds of happenings in the future.



1

made things worse. The music was good, but I wasn't a rockstar. I was a person hiding from my problems.

Our new guitar player, Victoria, saw how badly I was hurting. She, along with a couple close friends, helped me make it through. She encouraged me to seek counseling to confront my father's death, to improve the relationship with my family, and to be comfortable again in my own skin.

Though 2009 through 2012 seems like a void of time, when I look back I'm amazed to be reminded of what good things did come of it. Venus in Furs would release an album and tour the East Coast in 2012, and my relationship with that guitar player, Victoria, would blossom.

Victoria, aka 'Elle Machette' (her roller derby name), had been asked to join the band to play guitar, referred to us by fellow derby skater, Sour Kraut. From the start of the band, I felt this spark of excitement towards her. There was a comfort of a friend you'd known for years even though it was just a matter of months. As we got to know each other better, I'd bring her popsicles when she was sick. She came to events I was filming.

One evening, she said she was in the mood for sushi and asked me if I wanted to join her. We walked into a surprisingly crowded restaurant, which was odd for a Sunday night. Only after looking around and noticing couple-filled tables and menu items such as 'The Love Boat' did we finally realize it was Valentine's Day! As we left the restaurant we bumped into a few friends. The smiles on their faces suggested they'd discovered our secret date. I remember blushing, though it wasn't an official date. In fact, we were becoming an item.

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

This time would mark a change in my business. I was re-energized and would move from a solo operation (supported by freelancers) to hiring my first full-time employee. I had moved out of the home office and into a thousand-square-foot incubator space. Business plan in hand, I was taking more mindful steps to expand and grow.

I think it's actually much more challenging for me to be a woman in my industry than it is for me to be LGBTQ. Often, unless I am upfront about my marriage, etc, it's not obvious. Straight people tend to assume I'm also straight. This summer I was listening to a story on the radio about the activist who had been in Iraq advocating women's attendance of school. I thought how unfortunate it was that this is a still a real struggle for women in our modern times. It saddened me and made me feel fortunate that I was lucky enough to be born in a place where I am free to move about society, do as I will, and follow my career and dreams under my own terms.

Later, I was on a shoot and the talent walked onto set and proceeded to discuss details of the production with one of my teenage assistants, also



2



3

1 Natalie outside her company's studio. 2 With wife Victoria and their daughter. 3 Playing with Venus in Furs.

a male. He assumed that he was the director until I introduced myself and the crew. Sexism, even subtle and unintended, is still very much our reality. As I may be casually or unintentionally overlooked in a physical setting, I can only imagine how often this happens when being considered for work against my male peers or over other production companies.

Despite these continuing challenges, it would be a shame to focus only on the negative. I can't ignore the many opportunities brought before me as a result of hard work, or the women and men that have gone out of their way to help me advance my career. Being a woman and LGBTQ provides a perspective that many other directors simply do not have and is an advantage of its own.

THE PERSPECTIVE OF LIBERATION

As trying as my life's experiences have sometimes been for me and my family, enduring life's tragedies has helped me become a more patient, sympathetic person. It's impossible to know anyone's current situation, and I've learned that simple kindness goes a long way. On video shoots, I often hear comments about how calm I seem under stress, or how relaxed I am when production plans go awry. Though problems certainly do arise, it's not worth stressing over things outside your control. My experiences have given me perspective and understanding, qualities that have helped me with not only my business, but also with my personal life. And, although I love and value my work deeply, at the end of the day, business takes a backseat to family and my own personal well-being.

Growing up, I always felt I was born in the wrong time—that the 1960s should have been my generation. How incredible to be alive and see so much social change, to witness a turning tide. And yet, here I am, witness to this very change in my own lifetime. I would never have expected to see LGBTQ people go from being softly spoken about, be the butt of jokes, or used as a way to slight someone's masculinity/femininity, to seeing marriage equality, the end of DOMA, and an environment where I can freely refer to my partner as my wife. There is still much to be done. Yet, even while we are threatened in this political climate, I'm not sure anyone expected to see so much positive change so quickly.

I am a modern day activist simply by being myself. Really, we all are. Through this activism, we are empowered to be exactly who we should be: Ourselves. Most importantly, I've learned freedom. There was nothing more liberating than informing my colleagues that my wife just gave birth to our beautiful baby daughter. ■

BEFORE TUNES ON THE TERRACE

AND AFTER SELFIES WITH BUCKY



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feature



Slay

Milwaukee's **Lex Allen** charts a course through struggle, loss, finding his familia, and musical vulnerability and versatility.

AS A HEADSTRONG seven-year-old watching Whitney Houston slay on national TV., I imagined a life for myself that was just like that one. I'm glad I never gave up on the dream and made being an expressive singer into a reality.

Music wasn't my first talent—photography was—but it's been apart of my life since I was a little lad. My eldest brother, James, was a DJ, and with his guidance, great taste in music, and love for making people move, he helped me develop my style. Living with him, it submerged me with so many world-class acts that ranged from hip-hop, rock, and pop artists, all of whom would share themselves fearlessly on stage. The unique individuals who represented these genres inspired me to be my authentic self, and in turn, fall in love with the music industry and performing arts.

LOSS AND WHAT COMES AFTER

Among all the stars, the brightest one was my mom. She passed away two years ago and now shines over 11 of her beautiful children and so many others who loved her to the moon and back. The world I knew shattered that day. What once was her guiding light was now a dark patch cluttered with glassy shards of self-doubt and distrust. As time dragged on, I was sure that no one could fill my dear mother's absence. And in my search to feel her just once more, I took a road trip to Minneapolis. Reflection and clarity made gains with each mile closer to the city. Along the way a hawk, my spirit animal, swooped in to tell me to reclaim my destiny with freedom. Head out of the clouds, I turned

Song after song, the crowd grew in size, people who had never heard the band and I before came and stayed. It signaled to me that the new music touches souls and is ready for the world to hear.

on the radio. That's when I came across Mel Robbins. Her Ted Talk and #5SecondRule ("If you have an impulse to act on a goal, you must physically move within five seconds or your brain will kill the idea.") changed my perspective and shifted me back into finding a solution to becoming happier. I was drawn to grow.

Life now matters in a way it hadn't before. My ego has died, and my purpose on this planet is now this vivid picture painted by my desires. Making music with substance, being my true self, and the deep-rooted passion to better this world took centerstage. Those thoughts keep me on track while planting me right here in the present, living every moment each day has to offer. With the negative space of uncertainty in my head cleared, my focus is now on the future.

BIG MOMENTS

There have been countless realizations where I've stopped and said "Is this my life? I'm able to perform my own music and occasionally get a good twerk in on stage, too? I've got the ability to help our community grow by lending a helping hand to innovators and culture creators?"

Those thoughts were the pat on the butt to keep me moving, giving me newfound appreciation for milestones achieved. Winning 88.9 Radio Milwaukee Artist of the Year comes to mind as fuel for inspiration. Their awards ceremony was full of amazing talents from our city who are making music that matters. Rocking out at the Milwaukee Bucks halftime show for the first-ever Pride Night, backed by my beaut danc-

TIPS & TRENDS

Keeping an old artform alive and thriving



KATHRYN SMITH
GENERAL DIRECTOR, MADISON OPERA

The nature of American opera companies has changed a lot in the past decade. With the explosion of new repertoire, companies are programming a wide range of work, both classic and new. Madison Opera's 2017/18 season includes one of the world's most popular operas (Bizet's Carmen); a Mozart opera we have never performed before (The Abduction from the Seraglio); and a highly successful 1996 opera, Daniel Catán's Florencia en el Amazonas, which is Madison Opera's first Spanish-language opera. These works are sung in three different languages, showing how opera crosses borders and uses music to tell stories that touch us all.

Collaboration and cooperation for longevity



STEVE NOLL
VICE PRESIDENT & MARKETING CHAIR, BARTELL THEATRE

It's important to celebrate milestones. They show a level of dedication as well as proving the community has embraced the thing or idea. It was great to see *Our Lives* hit 10 years. The Bartell Theatre is entering our 20th season this year and we are all about the celebration! In the 1990s when the Bartell was formed, almost everyone said a theatre co-op wouldn't work. "Theatre people have too much drama and can't run a business." Well, 20 years and several hundred productions later, we proved it can be done. And we plan on keeping the drama on-stage for another 20 years.

LGBTQ+ YOUTH THEATER



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Starting September 14
Trinity United Methodist
1123 Vilas Ave., Madison

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FOR MORE INFORMATION: 608-222-9086
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TIPS & TRENDS

Better representation on stage and off



JENNIFER UPHOFF GRAY
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, FORWARD THEATER COMPANY

Over the past few seasons we've seen an increasing focus on the underrepresentation of women and people of color as authors, directors, designers, etc. in American theater. A more recent development has been an examination of bias in theater criticism. Playwrights Paula Vogel and Lynn Nottage raised the issue of gender discrimination in the reviews of their plays *Indecent* and *Sweat* on Broadway this past year. And, led by a coalition of Chicago theater artists (including Ike Holter, author of Forward's upcoming production of *Exit Strategy*), real dialogues are taking place about increasing racial diversity amongst critics, and no longer enabling those critics who approach their work with consistent and deep bias.

Authenticity through community art



SHARON KILFOY
DIRECTOR, DANE ARTS MURAL ARTS, INC.

Recently, Dane Arts Mural Arts dedicated seven new murals throughout Dane County including one in Monona that is 120 feet long. Monona residents decided to celebrate the importance of water and highlight their Native American heritage. DAMA artists worked closely with members of the Ho Chunk nation and others on the mural located across the beltline from South Towne. Also, check out the mural by ArtWrite Collective done in collaboration with LGBTQ teens, and portraits of incarcerated

ers and fellow New Age Narcissism familia will always be a stand-out moment. We represented the LGBTQ community in a positive way, with the added surprise of the game being broadcast internationally. It allowed whole new parts of the world to see the diversity of the Milwaukee music scene.

I'm missing a moment. This memory involves one of the largest music festivals where my mom saw me perform last, a place where I got to meet Questlove backstage with my best friend Amy after we opened for the Roots. In a tutu. And this year my musical familia helped me open for BJ the Chicago Kid on a world-class stage, too—of course I'm talking this year's Summerfest! Being the first performance of my new sound, vulnerability was in play, showcasing authenticity and growth. Those walking by could feel the connected energy of the audience underneath the Johnson Control Pavilion. Song after song, the crowd grew in size, people who had never heard the band and I before came and stayed. It signaled to me that the new music touches souls and is ready for the world to hear.

JUST THE BEGINNING

To quote a great philosopher, Britney Spears, "Get to work b*%@ch!" That saying, along with my personal motto, "Keep It Moving, Yah Beauts," serves as ammunition for focus. The year holds new collaborations with a resilient LGBTQ community group, where I'll be advocating a message of self-worth. Now a sitting member of the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, I'll have the opportunity to get our generation behind a beautiful establishment dedicated to bettering the quality of art we hear within our city.

The present moment ignites me mentally for what's to come, the new album "Table 7: For Sinner & Saints." Channeling all of my once-bottled emotions through lyrics and mind-altering productions over the past



The world I knew shattered that day. What once was her guiding light was now a dark patch cluttered with glassy shards of self-doubt and distrust.

two years, I am now set free.

Staying fluid like water and never fighting the waves is what has moved me through hardship. Finding out that happiness exists right outside my comfort zone changed my world. The bigger picture is far more important than any doubt I have now. This is only the beginning. ■

TIPS & TRENDS

people by Philip Salamone at Overture. Great authentic work is being done by Arts & Literature Lab & U.W.'s First Wave program. On a personal note, I recently visited NYC to see the retrospective at the Museum of Modern Art of work by Robert Rauschenberg and friends. The art is great—but there was no mention of what it was like for Rauschenberg or other artists of his era to live closeted lives. And, wow, Jean Michel Basquiat's paintings are now worth as much as Picasso's. I felt like a proud aunt.

Inclusivity insures relevance



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

Issues of inclusivity, cultural equity, and access have been top-of-mind for arts organizations. Museums are working to create a place where individuals can see themselves and explore issues relevant to them, and also serve as a forum for different perspectives and experiences. At MMoCA, this is seen in exhibitions that challenge norms and provoke thought, while reflecting diverse points of view.

Recent exhibitions "Taking Sides" (currently on view) and "Kambui Olujimi: Zulu Time" (now closed) have confronted social inequities and oppression related to race, gender, sexual orientation, and class. "Rashaad Newsome: ICON" focuses on and celebrates Vogue, the dance phenomenon that emerged from Harlem's queer ballroom scene. On view at MMoCA now, these video works reclaim this dance form and critique cultural appropriation. As with these exhibitions, MMoCA continues to explore how to present work that challenges visitors, even as we work to make them feel welcome.



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A Sense of Place

Brian Bigler's love of history and his community in Mount Horeb have pushed him toward a passion for preservation. They also lead to the creation of a new history museum for a small town that presented him with both challenges and enrichment along the way.

MOUNT HOREB'S WISE MENTORS, bullies, entrepreneurs, teachers, and civic-minded past and current residents all helped make me who I am. Experiencing our community pull together to tell our stories through the new Driftless Historium—operated by the Mt. Horeb Area Historical Society I helped found—therefore fulfills a life dream.

This attractive, new 14,000-square-foot, multi-million dollar research center, meeting room, kitchen, archive, and museum destination in my population 7,000 home town instills in me both community and personal pride.

EARLY FASCINATION WITH THE PAST

I was raised on a dairy farm outside Mount Horeb, next door to the Springdale Town Hall where my mother served as an election volunteer. I was six years old when the Village of Mount Horeb celebrated its centennial in 1961. My mother needed a dress for the parade, and I accompanied her to the home and attic of the family from whom my parents purchased the farm. They treated me to a presentation of old objects lovingly stored in an ancient Norwegian chest. One of these was an oddly shaped tea strainer. Its looped handles and handmade quality intrigued me and stuck in my memory.

My parents took over our farm from a distraught young widower who had lost two wives while living there. He literally left behind everything that had accumulated for decades in attic, basement, sheds, and barns. And at a young age the aesthetics, use, and history of these old things had



Brian Bigler (right) with his partner Ken Scott.

me hooked. This curiosity grew when my fifth grade teacher had us bring in antiques for a history day show-and-tell. I exhibited a kerosene-operated vaporizer.

Annual school trips to museums intensified my interest in all things old. A seventh grade trip to the UW-Extension Upham Woods nature preserve near Wisconsin Dells, combined with encouragement from our 4-H leader, inspired my creation of a mile-long nature trail on the farm. Soon Dad tolerated my filling four empty buildings with antiques discovered on the farm or given by neighbors and friends. I titled the place “Forest Valley Nature Trail and Farm Museum.” The local newspaper published a story and those wanting tours followed, sometimes received proudly by my bemused father.

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

At the same time, it began to dawn on me that operating a museum might be abnormal for a seventh-grade boy. Furthermore, my lack of interest in farming felt unusual. Other deep, undiscovered suspicions began to nag. I recall this becoming evident at a neighbor's birthday party when my best friend was asked to play ball with the boys while I was basically told I was not welcome. Pitifully, I stood and watched. Actually, I would have rather joined the girls and their wonderful cupboards full of colorful dishes. Such events demonstrated that I was not like the other boys in class.

Instead of letting it upset me, I consciously—rather arrogantly—told myself that whatever it was that made me different also made me unique.

In high school, I became a target of verbal taunts and physical shoves and strikes. To avoid this, I learned to fill all free time. Looking back, I regret taking a Future Farmers of America class rather than chorus. Harassment happened often enough that one time I recognized it coming and swung my locker door open so my would-be bully ran into it face-first. I would look forward to evenings and weekends retreating into my farm-based museum fantasy. By the time I was in eighth grade, my older sister had been discovering boys, and I hardly saw her world. I had the isolated farm escape to myself.

BECOMING WHOLE

After the bullies discovered my private lunch spot in the hallway, I took a job checking out books in the school's library, just across the way.

During downtime there, I thumbed the card catalogue looking for Mount Horeb history and discovered a publication from that 1961 Centennial. I could not believe the old pictures and how the community had changed. This booklet and everything leading up to that moment opened a path to a hobby that still consumes me today. It has grown into my livelihood in identifying and selling antiques, inspired going to college as an adult to earn a degree in history, and ignited my drive to promote our local history.

I looked at Olive through tears. She smiled and said, “I was going to give this to you when you got married, but decided now was best.” I knew her son was gay, and she had to say no more.

After high school, I asked the Village's librarian if there was a local historical society. She knew only of an unofficial group that had gathered for the Centennial of the Village some dozen years earlier. After more discussion, we placed an invitation in the local newspaper for a meeting. It was March of 1975, and the Mt. Horeb Area Historical Society was born.

For years, I dedicated myself to collecting and preserving area history, all while suppressing that “different” part of me. I feel I used this hobby to not only express my passion for old things but to partly fill a void in my life. As I matured, I wondered if others in the organization knew my secret.

Through the Society, I befriended Olive, whose mother had taken me on that 1961 attic tour. One day I mentioned to her that it may have been her mother who kindled my interest in old things and told her about a tea strainer I was probably imagining. She took me to her basement entertainment room to show me that strainer hanging in her display of family mementos. Simply seeing this humble artifact evoked a rush of recogni-

Still striving for more diversity



TAPIT/NEWWORKS ENSEMBLE THEATER
DANIELLE DRESDEN, PRODUCING ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Culture in general and theater in particular doesn't flow like a river so much as a turbulent set of rapids.

We think there's a general movement towards equality, acceptance, and room for all kinds of voices, but things seem to get choppy and flow backwards, too. Most plays produced are still written by men (63% in 2016, according to *American Theatre* magazine, and I assume they're mostly white, cisgender males), and genderqueer authors and people of color are still terribly under-represented. So I think we need to applaud the theater community's good intentions and then keep after it to actually walk the talk, or better yet, put it on stage.

Gender equity shouldn't be an outlier



AMERICAN PLAYERS THEATRE
CARRIE VAN HALLGREN, MANAGING DIRECTOR

Like many other industries, diversity, inclusion, and pay equity are on our minds. Senior staff at APT is 80%

women, but a recent study examining who directs and designs at major American professional theatre companies tells a much different story. In the 63 theaters examined, 70% of directing and design positions are held by men. In Wisconsin theatre, we are fortunate to have many women in positions of artistic leadership. How can we help open the doors for other women in all areas of theatre, particularly directing, design, and production in larger institutions?

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tion in me! It confirmed something I vaguely recalled from childhood all those year ago, and replayed memories of her mother. It was one of my life's most powerful moments.

Even after hearing a friend tell me he was gay physically weakened me, and observing his own outward self-acceptance, I continued to ignore the subject to the point of wanting to avoid him. While I figured I remained successfully closeted, I was still living with my parents at 36. A straight friend recognized how stifled I was and convinced me to find an apartment, urging me to start living my life. The Society board threw a housewarming gathering—seems they too thought it was about time—giving pans, kitchen knives, a cookbook, and some joke gifts. Under the pile of wrapping paper was a small box I had not noticed until the end. Unwrapping the tea strainer, I looked at Olive through tears. She smiled and said, “I was going to give this to you when you got married, but de-

After more discussion, we placed an invitation in the local newspaper for a meeting. It was March of 1975, and the Mt. Horeb Area Historical Society was born.

cidied now was best.” I knew her son was gay, and she had to say no more.

When I ventured “out,” orange juice promoter Anita Bryant’s public railing against gay people was still fresh in my mind and AIDS was taking many lives. Driving to Madison bars on Friday nights was like an underworld life. Imaginary gates opened for my car at a certain spot on Mineral Point Road and closed behind me on the way home. As one did pre-Internet, I placed ads in the Isthmus newspaper, with little luck. I wanted to meet a life partner, not just one-night stands. The same friend who had

frightened me by sharing that he was gay recommended the monthly Ten Percent Society Dance held at the University’s Memorial Union. I began to attend these events and there, in July 1991, I met my life partner.

PURSUING A PASSION

Finally coming out of the closet and confidently sharing with friends the whole person I was, I continued to devote energy and passion to the Historical Society. I always dreamed that this organization would offer more than a small-town museum, with many activities to seriously educate and help us understand ourselves through artifacts and past events. Over the past decade, the Society has planned and worked toward construction of a large museum complex in downtown Mount Horeb.

Having the same blood too long in an organization can stand in the way of progress. I had seen this happen to other organizations. Further, the Society had grown too large for a volunteer board alone to operate. We hired part-time, then full-time directors to manage the daily operations and the eventual building project. After 40 years of board service, and a couple previous conscious attempts, over the last 10 years I have succeeded in stepping away from the board while remaining on as a volunteer for specific projects. Currently, I’m helping research, design, and build the Historium’s long-term “permanent” exhibit, set to open in the coming year.

On June 3 of this year, more than 1,200 people attended the grand opening of the Driftless Historium. Throughout that festive weekend, I revisited the memories of all those I had met through the Society, and the fears I had when I decided to embrace being gay so many years ago that the organization might fold if people knew the real me. Having lived as myself, yet personally guarded, for so many years, to accept compliments for the success of the organization still feels somewhat awkward. My pride in this community, however, comes naturally. ■

TIPS & TRENDS

Are gains in visibility & representation lasting?



PROUD THEATER MILWAUKEE
EMMALINE FRIEDERICHS, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

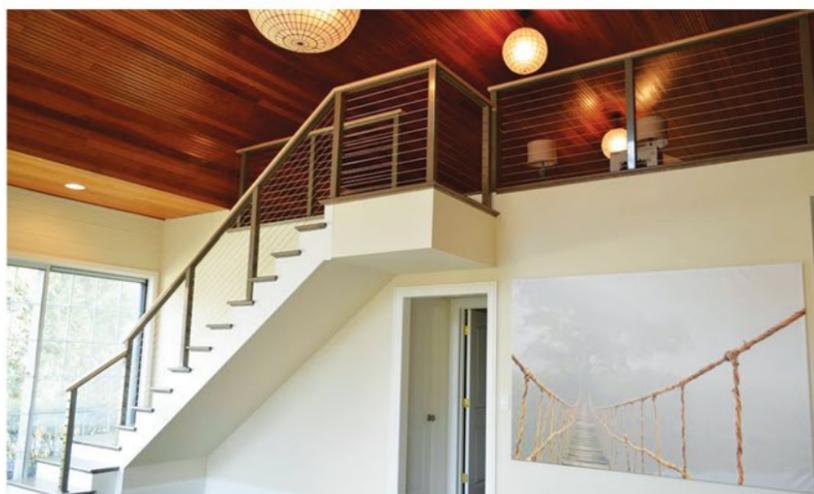
The diversity flip-flop by the Oscars and the Tonys is interesting. The Oscars went from an almost entirely white nominee pool to having its first Muslim winner, and an LGBT-themed Best Picture by an all-Black cast. The Tonys went in the other direction. Last year, they had the *Hamilton* sweep. This year the big winner was *Dear Evan Hansen*, a show about a straight white man with no named characters of color. Will the diversity trend be passed between the Tonys and the Oscars? How can we put an end to it?

Young artists make their mark



THE ARTWRITE COLLECTIVE
LAURA SEIDL, DIRECTOR

We need to continue to provide safe and affirming platforms for youth voices and ideas, or young artists will leave us out of their work altogether. Pay attention to what young artist-activists at GSAFE and Freedom, Inc. have to tell us about youth incarceration, policing, housing in/security, and public health. Kkeep track of programs offered by Goodman Center, Lussier Community Education Center, Mentoring Positives, Proud Theater, Madison Public Libraries, and many others across town. It’s no accident that these organizations are focusing on social entrepreneurship, creative expression through real-world projects (like radio), and the value of social spaces for youth.



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Early Ally

Historian **Dick Wagner** digs into the story of **Betty Cass**, a journalist who advocated for gay people at a time when it was still far off the radar of most Americans.

THIS SUMMER I visited Mineral Point for the play “Ten Dollar House” about the pioneering effort to preserve Cornish culture and specifically Pendarvis House on Shakerag Street. The effort was a joint project undertaken in the mid-1930s by two gay men, Bob Neal and Edgar Hellum. One of the characters in the play was a journalist named Betty Cass. For many decades she wrote an entertaining column for the *Wisconsin State Journal* titled “Day by Day.” She also published a collection of them as *How Long Are God’s Shoestrings?* In her columns she was a friend to gay men—an early ally.

Cass termed Pendarvis her pet restoration project. She referred to “the two young men” who lived in the tiny stone cottage and served meals. Cass felt the project was not supported by local trade but by visitors from Chicago, Rockford, Dubuque, and Madison. In the late 1930s she wrote, “Not more than a dozen or so Mineral Point residents have taken the time or trouble to go down to Shakerag Street.” As unnamed gay men living together and doing non-normative male work like cooking and dishwashing, she noted they had to put up in the early days with “friendlessness.” She also noted them as being, in the Cornish term, “slightly pixilated.” Most readers may not have known but pixies in Cornish lore was an alternative word for fairies, which even in those days had gay connotations.

CHAMPION OF PENDARVIS

Comparing Pendarvis to Williamsburg, she felt the Cornish restoration, focused on the local miners, was more of a workman’s civilization than the elegant colonial recreation. Her prose termed it “as stirring and as thrilling as anything in Wisconsin.” In 1939 she observed that her first column in the mid-1930s on Pendarvis resulted in “a constant stream of people from Madison.” The local paper, *The Democrat* of Mineral Point, pointed to her repeated columns as important in the work of making the restoration known.

Food was an important ingredient that made Pendarvis a success. Cass trumpeted the Cornish pasties, the thick scalded cream, and the wild plum preserves made by Neal and Hellum. She wrote of “the gourmets who ate these meals, delicious and unusual.” Cass advertised



She also noted them as being, in the Cornish term, “slightly pixilated.” Most readers may not have known but pixies in Cornish lore was an alternative word for fairies.

that at holiday time one could order “luscious” Cornish saffron cake from Pendarvis and they would put it on the next bus or mail it to you. Since the tradition of Cornish food had appeal for her readers, she published Neal’s recipe for Cornish gingerbread cookies.

After World War II she shared with her readers that Pendarvis had reopened with lunch and dinner being served but only by reservation, “since all food is purchased and cooked especially to your order ONLY.” She also told of further restoration undertaken by Neal and Hellum that permitted guest rooms in old Cornish structures. This was well before the bed and breakfast craze of modern times. Cass reported to her readers that famous food critic Duncan Hines and his wife had stayed at Pendarvis and had the house plum preserves and scalded cream on their morning toast. Hines termed it, “one of the most unusual and delightful places in the country.” Today Pendarvis and associated buildings are operated by the Wisconsin Historical Society as an educational museum and is open in spring, summer, and fall for visits.

FRIENDSHIPS AND ACQUAINTANCES

In addition to the boys at Pendarvis, Cass also had a fondness for Madison gay poet and pianist Keith McCutcheon. McCutcheon, slowed by tuberculosis, was at the state hospital near Waukesha for a time. She described

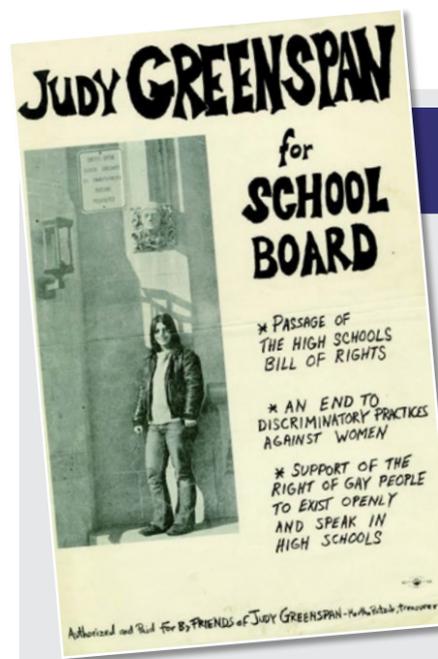
him as a “lover of the truly beautiful things of life, whose turbulent, eager spirit came under the chastisement of two years in a sanatorium, to know the joys of the peaceful, quiet things of the world.” Cass also wrote, “His verse was like delicate cameos cut from virgin stone. His music was sometimes wild rebellious, more often soft and tender. He was carefree, gay.”

McCutcheon sent Cass a short sketch describing a tuberculosis patient and his health struggles. His note said he thought she might use it as a preliminary to the annual TB Christmas Seal sale. She ran the sketch on December 20, 1935 as “a human soul, tortured, and racked as his body suffers, and soothed at last as his body is restored.” The patient, named John, is racked with blood dotted sputum but finds beauty in once more sitting while “tone by tone he restrung the precious pearls of his beloved piano upon a golden thread of overtones.”

Cass turned over another of her columns to McCutcheon for a guest stint. He decided to write the story of a person who is not fully identified, for “such a secret is ever the privilege of the narrator.” McCutcheon talks of traveling with a male friend where they find an old stone house and an old man who lives alone. He describes the fellow as having Thomas Mann’s *The Magic Mountain*, which he gives to the visiting friends. He may have known of Mann’s gay life. McCutcheon observed, “He said we knew of the magic mountain, and we did...” Other gay literary textual references appear in the column; Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and the bisexual poet Edna St. Vincent Millay. The final judgment: “this is a man of culture.” Bowing to conventions, though, as he writes, “without benefit of cloister or pulpit,” he finishes the story with the old man’s favorite worn book, *The Bible*.

A LONG CAREER

Cass’s columns would sometimes start with a reader’s letter. One termed her “Dear Angel-Over-Madison.” She often mentioned her growing children and their probing questions, like, “When you’re alive on earth are you dead in heaven? Can God make shoes?” News from Taliesin or Frank Lloyd Wright was frequent in her columns. She described having nightmares liking walking State Street barefooted. Cass concluded her nightmare column, “Once I even dreamed I’d been a columnist for 20 long years and had to write a column every single day. And was *that* a nightmare.” Nevertheless, some gay people could count her among the dream angels over their own lives at a time when there were precious few. ■



Making History

Andrew Shaffer on Madison’s history of out elected officials, now part of the preservation efforts at the LGBTQ Archive.

In 1973, Judy Greenspan announced her candidacy for Madison’s School Board. Greenspan, a local activist and member of the Madison Gay Liberation Front (GLF), was outraged by the School Board’s decision to ban the GLF from speaking in public high schools, and saw her campaign as a way to circumvent the policy.

As a political candidate she appeared in debates in local schools, in front of the School Board, and in numerous interviews in local media outlets. Greenspan ran on a platform that advocated the passage of a high school student bill of rights, an end to discriminatory practices against women in education, and the right of queer people to live and speak openly in schools. She garnered more than 6,000 votes, and made gay rights and sexism in the schools into defining issues of the campaign. While her bid was ultimately unsuccessful, the campaign was historic in its own right, making her the first known out lesbian ever to run for public office in the U.S.

While Greenspan laid the groundwork for out candidates, Jim Yeadon, a gay law student, was the first to gain a place at the table for the local community. In 1976, Yeadon was appointed by the Madison City Council to complete the term of a resigned alderman. He came out in the papers the day after being appointed and ran for re-election six months later, becoming the fourth out candidate to win an election in the country.

By 1989, Madison was home to more than 20% of all out LGBTQ elected officials in the nation. That year Ricardo Gonzalez, longtime owner of the Cardinal Bar, ran for and won a seat on Madison’s City Council, becoming the country’s first openly gay Latinx elected official. He built on his experiences as a business owner, running on a platform of downtown revitalization and was a strong advocate of the construction of Monona Terrace.

Madison has a rich legacy of queer activism and engagement, yet rarely do we reflect on the history that has happened all around us. Judy Greenspan, Jim Yeadon, and Ricardo Gonzalez each contributed to shaping our city, and their impact is still visible for those who know where to look. The Madison LGBTQ Archive is working to document and preserve these memories before they fade away. This archive is for all of us—to create a permanent statement that we are here, that our stories are important, and that our lives belong in the pages of history. Find out more about the archive and how you can get involved online at go.wisc.edu/LGBTQ60s or on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram at @MadisonLGBTQ.

OutReach LGBT Community Center is the fiscal sponsor of the Madison LGBTQ Archive, and funding for this project has been generously provided by the New Harvest Foundation, Inc. and the George L. Mosse Program in History. ■

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Unexpected Pawprietors

Jeff Clark and husband Tim Hagen walked a long and unexpected (but happy) path to the opening of their new pet store.

IN AUGUST, my husband Tim and I opened an EarthWise Pet Supply Store. It's the culmination of an unexpected journey we started a year ago and the realization of a dream we've had for nearly 11 years.

Tim and I met in 2006 and hit it off on our first date. The years have flown by as we ticked off milestones: moving in together, getting married, traveling the world, and settling in the Vilas neighborhood. Through it all, we've had successful — albeit somewhat unfulfilling — careers. We often discussed the idea of owning our own business and at one point even considered opening a bed and breakfast.

The year 2016 started with my trip to Costa Rica to build a house with a Habitat for Humanity group. I met 12 complete strangers who continue to inspire me every day. Right after that, Tim and I went to Greece, spending a week on a sailboat with six other friends. Then came June. A heavy rainstorm caused a giant limb from our 200-year-old oak tree to crash into our garage, leading to a backyard renovation project we're still dealing with today.

We unexpectedly lost our beloved beagle, Dolce, at age eight. He left a gaping hole in our hearts but also set us on our current journey. Our company name is Dolce's Dream, LLC, in his honor.

The saddest event happened in August of last year. We unexpectedly lost our beloved beagle, Dolce, at age eight. Dolce started the day normally but became sluggish and unable to walk over the course of one afternoon. We took him to an emergency pet clinic and discovered tumors in his abdomen that were causing internal bleeding. Surgery was a distant possibility, but the vet felt Dolce was unlikely to make it through the night. That evening, we made the agonizing decision to put him to sleep. He left a gaping hole in our hearts but also set us on our current journey. Our company name is Dolce's Dream, LLC, in his honor.

In early September of last year, I was researching business ideas and stumbled on an advertisement for EarthWise Pet Supply. After reviewing



their website, I requested more information. When I informed Tim of my crazy idea, it didn't take much to get him on board. A few days later we had a call with the COO of the franchise, and the wheels were in motion. The CEO came to Madison and we toured several potential store sites, ultimately settling on the Shorewood Hills location.

As we were deep into negotiating our franchise agreement, I was out for a run when I heard a pop and felt intense pain—I had broken my femur and needed surgery. We thought the business was certainly on hold and were both very upset. When we talked to the franchise, though, they were extremely supportive and convinced us to stick with our plan. Since I was confined to our living room for a couple months, I worked on our business plan, negotiated our lease, and applied for a loan.

Around Thanksgiving, I was finally starting to get back on my feet again. Tim's mom sent us a picture of a puppy her coworker was fostering. We couldn't resist going to visit, and soon enough we adopted her from Fetch. Siena is a one-year-old basset hound and Labrador mix (a "Bassador"), and is now officially titled, EarthWise "AmBassador."

Our love for pets and our experiences together led us to our new store, putting our energy into something we love, and providing valuable products and services to the community. We're committed to being knowledgeable about all of our products so pet owners can make an informed decision about their pet's health. Our store features natural foods for cats and dogs, as well as treats and accessories including toys, leashes, and collars. By partnering with local rescues and other organizations that help connect animals with people, we're also proud to support our local community. ■

PHOTO BY EMILY MILLS.



NAME: Riley
OWNERS: Patty & Amanda
HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR PET?: My sister sent a picture...that's all she wrote!
SEX: Female
BREED: Goldendoodle
BIRTHPLACE: Wisconsin Rapids
RESIDENCE: Middleton
OCCUPATION: CEO Neighborhood Watch
FAVORITE TOYS: Frisbee, ball, deer antler, anything she can fetch, iPhone 6
FAVORITE LEISURE ACTIVITIES: Playing with humans and other dogs, water sports, riding in the car, receiving belly rubs and lounging on a lap!
FAVORITE FOODS: Chicken & rice, peanut butter, blueberries, ice cubes.
PET PEEVES: Sox, her feline boss.
LEAST FAVORITE PHRASE: Who's a naughty girl?
IF PETS COULD TALK, WHAT WOULD YOURS SAY?: Let's go! Let's play! Let's go for a ride in the car! Let's swim! Let's go, go, go! That smells good!

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Passport to Health

New tool aims to help LGBTQ people better track, understand, and access medical care and increase quality of life.

LIKE OTHER SOCIAL AND ETHNIC minority groups in Wisconsin and beyond, LGBTQ individuals face challenges in even the simplest daily activities. Decisions in healthcare, and finding a provider open and accepting of gender and sexual minorities, is no exception.

In fact, through conversations held around the state, many members of the LGBTQ community talked about their struggles to find a healthcare provider who is fully accepting of their sexual orientation or gender identity, noting uncomfortable experiences and a lack of trust or acceptance. This is a growing contributing factor to the health disparities that exist within the LGBTQ community.

In Wisconsin, LGBTQ people experience several disparities, putting them at an increased risk for cancer and other health ailments. In addition to the low rates of accessing health services, an increased prevalence of alcohol misuse, tobacco use, and obesity are all con-

tributing factors. By the numbers, gay men are more likely to be current cigarette smokers than their heterosexual peers, and are more likely to have received a cancer diagnosis at some point in their life.

Lesbian women are more likely to have activity limitations due to arthritis, asthma, and other chronic conditions. These women are also more likely to be obese, current smokers, and recent binge drinkers. Among both LGBTQ men and women, there is an increased prevalence of reported mental distress than heterosexual peers. Most of these conditions are preventable or manageable with proper healthcare—it's a matter of getting it.

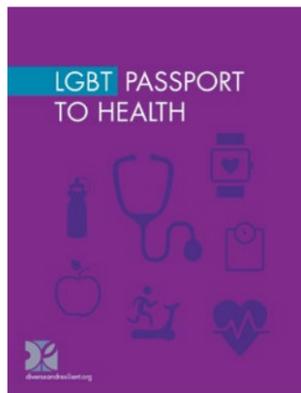
NEW RESOURCES

In order to combat these disparities and support members of the LGBTQ community in taking control of their healthcare, a "LGBT Passport to Health" was developed by Milwaukee-based organization Diverse & Resilient (D&R), funded by a grant from the Wisconsin Comprehensive Cancer Control program.

The organization strives to create a future in which lesbian, gay, transgender, and queer people in Wisconsin thrive, living healthy and satisfying lives in safe and supportive communities. Through community outreach and resource development, D&R continues to make an impact in the community.

The pocket-sized resource has eight sections. The first two sections, "About Me" and "Health Behaviors," give space for individuals to reflect and make note of meaningful relationships, along with their involvement in behaviors associated with cancer risk. For instance, the frequency of tobacco and alcohol use, sexual behaviors and preferences, drug use, exercise, and more. Along with each category is a brief description of how the topic relates to overall wellbeing.

The next section highlights other health considerations, including ways to prevent sexually transmitted diseases, suggestions about tobacco and alcohol use, and mental health awareness. Included is a place to make note of medical history and known allergies and drug



reactions. The cancer screening section follows, offering insight and risk to leading cancers among the LGBTQ population, including colon, lung, breast and cervical, prostate, testicular, and anal. Along with the recommended screening guidelines, there is a tool that allows patients to track when their screenings or exams took place.

Beyond cancer, a section is dedicated to assessing other health maintenance requirements, screenings, and vaccinations. To wrap up the health information, a special health considerations section offers specific recommendations to the user.

CONNECTING WITH PROVIDERS

The LGBT Passport to Health goes beyond addressing medical needs. The final two sections include legal and community resources that individuals within the LGBTQ community, and their providers, may find useful.

The resource offers easy tracking of information, current guidelines, and a tool for communication. The passport was initially given out at known events in the LGBTQ community, like PrideFest in Milwaukee. In addition, 120 youth and adult community health workers distributed passports to LGBTQ-serving organizations and the clients they serve.

Since then, preliminary surveys have suggested that many patients and their physicians have found the resource useful. Over three-fourths of individuals who had seen their provider said they brought the passport along, or at least discussed it with them. The same number of individuals said that the tool was helpful in increasing the quality of service and the interactions they had with their provider. Over half of those surveyed said that, at the very least, they had a change in their intention to be screened for a health condition discussed in the passport.

Moving forward, D&R hopes to continue disseminating the LGBT Passport to Health within the LGBTQ community. Similarly, they want to increase the tool's awareness among healthcare providers within the community. Are you interested in learning more about the LGBT Passport to Health or having a copy of your own? Visit diverseandresilient.org/resources/lgbtq-passport-health. ■

MORGAN SCROBEL works as a project assistant with the U.W. Carbone Cancer Center and the WI Comprehensive Cancer Control Program. A recent U.W. graduate, Morgan begins work on her Master's degree in fall, at Emory University in Atlanta.

When a Cake Isn't Just a Cake

Attorney **Michele L. Perreault** takes a hard look at the case soon to be before the U.S. Supreme Court that could roll back protections for LGBTQ people.

IN 2012 A COLORADO baker refused to create a wedding cake for two men. That event triggered a series of legal challenges that have now landed on the lap of the U.S. Supreme Court in the case of *Masterpiece Cake Shop v. Colorado Civil Rights Commission*.

Unfortunately, in the five years since the case began, and even since the landmark marriage equality decision in 2015, the composition of the Supreme Court has changed such that many believe it will continue to take cases in an effort to roll back hard-won protections, perhaps even reaching marriage equality. This case may well be the front-runner to signal the new direction of the Supreme Court.

If some did not understand the importance of elections before, the 2016 Presidential election and the subsequent makeup of the Supreme Court should make it crystal-clear. The key change has been the addition of Justice Neil Gorsuch, a Trump-supported nominee and darling of the ultra-conservative right wing.

Gorsuch was a Court of Appeals judge prior to his appointment to the Supreme Court. His extreme views came out in a series of decisions, including the *Hobby Lobby* case, where the court upheld the right of Hobby Lobby to refuse to provide insurance coverage for medical treatment they found objectionable on religious grounds. Not content to simply join the decision that affirmed Hobby Lobby's right to discriminate, Gorsuch wrote his own decision, writing in part, "All of us must answer for ourselves whether and to what degree we are willing to be involved in the wrongdoing of others. For some, religion provides an essential source of guidance both about what constitutes wrongful conduct and the degree to which those



who assist others in committing wrongful conduct themselves bear moral culpability."

In *Hobby Lobby*, that "wrongdoing" is apparently women seeking access to all health care options. The question is, does Gorsuch believe that common events in people's lives, such as weddings, marriage, health care decision-making, and employment may be considered "wrongdoing" if they are undertaken by LGBTQ individuals and families?

Unfortunately, I believe the most likely answer is going to be that individuals such as the baker and corporations such as Hobby Lobby will be permitted to discriminate against LGBTQ individuals and families on religious grounds. This decision and others that have

been accepted for review (e.g., there is an employment discrimination case also before the Court) may well signal a new legal backlash.

What can we do to make a difference? The first answer is obvious: change the rules by changing the makeup of the politicians who get

Does Gorsuch believe that common events in people's lives, such as weddings, marriage, health care decision-making, and employment may be considered "wrongdoing" if they are undertaken by LGBTQ individuals and families?

to appoint federal judges and Supreme Court justices. The first chance to do that is just over a year away, yet the apathy of progressive voters continues to harm our causes. Statistics show that younger generations overwhelmingly support equality, and yet the percentage of people who actually vote is abysmal. That leads to the importance of the second step: let your friends, family members, and colleagues know how crucial these issues are, and get them to call their representatives, write to them, and most importantly, vote for politicians who openly support equality. It's not really about a cake. ■

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Beyond Sex Addiction

In response to a recent anonymous article about a gay man's struggles with healthy sexuality, two therapists respond with a new research-based approach that may be the future of sexual health—without the label of addiction.

WE WERE TOUCHED WHEN, in the last issue, we read how an anonymous contributor shared the challenges he faced as he developed his sexual life as a gay man. The article highlighted the many factors that impacted the choices he made as he started his journey. His examples of shaming by friends and family about both sex and being gay, internalized homophobia, lack of self acceptance, and the excitement of finding new partners are all too common.

These factors led to the author engaging in behaviors of which he was confused and not proud. Fortunately he was able to find help from counselors and support groups to change his relationship with sex. As has often been the case over the almost 40 years since the concept of sex addiction was first developed, he was diagnosed as being a sex addict and treated with the classic sex addiction model.

While the addiction model approach has been popularized by the media, celebrities, and certain portions of the therapeutic community, you may be surprised to find out that there is no actual diagnosis of sex or porn addiction in the DSM-5, the definitive manual used by mental health practitioners in the United States. Sex and porn addiction were intentionally not included due to lack of research supporting them as a diagnosis. The American Association of Sexuality Educators, Counsel-



When using the term addiction we, as therapists, believe it shuts down the process of understanding sexuality through a non-judgemental perspective. We prefer to help a client understand how shame shuts them down and prevents them from being honest.

ors and Therapists (AASECT), the preeminent professional organization focused on sex and sexuality issued a position statement in 2016 which stated that they “do not find sufficient empirical evidence” to support sex addiction as a diagnosis and that sex addiction treatment models are not “adequately informed by accurate human sexuality knowledge.”

When using the term addiction we, as therapists, believe it shuts down the process of understanding sexuality through a non-judgemental perspective. By using the unscientific pejorative language of “sex addict” we force the connotations that are tied to substance related dependence onto them as an identity. We prefer to help a client understand how shame shuts them down and prevents them from being honest. We help clients understand how anxiety, depression, values conflicts, and other issues subtly mingle with sexuality and play out in their relationships so they can have a clearer understanding of themselves which allows them to keep relationship agreements and have sexual integrity.

We would like to help clients and clinicians to stop using act-centered morality to guide them and instead use principle-based sexologically informed models and knowledge to be able to be authentic in relationships. We believe

that utilizing an addiction model actually prematurely shuts down the evaluation process by which someone fully explores their sexuality.

We, along with many colleagues, use a newer approach that is more informed by sexual health research and qualitatively more effective when dealing with sexual health and sexual expression. The sexual health model is based on the World Health Organization's (WHO) definition of sexual health. WHO defines sexual health as, “...a state of physical, emotional, mental and social well-being in relation to sexuality; it is not merely the absence of disease, dysfunction or infirmity. Sexual health requires a positive and respectful approach to sexuality and sexual relationships, as well as the possibility of having pleasurable and safe sexual experiences, free of coercion, discrimination and violence. For sexual health to be attained and maintained, the sexual rights of all persons must be respected, protected and fulfilled.”

The sex addiction model and the sexual health model have important differences:

- **The sex addiction model is an act-centered model and the sexual health model is a principle-based model. We use principles that help increase communication and understanding rather than judgement.**
- **An act-centered model decides that certain behaviors are good or bad for everyone based on a morality determined by someone other than client. A principle-based model helps the client have a better understanding of their values and how they see being honest or keeping relationship agreements.**
- **In an act-centered addiction model, if the client is engaging in behaviors judged to be bad, the therapist will exploit the use of shame to attempt to change behaviors or beliefs. A principle-centered sexual health model helps the client understand their thoughts, urges, and behavior based in the principles of sexual health. The guiding principles of sexual health are:**
 - 1 Consent
 - 2 Honesty
 - 3 Non-exploitative
 - 4 Protected against STI, HIV, unwanted pregnancy
 - 5 Shared values
 - 6 Mutual pleasure

We know that shame is not a useful approach to sustainable change. Shame is highly correlated with substance abuse/addiction, depression, violence, aggression, bullying, suicide, and eating disorders. Those are not the outcomes we want when attempting to help individuals.

The sexual health model is principle-centered. Rather than being based on someone else's expertise and judgment of an individual's choices, it is driven by the individual's internal values. It doesn't define anything as inherently good or bad. Instead it is based on what is individually pleasurable or not, and how those choices play out in relationship agreements with self and others. It shifts the focus from what not to do, to what you want to create in your life and relationships.

The sexual health model invites diversity and uniqueness of individual value systems and principles. Now that our field has a better model from which to work, we can do better work. The shift to helping individuals clarify and embrace their unique value system as they develop their own sexual expression allows the individuals to have better skills around other principles of sexual health, like honesty and agreement keeping. This type of change is more sustainable.

Valuing someone's honesty is hard when it challenges our understanding of them, their life, and our own belief system. But we have to strive to understand. It's our duty to be open to diversity and to not assume that everyone should be a mirror image of us or be judged. The values and agency of individuals must be respected even as society seeks to create a common set of rules and judgments as a means of controlling sexual expression. It's in this space where the values of others intersect with the values of the individual that therapists need to be very careful not to collude with society, but instead should help the individual clarify their own authenticity in relation to sexual health. The role of the therapist is not to impose the will and morals of society but rather to help the individual become the person they wish to be.

If you are concerned with issues related to sexual thoughts, urges, or behaviors there are mental health professionals that can help. Be a smart consumer. Ask questions before choosing a therapist. Talk to more than one. Find out if their approach, and personality, are a good fit for you. We encourage you to find a therapist that doesn't attempt to use shame around a subject that already has significant shame created by our society. You deserve to develop your own sexual expression in a way that is consistent with your own principles and values. ■

CHUCK FRANKS, LCSW, CST (chuckfranks.com) is an AASECT-certified sex therapist helping individuals and communities develop resilient sexual integrity through interventions designed to improve insight, authenticity and compassion through sexual health conversations. (Located in Kansas City, Missouri)

JAY BLEVINS, LMFT (awentherapy.com) has a private practice, Awen Therapy, in Madison, Wisconsin. Jay works with individuals and partners with a focus is alternative sex and sexuality, power dynamic relationships, and non-monogamy.

YOUR Local COMMUNITY PUBLICATIONS



Madison Essentials (bimonthly)

Madison Essentials serves as your guide to local restaurants and shops in the Greater Madison area with in-depth business tours and the stories of the people behind them. Whether this is your home or your home-away-from-home, we'll help you discover the essentials of Madison.

madisonessentials.com



Home Elements & Concepts (quarterly)

Home Elements & Concepts helps you think about great ideas that can transform your home before you knock out a wall or dig up your backyard. You'll receive professional perspectives in each article, connecting you with the designers, contractors, and tradespeople who have been turning houses into homes for years.

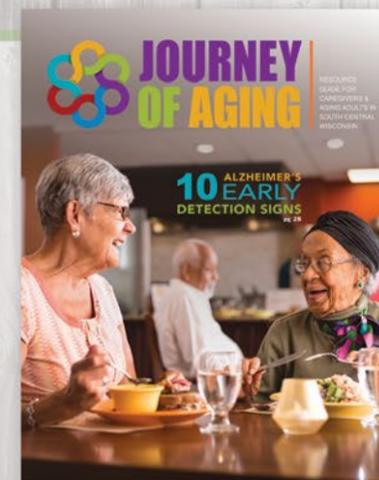
homeelementsandconcepts.com



Journey of Aging (biannual)

Whether you're a senior in life school or know someone who is, this resource guide provides more than just information on doctors and living facilities. From helping you explore your inner artist to preparing you for changes in lifestyle, our contributors provide their perspective and expertise in engaging articles.

journeyofaging.com



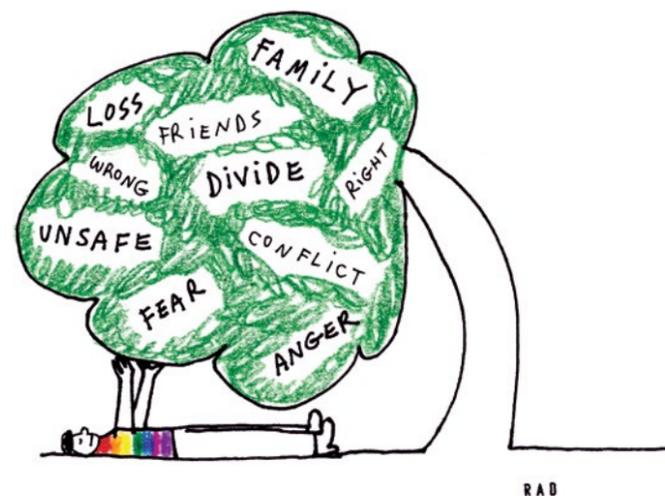
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Family Matters

Therapist **Alexander Einsman** on navigating potentially thorny interactions with family and friends in the Trump era.

TRAUMA AND GRIEF come in many forms, affecting our relationship with ourselves and having a ripple effect through the relationships in our lives. After the 2016 election, many people who supported politicians who support equal rights for LGBTQ people experienced a collective process of traumatic and complicated grief. Anxiety, anger, sadness, blame, and bargaining were, and continue to be, acutely present for many people.

We often rely on supportive communication with friends and family to help process these difficult emotions. But what happens when someone you love, particularly a family member, feels differently? For many families with differing political views, the election aftershock ripped a deeper divide in family relationships.

Family relationships are complex, unique, and often fixed in rigid patterns of unproductive communication cycles. In navigating turbulent relationships, it can be helpful to break down the process and go in with a game plan.

STEP 1: UNDERSTAND THE PROCESS

The way many people are coping with the political divide in their family relationships parallels how our psyches react to survive when we are threatened: fight, flight, and freeze. When this reptilian brain process is translated to relationships, it means heated arguments, withdrawing from family relationships, or feeling powerless about how to discuss this loaded topic. There is no grey area when our brain survival mode is activated, only the opposite extremes: safe or unsafe, right or wrong, good or bad, loved or unloved. This is why heated arguments rarely resolve anything. The opportunity for resolution usually only happens after the fact, if at all.

For people to change or expand their minds, a whole different part of the brain that is unavailable when survival mode is activated must be accessed. This means that you and the person you want to communicate with can't be feeling defensive or attacked, as it will block out opportunity for understanding. There are a few things you can do to create a safe, non-defensive environment for discussion—

and it doesn't start with the other person. To effectively understand and challenge others, you must first be willing to understand yourself and curate the conditions you require to be able to clearly communicate.

When it comes to your family, it's most important to figure out what you most value and what you would like to try to change. You know your relationships best and whether or not a meaningful dialogue is possible. For

At the root of every "belief system" lies a "value system." If you are interested in changing your own behavior or holding hope for change in someone you care about, it's likely necessary to explore the values underneath in order to make that change happen.

some, either choosing not to talk about conflict or distancing themselves from a relationship is a necessary form of safety and self-care. But it can be difficult to discern between necessary distance and outright avoidance of an uncomfortable topic. It is important to be honest with yourself about which you are doing, and act accordingly. Keep in mind that change can never occur unless it's attempted.

STEP 2: ANTICIPATE THE OBSTACLES

Common road blocks in relationship resolution is the tendency to categorize beliefs in extremes and negatives, which is different from trying to understand where the beliefs are coming from. For example, identifying a person's lack of intelligence or ignorance as a reason for their perspective serves to invalidate that person's experience. No one likes to be told they are stupid. The ability for the brain to hear and process anything after being called "stupid" or "uninformed" stops almost immediately.

Remember, at the root of every "belief system" lies a "value system." Values drive beliefs and beliefs drive behavior. If you are interested in changing your own behavior or holding hope for change in someone you care about, it's likely necessary to explore the values underneath in order to make that change happen. Most often, values have to expand or shift in order for beliefs to be modified.



ALEXANDER EINSMAN, MS LMFT is a licensed psychotherapist with Atlas Counseling, located in Madison. He specializes in adolescents, adults, intimate relationships, and the LGBTQ community.

ILLUSTRATION BY RACHAL DUGGAN.

Before inquiring on the values or someone else, consider what your own values are. Doing your own value exploration can help identify the presence of shared values. Shared values can offer common ground for change in a relationship because it allows the opportunity for empathy. Appealing to someone's emotions through the love within a shared family connection can set the groundwork for empathy and growth.

STEP 3: THE EXPERIENCE

We feel threatened and hurt when someone values their own experience over ours. It puts us in survival mode reaction for a really, really good reason. Invalidating someone else's experience, and only focusing on your own, is one of the pillars of an unhealthy relationship dynamic. And truly giving effort to understand someone else's experience can be inconvenient, because it means we have to consider our own experience in light of theirs.

If you want someone to listen to your experience, first ask them questions about their own experience and values, and be willing to listen. Redirecting the conversation back to authentic feelings is often necessary, particularly if what they are saying seems to parrot the values of outside systems, like a political party, institution, or type of media. When we are tasked with explaining internal feelings about

a particular topic, the door for understanding other perspectives opens.

STEP 4: ACCEPT YOURSELF, WHAT IS, AND WHAT MAY NOT BE, AT LEAST FOR NOW

The very definition of a healthy family relationship lies in flexibility to adjust to the ongoing changes that life always brings. You can do your best to lay the groundwork for mutual respect for each others' experiences, but whether that opportunity is taken is on is up to both parties in the conversation. It is usually a long-term goal that requires revisiting.

It would certainly be more ideal to share the same values, experiences, and beliefs with our family of origin, but it's not guaranteed. We have to work at it continuously, within ourselves and the other relationships in our life. Accepting that it's an ongoing theme in life can actually remove some of the difficulty.

In the meantime, our task is to take care of ourselves and cultivate compassion for ourselves, especially if it's not coming from our family relationships. We can seek to validate our own experience through other family members or through the other chosen relationships in our lives. We can take our needed space from the relationships causing distress for our own mental health, so we can plan more effectively if, how, and when to approach the divides. ■

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IN RETROSPECT, the idea of drag queens reading stories to children makes real sense. Lots of kids love playing dress-up, getting into adult makeup, and wearing outrageous combinations of patterns and colors, tutus, capes, and more. It's a way to explore identity and expression, to revel in ridiculousness or even find something that really resonates for you.

What is drag if not a way for adults to do much the same? And what are drag queens if not consummate showfolk, over-the-top performers who seek to connect with audiences and draw us out of our shells? What could be more perfect for a group of wiggly children, keen to hear dramatic tellings of good stories?

That's the idea behind Drag Queen Story Hour, which has been held at libraries across the country, and now right here in Madison at the Pinney Branch Library on the city's east side. The second event in the series unfolded on August 19, with Miss Gretta (aka Craig Schlagel) reading *The Family Book* by Todd Parr to a group of about 150 kids and their adults.

Holly Storck-Post, the Youth Services Librarian at Pinney, says "We had tons of amazing feedback. Lots of families thanked us for doing such an inclusive, fun event, celebrating Pride, and presenting this as a normal part of life. Several asked if we could make this a monthly series."

The library plans to hold more drag queen story hours in the future. "Drag Queen Story Hour is a good way to celebrate our differences and look at gender fluidity and defying gender stereotypes in a really fun, celebratory, and also developmentally appropriate way for kids. We also offer a variety of library resources, including LGBT booklists so that all kids can see their families represented in books, as well as resources for talking with kids about gender." ■

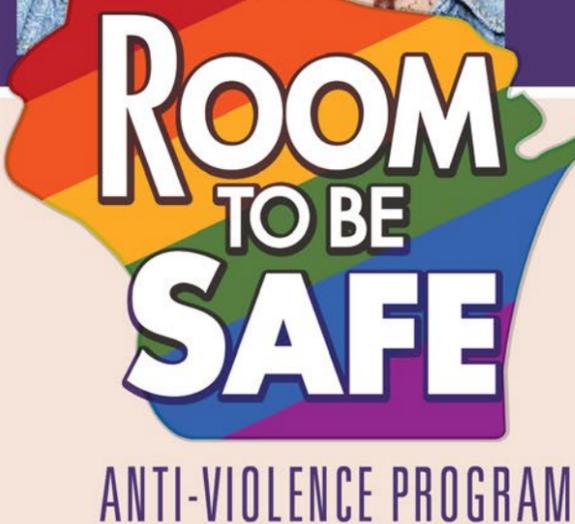
Queens of Story Time

Local drag queens are going from the stage to the storyteller's seat in an effort to bring more diversity to kid's library programming.

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